

A PROJECT WORK ON
An Ethnographic Study of Emotional Intelligence Practices to
Enhance Guest Experiences in Pokhara Hotels

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project work titled “**An Ethnographic Study of Emotional Intelligence Practices to Enhance Guest Experiences in Pokhara Hotels**” submitted for the BHM is my original work, and the project work report has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or other similar titles.

Diya Sunar Kami

July 2026

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project work titled “**An Ethnographic Study of Emotional Intelligence Practices to Enhance Guest Experiences in Pokhara Hotels**” submitted by **Diya Sunar Kami** for the partial fulfilment of the requirement of BHM embodies the Bonafide work done by her under my supervision.

.....

Suresh Raj Adhikari

Project work supervisor

July 2026

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The hospitality industry is fundamentally built on human interaction, where service quality depends not only on technical skills but also on emotional engagement. In modern tourism, guests expect more than basic accommodation; they seek personalized, meaningful, and emotionally satisfying experiences. This shift has made emotional intelligence (EI) a critical competency for hospitality professionals. In the hospitality sector, emotional intelligence is highly important because hotel employees deal directly with guests from different cultural, social, and emotional backgrounds. Front office staff, waiters, housekeeping employees, and managers frequently face emotionally demanding situations such as guest complaints, service failures, special requests, and cultural misunderstandings. Employees with high emotional intelligence are more capable of responding politely, understanding guest feelings, and maintaining professional behaviour during stressful interactions. These emotional skills help create guest satisfaction, trust, loyalty, and positive hotel experiences.

Nepal's National Context, one of the main drivers of the national economy in Nepal is tourism. A sizable percentage of the workforce is employed in tourism, which directly contributes roughly 7.9% to the national GDP, according to the MoCTCA (2023). The hotel business is a key player in this area. The need for top-notch hotel service has grown as Nepal markets itself as a travel destination with initiatives like "Visit Nepal 2020" (before the pandemic disrupted it). Hotel operators have been forced to reconsider the skills needed by frontline staff as a result of this demand. However, emotional intelligence has been generally overlooked in Nepali hotel education and employment, whereas technical training and operational skills have been given priority. The soft skills required to handle emotional labour, the weariness, stress, and performance pressure that come with continuously interacting with guests, are frequently lacking among front desk staff. A lack of knowledge about emotional intelligence (EI) results in poorly managed visitor complaints, poor service, and emotionally sensitive situations like delays, room problems, or cultural misunderstandings.

The hotel industry in Pokhara has expanded rapidly due to increasing domestic and international tourism demand, growth in adventure tourism, and investment in accommodation infrastructure. Hotels in Pokhara range from budget lodges and family-run guesthouses to boutique and luxury hotels that aim to enhance visitor experiences. According to Malla (2024), Pokhara has developed strong tourism infrastructure, including hotels, restaurants, recreation facilities, and hospitality services, making it one of the most important tourism centres in Nepal. However, the author argues that despite these developments, there remain limitations in physical accessibility, transportation systems, and supporting service infrastructure that affect the long-term competitiveness of the hotel sector. Malla further suggests that infrastructure improvement should accompany promotional campaigns for sustainable growth.

In seeking to satisfy both internal and external customers, the skill sets included in emotional intelligence (EI) are important (George, 2000; Higgs & Aitken, 2003; Langhorn, 2004). Mayer and Salovey (1997), who created the term emotional intelligence, define it as “the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional meanings, and to reflectively regulate emotions in ways that promote emotional and intellectual growth” (p. 10). This study intends to advance academic understanding and real-world advancements in the hotel industry by concentrating on a regional setting with worldwide significance. It lays the groundwork for future research on emotional intelligence and its connection to superior customer service.

In the service industry, especially in the tourism and hospitality sector, being friendly and emotionally responsive to guests is considered an additional value and an important part of the service product provided by employees (Schneider & Bowen, 1985). Hospitality services are highly people-oriented, where direct interaction between employees and customers plays a significant role in shaping guests’ perceptions and experiences. Employees are expected not only to perform their technical duties efficiently but also to communicate warmly, politely, and empathetically with guests. Such positive emotional behaviour helps create a welcoming environment and strengthens the relationship between hotels and customers. Most managers believe that the friendliness and good cheer of employees

are strongly related to customer satisfaction and increase customer commitment and loyalty, and therefore affect organizational performance and bottom lines (Albrecht & Zemke, 1985). In highly competitive tourism destinations, customer satisfaction has become essential for maintaining a good reputation and encouraging repeat visits. Guests are more likely to remember hotels where employees demonstrate kindness, patience, emotional understanding, and supportive behaviour during service encounters.

To secure employees' emotional expression, some organizations have clearly displayed rules to regulate employees' behaviour (Bowen, et.al 1989). These behavioural expectations are often included in organizational culture, training programs, and service guidelines to ensure consistent customer service. Employees are encouraged to maintain positive attitudes, control negative emotions, and display professionalism even during stressful situations. Such emotional display rules help organizations maintain service quality and create positive guest experiences, particularly in the hospitality industry where customer interaction is continuous and emotionally demanding.

This study investigates how Pokhara hotels front desk operation and food and beverage service benefits from emotional intelligence. The hospitality industry is fundamentally centered on providing high-quality service and memorable experiences to guests. In popular tourist destinations hotels play a crucial role in shaping overall perceptions of the destination. While physical facilities and service efficiency are important, the emotional connection established between hotel staff and guests has increasingly become a defining factor in guest satisfaction and loyalty. Guest service in the hospitality industry is one of the main business processes which leads to growth and attracts potential guests. The hotel industry in Pokhara has grown rapidly due to increasing domestic and international tourism. Pokhara is one of Nepal's most important tourism destinations, known for its natural beauty, adventure tourism, lakes, and mountain views. Hotels in Pokhara compete to provide high-quality services and memorable guest experiences.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The hospitality industry is highly dependent on human interaction, where employees' emotional behaviour and communication significantly influence guest

satisfaction and the overall hotel experience. In hotels, especially in tourist destinations like Pokhara, guests expect not only quality physical services but also warm hospitality, empathy, emotional understanding, and personalized care. However, many hotels continue to focus more on operational efficiency and physical facilities while giving less attention to emotional intelligence practices among employees. This gap can negatively affect guest experience, customer loyalty, and service quality. According to Daniel Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others. This concept is especially important in the hospitality industry because front desk employees must interact with guests from diverse cultural backgrounds, remain calm under pressure, and provide empathetic service. Prati et al. (2003) emphasized that a lack of emotional intelligence skills can lead to poor communication, emotional mismanagement, and a decline in customer satisfaction and loyalty. Although international hotel chains have increasingly invested in emotional intelligence training programs to improve employee performance and guest relations, many local hotels in Pokhara still lack such initiatives. Most employees receive formal training in technical skills such as billing, check-in procedures, and room allocation, but they often do not receive adequate training in interpersonal communication and emotional management. As a result, a gap exists between guest expectations and employees' ability to deliver emotionally satisfying service experiences.

In Nepal, most hospitality-related studies primarily focus on tourism growth, infrastructure development, or customer satisfaction, while the psychological and emotional dimensions of hotel service remain underexplored. Without evidence-based knowledge regarding the role of emotional intelligence in front office operations, hotel management may miss opportunities to improve both service quality and employee well-being. Given Pokhara's rapid tourism growth (as outlined above), the gap between guest expectations and employees' emotional-intelligence competencies becomes a pressing, and currently under-researched, concern.

Therefore, understanding the role of emotional intelligence in front office operations has become increasingly important. This study aims to investigate how emotional intelligence practices among front desk employees enhance guest experience in hotels in Pokhara. Specifically, the study seeks to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence, employee performance, guest satisfaction, and overall service quality. By addressing this research gap, the study

intends to provide valuable insights for hotel managers, hospitality educators, and policymakers regarding the importance of integrating emotional intelligence training into hospitality professional development programs.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How do employees manage their emotions during stressful or conflict situations with guests?
2. What challenges do hotel employees face in practicing emotional intelligence consistently?
3. How does emotional intelligence contribute to building long-term guest loyalty and guests' intention to revisit the hotel?

1.4 Objectives of the study

- To identify challenges faced by employees in applying emotional intelligence.
- To evaluate how front desk employees' emotional intelligence enhances guest satisfaction and relations.
- To investigate the relationship between service delivery in front office operations and emotional intelligence traits (like empathy and self-regulation).

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to academic knowledge by applying an ethnographic approach to emotional intelligence in hospitality, which is relatively underexplored in Nepal. It provides practical insights for hotel managers to improve service quality through emotional intelligence training. The ability of front desk employees to control their emotions has a direct impact on the overall guest experience because they are the first and last point of contact for visitors. This study gives hotel managers useful information to enhance staff development initiatives by examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and guest satisfaction. It highlights how providing individualized and emotionally satisfying service requires emotional competencies like empathy, patience, and self-awareness.

This study is significant because it provides practical and academic insights into the role of emotional intelligence in enhancing guest experience in Pokhara hotels. The findings may help hotel managers understand how emotionally intelligent practices can improve service quality, strengthen guest satisfaction, and encourage positive guest relationships. The study may also assist hotel employees in recognizing the importance of empathy, effective communication, self-awareness, and emotional regulation in their daily interactions with guests.

From an academic perspective, this research contributes to the limited literature on emotional intelligence practices in the hospitality industry of Nepal, particularly in the context of Pokhara hotels. The findings may serve as a reference for future researchers interested in emotional intelligence, guest experience, and hospitality management. In addition, the study may provide useful information for hotel owners, managers, and tourism stakeholders when developing staff training and service improvement strategies that enhance both employee performance and guest experience

1.6 Literature Review

This literature review focuses on the impact of emotional intelligence on front desk operations, particularly in Pokhara, Nepal. The front desk department plays a vital role in shaping guests' first and last impressions of a hotel, as front office employees are responsible for welcoming guests, handling complaints, providing information, and ensuring customer satisfaction throughout the stay. In such service-oriented environments, employees' ability to understand, manage, and respond to emotions effectively is essential for maintaining positive guest relations and delivering high-quality hospitality services. Hotels in Pokhara face increasing competition and must provide not only physical facilities but also emotionally satisfying services to attract and retain guests. Understanding the role of EI can help hotel managers develop effective training programs, improve employee performance, reduce workplace stress, and strengthen guest relationships.

1.6.1 Employee Experiences in the Hospitality Industry

Customer experience refers to the overall impression formed through every interaction a customer has with a service provider. Customers expect high-quality service in every transaction, and their experiences influence how they evaluate the

organization. Sanjaya et al. (2013) defined customer experience as the accumulation of all events that customers consciously experience during their interactions with a business. Similarly, Yulian (2002) explained service quality as the benefits customers obtain through the ease of accessing products and services, either directly or indirectly. According to Rua et al. (2020), customer satisfaction is closely linked to the quality of products and services delivered. In the hospitality industry, positive customer experiences are particularly important because they shape customers' perceptions of service quality and influence their overall evaluation of the hotel. When guests receive prompt, reliable, and personalized services, they are more likely to develop favourable attitudes, trust the organization, and establish long-term relationships. As competition in the hospitality sector continues to increase, creating meaningful and memorable experiences has become a key source of competitive advantage. Positive customer experiences not only enhance satisfaction but also encourage customers to recommend the organization to others and remain loyal. Nasution et al. (2022) found a positive relationship between customer experience, satisfaction, and loyalty, while Agustiono et al. (2022) define customer satisfaction as the feeling that results from comparing customers' expectations with the actual service they receive. Likewise, Chotisarn and Phuthong (2025) identify customer satisfaction as one of the primary determinants of customer loyalty. In today's highly competitive service environment, organizations must consistently deliver outstanding service experiences to encourage repeat purchases and strengthen customer loyalty (Tran et al., 2021). Within hotels, employees play a vital role in shaping guest experiences because hospitality services rely heavily on human interaction. Lisiewski and Perotti (2023) emphasize that hotel employees are the primary source of both customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, while Dongyuan et al. (2019) note that customer service experiences significantly influence customer attitudes, perceived value, and loyalty. Similarly, Curry and Gao (2012) found a strong relationship between service excellence and customer loyalty, although customer satisfaction has an even greater influence on loyalty and repurchase intentions than service quality alone. Furthermore, customer experience extends beyond functional service delivery to include emotional responses and impressions formed while consuming products and services. Positive emotions generated through enjoyable services, quality products, and a pleasant environment contribute significantly to customer satisfaction. Huddin et al. (2024) argue that a positive and cheerful atmosphere enhances

customers' overall experiences and satisfaction. Therefore, hospitality organizations should prioritize delivering high-quality service, emotionally engaging interactions, and memorable experiences to improve customer satisfaction, strengthen loyalty, encourage positive word-of-mouth communication, and achieve long-term organizational success.

1.6.2 Customer Loyalty in the Hotel Industry

Customer loyalty is a crucial indicator of business success in the hospitality industry because loyal guests are more likely to revisit a hotel and recommend it to others. Rasouli and Vazifehdoost (2014) define customer loyalty as a customer's commitment to continue choosing the same company through repeated purchases and long-term dedication. Similarly, Stading and Johnson (2012) describe customer loyalty as the ideal outcome of a strong buyer–seller relationship, while Arvanitis (2010) recognizes it as an important measure of organizational performance. According to Bian et al. (2019), loyalty is reflected in customers' positive attitudes, emotional attachment, brand familiarity, and continued preference for a specific hotel brand. In service industries such as hospitality, Parasuraman et al. (1985) argue that close interactions between service providers and customers strengthen loyalty because guests often rely on trust and perceived service quality when making repeat purchase decisions.

1.6.3 Emotional Intelligence in Hospitality Services

Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a significant role in improving service quality by enabling employees to recognize and manage both their own emotions and those of others. Service employees who accurately interpret customers' facial expressions, body language, and emotional cues can better understand guest needs and respond appropriately (Koc & Boz, 2019; Marsh & Ambady, 2007). These abilities foster empathy, trust, and prosocial behaviour, which are essential components of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Emotional intelligence involves the capacity to perceive, understand, regulate, and effectively use emotions in interpersonal interactions (Goleman, 1996; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Consequently, emotionally intelligent employees not only enhance

customer satisfaction but also improve teamwork and workplace relationships, leading to better organizational performance (Koc & Boz, 2019; Servidio & Ruffolo, 2016).

1.6.4 Customer Experience and Guest Satisfaction in Hotels

Customer experience (CX) is a key determinant of guest satisfaction and loyalty in the hotel industry. Hotels that successfully meet or exceed customer expectations create memorable experiences that generate positive emotions and stronger evaluations of the hotel's services and brand (Kim & Moon, 2009; Slåtten & Mehmetoglu, 2011). Recent studies indicate that guests increasingly select hotels based on previous positive experiences rather than solely on factors such as price, quality, or convenience (Chapple et al., 2023). Khan and Rahman (2017) identified five major dimensions influencing hotel customer experience: hotel location, stay and ambience, staff competence, website and social media interactions, and guest-to-guest experiences. Expanding this perspective, Kim and So (2023) emphasize that customer experience extends across various hospitality and tourism services, including accommodation, food and beverage, tour operations, and leisure activities. These findings highlight the importance of designing emotionally engaging service experiences that enhance guest satisfaction and encourage long-term loyalty.

1.6.5 Factors Affecting Emotional Intelligence, Customer Experience, and Customer Loyalty

The effectiveness of emotional intelligence and the quality of customer experience in hotels are influenced by a combination of individual, organizational, and environmental factors. At the individual level, employees' communication skills, empathy, self-awareness, emotional regulation, personality, work experience, and professional competence significantly determine how effectively they interact with guests (Goleman, 1998; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Employees who possess strong emotional intelligence are more capable of managing stressful situations, resolving customer complaints, adapting to different guest personalities, and maintaining positive relationships even under work pressure (Koc & Boz, 2019). Organizational factors also play an essential role in developing emotional intelligence and improving guest experiences. Supportive leadership, continuous employee training,

organizational culture, teamwork, motivation, reward systems, and effective human resource practices encourage employees to demonstrate emotionally intelligent behaviours during service encounters. Hotels that invest in emotional intelligence training and customer-oriented organizational cultures often achieve higher service quality and stronger customer satisfaction. Furthermore, customer experience is influenced by several operational factors, including service quality, employee responsiveness, hotel ambience, cleanliness, safety, reliability, accessibility, technological facilities, and the overall physical environment (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Khan and Rahman (2017) identified hotel location, hotel ambience, staff competence, website and social media experience, and guest-to-guest interaction as major determinants of hotel customer experience. Kim and So (2023) further emphasized that accommodation quality, food and beverage services, leisure activities, and tourism-related services collectively shape customers' perceptions of hospitality experiences. External factors such as cultural differences, customer expectations, technological advancement, and competitive market conditions also influence how guests evaluate hotel services. These factors ultimately affect customer satisfaction, trust, perceived value, and emotional attachment, which determine whether customers become loyal to a hotel. According to Parasuraman et al. (1985), consistent service quality and meaningful employee–customer interactions increase customer confidence and long-term loyalty. Similarly, Arvanitis (2010) and Bian et al. (2019) argue that maintaining positive customer experiences through emotionally intelligent service delivery strengthens brand image, encourages repeat visits, and generates positive word-of-mouth recommendations. Consequently, understanding the various factors affecting emotional intelligence and customer experience is essential for hotel managers seeking to improve service quality, enhance guest satisfaction, and build sustainable customer loyalty. In the context of Pokhara's hospitality industry, these factors are particularly significant because hotels operate in a highly competitive tourism destination where personalized service and emotional connections with guests can create a lasting competitive advantage.

1.6.6 Influence of Cultural Practices in the Hospitality Industry

Cultural practices have a significant influence on the hospitality industry because they shape employees' behaviours, service delivery, communication styles,

and guests' expectations. The hospitality industry is characterized by frequent interactions between people from diverse cultural backgrounds, making cultural awareness and sensitivity essential for delivering high-quality services. According to Hofstede (2001), culture influences individuals' values, beliefs, attitudes, communication patterns, and behaviour's, all of which affect how service is delivered and perceived. Hotel employees who understand cultural differences are better able to adapt their communication, respect guests' customs and traditions, and provide personalized services that meet diverse customer expectations. In contrast, a lack of cultural awareness may result in misunderstandings, dissatisfaction, and poor service experiences. Therefore, cultural competence has become an important skill for hospitality employees working in increasingly global and multicultural tourism destinations.

In addition to national culture, organizational culture strongly influences hospitality operations by shaping employees' attitudes toward guests and service quality. Schein (2010) explains that organizational culture consists of shared values, beliefs, and norms that guide employees' behaviours within an organization. Hotels that foster a customer-oriented culture encourage employees to demonstrate respect, empathy, teamwork, professionalism, and emotional engagement during service encounters. Such organizational values motivate employees to provide consistent and personalized services, resulting in greater guest satisfaction and loyalty. Goleman (1998) also argues that emotionally intelligent organizations create positive work environments where employees are better able to manage emotions, collaborate with colleagues, and build meaningful relationships with customers. Consequently, the integration of organizational culture and emotional intelligence contributes to improved service quality and organizational performance.

Cultural practices also influence guests' perceptions of hospitality experiences. Different cultures have different expectations regarding greeting styles, communication, privacy, food preferences, cleanliness, time orientation, and customer service standards. Hospitality employees who recognize these cultural differences can customize their services according to guests' cultural needs, thereby creating memorable and satisfying experiences. Reisinger and Turner (2003) argue that understanding cultural diversity is essential for providing effective hospitality services because tourists evaluate service quality based on their own cultural values and expectations. Similarly, Koc and Boz (2019) emphasize that emotionally intelligent

employees are more capable of recognizing and responding to culturally influenced emotional expressions, allowing them to establish trust and stronger interpersonal relationships with guests.

In the Nepalese context, cultural hospitality practices are deeply rooted in the traditional philosophy of "Atithi Devo Bhava" (guests are regarded as gods), which emphasizes respect, kindness, generosity, and sincere care toward visitors. These cultural values encourage hotel employees to welcome guests warmly, provide personalized attention, and maintain courteous behaviour throughout the guest's stay. In major tourist destinations such as Pokhara, where hotels serve visitors from different countries and cultures, integrating local hospitality traditions with emotional intelligence enables employees to provide culturally sensitive and emotionally responsive services. Such practices enhance guest satisfaction, strengthen customer loyalty, generate positive word-of-mouth, and improve the competitiveness of hotels. Therefore, cultural practices influence not only employee behaviour but also customer experience, service quality, organizational reputation, and the long-term sustainability of hospitality businesses.

1.6.7 Operational and financial challenges in Hotel

The hospitality industry operates in a highly competitive and service-oriented environment where financial management and operational efficiency are critical for business sustainability. Hotels must balance the costs of maintaining service quality, employee development, and guest satisfaction while ensuring profitability. In tourist destinations such as Pokhara, hotels often face financial challenges due to seasonal fluctuations in tourist arrivals, increasing operational costs, and intense market competition. These financial constraints can limit investments in employee training programs, including emotional intelligence (EI) development initiatives that are essential for improving guest experiences.

Effective financial management enables hotels to allocate resources strategically toward staff development, customer service improvement, and technological advancement. According to Hayes and Ninemeier (2009), hotel managers must carefully manage revenues and expenses to maintain service quality and operational effectiveness. However, many hotels, particularly small and medium-sized establishments, struggle with budget limitations that affect their ability to

provide continuous training and professional development opportunities for employees. As a result, front desk staff may lack the emotional and interpersonal skills necessary to handle guest complaints, manage stress, and create positive guest experiences.

Operational challenges also significantly influence service delivery in hotels. Front desk employees are often required to manage multiple responsibilities simultaneously, including guest check-in and check-out procedures, reservation management, complaint handling, and communication with other departments. High workloads, staff shortages, long working hours, and employee turnover can create stress and emotional exhaustion among employees. According to Baum (2015), workforce-related challenges remain one of the most significant issues in the hospitality industry, affecting employee performance and customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, the tourism industry in Pokhara experiences seasonal demand variations, which create operational uncertainties for hotels. During peak tourist seasons, employees may face excessive workloads, while off-seasons can lead to reduced revenue and staffing adjustments. Such conditions may negatively affect employee morale, emotional well-being, and service quality. Emotional intelligence becomes particularly important in these situations because it helps employees regulate emotions, manage workplace stress, and maintain positive interactions with guests despite operational pressures.

Research suggests that emotionally intelligent employees contribute to better customer service outcomes, stronger guest relationships, and increased customer loyalty (Goleman, 1998). However, the successful implementation of emotional intelligence practices requires organizational support, adequate financial resources, and effective operational management. Therefore, understanding the financial and operational challenges faced by hotels in Pokhara is essential for examining how emotional intelligence practices are developed, maintained, and utilized to enhance guest experiences.

1.6.8 Literature Gap

Although emotional intelligence (EI) has received considerable attention in hospitality research, most existing studies have been conducted in international or metropolitan contexts, where the primary focus has been on the relationship between

EI, customer satisfaction, service quality, employee performance, and organizational success. In Nepal, the available literature on emotional intelligence in the hospitality sector remains limited and is largely concentrated in Kathmandu-based hotels. As a result, there is insufficient understanding of how emotional intelligence is practiced and experienced in other major tourism destinations such as Pokhara. Furthermore, many previous studies have examined EI from a quantitative perspective, emphasizing training effectiveness, leadership, or overall service quality, while giving less attention to its practical application in front desk operations. Since front desk employees serve as the primary point of contact between hotels and guests, their ability to recognize, manage, and respond to emotions plays a crucial role in shaping guest perceptions and experiences. Therefore, a significant research gap exists in understanding how emotional intelligence is practiced by front desk staff and how these practices influence guest experiences in the context of Pokhara hotels.

This study addresses this gap by exploring the emotional intelligence practices of front desk employees in hotels located in Pokhara, one of Nepal's most prominent tourist destinations. Through an in-depth examination of employees' emotional interactions, communication styles, empathy, and emotional management strategies, the research seeks to understand how EI contributes to enhancing guest experiences. The findings are expected to provide context-specific insights that can support hotel managers in developing effective employee training programs, improving service delivery, and strengthening customer satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, the study will contribute to the growing body of hospitality literature by offering a localized understanding of emotional intelligence practices within Nepal's tourism and hospitality industry.

1.6.8 Conclusion

The body of research clearly shows that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in creating excellent guest experiences, particularly in front desk environments where emotional labour is ongoing. Employees that possess these abilities are better able to manage stress, settle disputes, and provide individualized guest experiences. Although these concepts are widely recognized in global hospitality research, their application in Nepal, particularly in Pokhara, remains underexplored. This study seeks to bridge that gap by analysing how front desk

employees use emotional intelligence in real hotel settings, contributing both to academic literature and practical improvements in service delivery.

1.7 Research Methodology

This chapter describes the methodical strategy used to look into how food and beverage service employees' and front desk employees' emotional intelligence (EI) improves the visitor experience in Pokhara hotels. The research design, data collection procedures, sampling strategy, data analysis methodologies, and ethical considerations are all explained in the methodology.

1.7.1 Research Design

This study uses a descriptive, case-study research design with a predominantly qualitative orientation, supported by a structured guest questionnaire, concentrating on a few Pokhara hotels. This design is well suited to investigating a context-driven phenomenon like emotional intelligence and its effect on guest service. The case-study approach allows an in-depth understanding of how emotional intelligence, as perceived by guests, shapes satisfaction, trust, and loyalty.

The research is both descriptive and exploratory: exploratory, because it investigates an under-researched application of EI in Pokhara's hotel sector; and descriptive, because it documents guest-reported patterns in employee behaviour that shape the guest experience.

1.7.2 Data Sourcing

Both primary and secondary sources provided data for this study:

Primary Sources: Direct observations and semi-structured interviews with food and beverage managers and employees at a few Pokhara hotels rated three stars and higher.

Secondary Sources: Books, journal articles, industry reports, and scholarly works on hotel operations, guest experience, and emotional intelligence.

1.7.3 Sampling/Sample Size

To choose individuals with a wealth of information, a purposive sampling technique is used.

- i. Units of Sampling: Hotel guests staying at 3-5-star hotels in Pokhara.
- ii. Sites for Sampling: Selected lakeside-area hotels in Pokhara and surrounding tourist destinations.
- iii. Size of Sample: 30 hotel guests, selected through purposive sampling to capture variation in age, gender, and purpose of visit.

1.7.4 Techniques for Gathering Data

1. Participant Observation: The researcher will observe hotel employees during their daily interactions with guests to understand how emotional intelligence is practiced in natural settings.
2. Structured Guest Questionnaire: A questionnaire combining closed-ended and one open-ended question was administered to 30 hotel guests to capture their perceptions of front-desk employees' emotional intelligence and its effect on their satisfaction and loyalty.
3. Informal Conversations: Casual discussions with staff during fieldwork will provide additional insights into workplace culture and emotional practices.
4. Field Notes: Brief observational notes made during on-site data collection to contextualize guest responses.
5. Document Review: Relevant documents such as hotel service policies, training manuals, and guest feedback reports will be reviewed to support the findings.
6. Triangulation: Data collected from observations, interviews, field notes, and documents will be compared to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research.

1.7.5 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, field notes, and document review will be analysed using thematic analysis. First, all interview recordings will be transcribed verbatim, and observation notes will be organized systematically. The researcher will then read the data repeatedly to become familiar with the content. Next, meaningful codes will be generated and grouped into broader categories based on similarities. These categories will be developed into

themes that reflect emotional intelligence practices, employee behaviours, guest experiences, and organizational culture in Pokhara hotels. Finally, the identified themes will be interpreted and supported with direct quotations from participants and observation findings to answer the research objectives.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, the study will use data triangulation by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, field notes, and documents. The researcher will also maintain a reflexive journal throughout the study to minimize personal bias and ensure credible interpretation of the data.

1.7.6 Ethical Consideration

All participants gave their informed consent after being informed of the goal of the study and their freedom to discontinue participation at any time.

Confidentiality: Transcripts and results were anonymized to protect participant identities and hotel names. Participation was entirely voluntary; no one was forced or offered incentives.

Bias Reduction: To reduce researcher bias and guarantee objective interpretation, reflexivity was used.

In conclusion, the case study design and selected qualitative technique offer a thorough look at how Pokhara's food and beverage service employees and front desk employees use emotional intelligence to raise customer happiness. The study intends to provide significant insights into human-centric services design in Nepal's hotel industry using purposive sampling, extensive data collection techniques, and thematic analysis.

CHAPTER II

FINDING

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on interviews, participant observations, field notes, and guest responses collected from selected hotels in Pokhara. The data were analysed using thematic analysis to explore how emotional intelligence is practiced by hotel employees and how these practices influence guest experiences. Five major themes emerged from the analysis: Emotional Intelligence Practices during Guest Interactions, Emotional Intelligence and Guest Satisfaction, Emotional Intelligence and Guest Loyalty, Challenges in Practising Emotional Intelligence, and Strategies for Strengthening Emotional Intelligence in Hotel Services. Each theme is supported by quotations from participants, observations made during fieldwork, and interpretations linked with relevant literature. To maintain confidentiality, participants are identified using pseudonyms.

2.1 Profile of the Participants

Thirty hotel guests participated in this study. The participants represented different genders, age groups, and travel purposes. Most participants were visiting Pokhara for leisure, while others were travelling for business. Their diverse backgrounds provided a broad understanding of how guests perceived emotional intelligence practices in hotel services. During the fieldwork, the researcher also observed front office employees while they interacted with guests during check-in, check-out, complaint handling, and general service encounters. These observations complemented the interview data and helped provide a comprehensive understanding of emotional intelligence practices in the selected hotels.

2.2 Emotional Intelligence Practices during Guest Interactions

The first theme that emerged from the interviews was emotional intelligence practices during guest interactions. Both hotel guests and front office employees explained that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in creating positive guest experiences. Participants consistently described warm greetings, empathy, patience, active listening, and respectful communication as essential behaviours that

strengthened relationships between employees and guests. Although participants shared different experiences, they agreed that emotionally intelligent service helped guests feel welcomed, respected, and comfortable throughout their stay.

2.2.1 Warm Greetings and Positive First Impressions

Participants consistently explained that the first interaction between hotel employees and guests strongly influenced their overall hotel experience. Most guests believed that a warm greeting, friendly smile, and respectful communication created a positive first impression and made them feel comfortable immediately after arriving at the hotel. Suman, a 21-year-old guest, at Poka Hotel, shared "The receptionist welcomed me with a genuine smile and greeted me politely. After travelling for several hours, I immediately felt relaxed and comfortable." Similarly, Srijana, another guest at the same hotel, opined "The staff welcomed me warmly and explained the check-in process clearly. Their friendly attitude made me feel that I had chosen the right hotel." Likewise, Sarita, a Front Office Employee, stated, "The first impression is very important. We always try to welcome every guest with a smile and polite greetings because guests should feel respected from the moment they enter the hotel."

Based on my observation, warm greetings are an important part of emotional intelligence in hotel service. During the observation, employees welcomed guests with smiles, polite communication, and eye contact, creating a positive first impression. These behaviours reflect empathy and effective communication, which help guests feel comfortable and valued.

2.2.2 Empathy and Understanding Guests' Needs

Another important aspect of emotional intelligence identified by participants was empathy. Guests appreciated employees who listened carefully, understood their concerns, and responded patiently to their requests. Participants believed that empathy made them feel valued and respected rather than treated as ordinary customers. Sita, a 34 years old guest, at Pokhara hotel said "When I asked about changing my room because of the noise, the receptionist listened patiently and solved the problem without making me feel uncomfortable." Similarly, another guest named Sarita explained to the front staff, "The staff understood that I was travelling with my elderly

parents. They offered additional assistance without us asking, which showed genuine care." Likewise, Sunita, a Front Office Employee, expressed, "Every guest has different expectations. Sometimes guests are tired or frustrated after travelling. We first listen carefully before responding because understanding their feelings helps us provide better service."

On the basis of my observations, empathy is one of the strongest emotional intelligence competencies demonstrated by hotel employees. During observation, employees were seen listening attentively to guest concerns, responding politely, and showing patience when answering repeated questions. Employees avoided interrupting guests and maintained respectful communication even when handling complaints. Such behaviours reflect emotional awareness and emotional regulation, which are essential elements of emotional intelligence. The findings support Salovey and Mayer (1990), who describe empathy as the ability to recognize and understand the emotions of others. Likewise, Goleman (1998) argues that empathetic employees are better able to establish trust and improve customer satisfaction through emotionally responsive service.

2.2.3 Active Listening and Effective Communication

Participants also emphasized the importance of active listening and clear communication during their interactions with hotel employees. Guests appreciated staff who listened attentively, explained hotel services clearly, and communicated respectfully throughout their stay. Bikash, a 24-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, reported, "Whenever I had questions, the receptionist listened carefully before answering. They explained everything clearly, which made me feel confident." Similarly, Anisha, a 27-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, expressed, "The staff communicated politely and always confirmed whether I needed additional assistance before ending the conversation." Likewise, Ramesh, a Front Office Employee, explained, "Good communication helps us understand what guests actually need. We try to listen first and then provide the most suitable solution."

On the Basis of my observations, effective communication strengthens emotional connections between employees and guests. Throughout the observation period, employees consistently used polite language, maintained positive facial expressions, and provided guests with clear information regarding hotel services and

local attractions. Active listening allowed employees to understand guests' concerns more accurately and respond appropriately. These findings suggest that communication skills are closely linked with emotional intelligence because they encourage trust, reduce misunderstandings, and improve service quality. Koc and Boz (2019) argue that emotionally intelligent employees communicate more effectively because they can recognize emotional cues and adjust their responses according to guests' needs. These findings also support Goleman's (1998) view that communication and social skills are essential dimensions of emotional intelligence in hospitality service.

Conclusion

Overall, participants consistently described emotional intelligence as an essential component of successful guest interactions. Warm greetings, empathy, active listening, and respectful communication were identified as the behaviours that most positively influenced guests' first impressions and overall experiences. Observation findings further confirmed that employees who demonstrated emotionally intelligent behaviours created welcoming environments, built stronger relationships with guests, and enhanced service quality. These findings indicate that emotional intelligence forms the foundation of positive guest interactions and contributes significantly to delivering high-quality hospitality services in Pokhara hotels.

2.3 Emotional Intelligence and Guest Satisfaction

The second theme that emerged from the interviews was the influence of emotional intelligence on guest satisfaction. Participants consistently explained that emotionally intelligent employees created positive experiences by demonstrating empathy, professionalism, patience, and respectful communication. Guests believed that when employees understood their needs and responded appropriately, they felt more comfortable, appreciated, and satisfied with the services they received. Front office employees also acknowledged that emotional intelligence helped them establish positive relationships with guests and contributed to higher levels of guest satisfaction.

2.3.1 Building Guest Trust Through Emotionally Intelligent Behaviour

Participants explained that trust developed when hotel employees communicated honestly, behaved respectfully, and fulfilled guests' requests professionally. Guests emphasized that emotionally intelligent employees created a sense of confidence that encouraged them to rely on hotel staff whenever they needed assistance. Srijan, a 25-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, shared, "Whenever I had a question, the receptionist answered honestly and politely. Their behaviour made me trust the staff throughout my stay." Similarly, Nisha, a 30-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, stated, "The employees treated every guest with respect and handled our requests professionally. I felt comfortable asking them for help because they seemed trustworthy." Likewise, Sunita, a Front Office Employee, explained, "Guests trust us when we communicate honestly and solve their problems sincerely. Even if we cannot solve an issue immediately, we explain the situation politely and keep the guest informed."

On the Basis of My Observations, honest and respectful communication helps build guest trust. During the observation, employees responded calmly to guest inquiries and provided professional assistance, making guests feel comfortable and confident. These behaviours reflect empathy and reliability, supporting the views of Parasuraman et al. (1985) and Goleman (1998), who emphasized that trustworthy and emotionally intelligent service strengthens guest relationships.

2.3.2 Emotional Intelligence and Overall Guest Satisfaction

Participants described emotionally intelligent service as an essential element that enhanced their overall experience during their stay at the hotel. Guests believed that kindness, patience, empathy, and positive communication contributed significantly to their satisfaction during their stay. Anita, a 29-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, stated, "The hotel facilities were good, but what impressed me most was the behaviour of the staff. They were always friendly, patient, and willing to help." Similarly, Rohit, a 34-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, explained, "Whenever I interacted with the employees, they remained polite and respectful. Their attitude made my stay enjoyable." Likewise, Priya, a Front Office Employee, shared, "Guest satisfaction depends not only on facilities but also on how guests feel during their stay. We always try to understand their expectations and provide personalized service."

On the Basis of my Observations, emotional intelligence enhances guest satisfaction through respectful communication, patience, and personalized service. During the observation, employees interacted politely and attentively with guests, creating a positive service experience. These findings support Kim and Moon (2009), who emphasized the importance of emotionally engaging service, and Chotisarn and Phuthong (2025), who identified emotional intelligence as a key factor in improving guest satisfaction.

2.3.3 Emotional Intelligence and Positive Guest Experiences

Participants frequently described emotionally intelligent behaviour as an important factor in creating memorable experiences that extended beyond routine hotel services. Guests appreciated employees who demonstrated genuine care, personalized attention, and a willingness to exceed their expectations. Kiran, a 32-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, shared, "One evening I asked for recommendations about local places to visit. The receptionist not only explained everything but also marked the locations on a map. That personal attention made my trip much easier." Similarly, Pooja, a 26-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, stated, "The employees remembered my name and always greeted me whenever I entered the hotel. It made me feel valued rather than treated like just another customer." Likewise, Suresh, a Front Office Employee, explained, "We try to create memorable experiences because small acts of kindness often leave a lasting impression on guests."

On the basis of my observations, emotionally intelligent service creates memorable guest experiences through empathy, professionalism, and personalized care. During the observation, employees were seen offering personalized assistance and interacting warmly with guests. These behaviours enhance guest satisfaction and support the findings of Kim and So (2023) and Goleman (1998), who emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence in building positive guest relationships.

Conclusion

Overall, participants consistently agreed that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in enhancing guest satisfaction. Honest communication, empathy, patience, professionalism, and personalized attention helped guests develop trust and enjoy

positive experiences throughout their stay. Observation findings further confirmed that emotionally intelligent employees created welcoming and supportive service environments that strengthened guest satisfaction. These findings demonstrate that emotional intelligence is an important factor in improving service quality and delivering memorable hospitality experiences in Pokhara hotels.

2.4 Emotional Intelligence and Guest Loyalty

The third theme that emerged from the interviews was the relationship between emotional intelligence and guest loyalty. Participants consistently explained that emotionally intelligent behaviour encouraged guests to revisit the hotel and recommend it to others. Guests emphasized that positive interactions with hotel employees often influenced their decision to return more than the hotel's physical facilities. Front office employees also believed that establishing emotional connections with guests was essential for building long-term relationships and encouraging repeat business.

2.4.1 Positive Employee Behaviour and Repeat Visits

Participants consistently highlighted that emotionally intelligent behaviour encouraged guests to return to the same hotel during future visits to Pokhara. Guests believed that employees who demonstrated kindness, respect, and professionalism created memorable experiences that strengthened their intention to revisit the hotel. Ramesh, a 30-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, shared, "I would definitely stay at this hotel again because the staff treated me with genuine respect. Their behaviour made me feel comfortable throughout my stay." Similarly, Binita, a 27-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, explained, "The service was excellent because the employees were always friendly and approachable. Their attitude made me feel welcome, and I would happily return to this hotel." Likewise, Anjali, a Front Office Employee, stated, "We believe that satisfied guests will return. That is why we always try to treat every guest politely and make them feel valued during their stay."

On the basis of my observations, emotionally intelligent behaviour encourages repeat visits by creating positive relationships with guests. During the observation, employees warmly greeted returning guests and provided personalized service. These behaviours strengthened guest loyalty and supported the findings of

Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) and Goleman (1998), who emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence in building long-term customer relationships.

2.4.2 Emotional Connection and Guest Recommendation

Participants consistently highlighted that emotionally intelligent service not only encouraged repeat visits but also inspired guests to recommend the hotel to their family members, friends, and colleagues. Guests believed that sincere hospitality and personalized attention created memorable experiences worth sharing with others. Aashish, a 31-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, stated, "I have already recommended this hotel to my friends because the staff were extremely polite and helpful. Their behaviour made my stay enjoyable." Similarly, Roshani, a 25-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, shared, "When people ask me about hotels in Pokhara, I always recommend this hotel because of the excellent customer service." Likewise, Binita, a Front Office Employee, explained, "Guests often thank us before they leave and tell us they will recommend our hotel. That makes us feel proud because good service creates good memories."

On the Basis of my observations, emotionally intelligent behaviour encourages positive word-of-mouth recommendations. During the observation, guests expressed appreciation for the employees' kindness and professionalism before checking out. These behaviours support the findings of Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) and Chotisarn and Phuthong (2025), who emphasized that emotionally intelligent service encourages guest recommendations and strengthens long-term customer relationships.

2.4.3 Emotional Intelligence as a Foundation for Long-Term Guest Relationships

Participants frequently described emotional intelligence as an essential factor in building meaningful relationships between guests and hotel employees. Rather than viewing hospitality as simply providing accommodation, participants emphasized that genuine care, empathy, and consistent communication fostered long-term relationships with guests. Prakash, a 36-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, explained, "The employees remembered my name every morning and always asked whether I needed anything. Those small gestures made me feel like a valued guest." Similarly, Sabina, a 29-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, stated, "I felt that the staff genuinely

cared about my comfort rather than simply doing their job. That experience will stay with me." Likewise, Suresh, a Front Office Employee, shared, "Building good relationships with guests is one of our priorities because loyal guests often return and become regular customers."

On the Basis of my Observations, emotional intelligence helps build long-term relationships with guests through personalized communication and genuine care. During the observation, employees warmly greeted returning guests and responded to their needs attentively. These behaviours strengthened guest trust and loyalty, supporting the findings of Goleman (1998) and Kandampully (2007), who emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence in developing lasting customer relationships.

Conclusion

Overall, participants consistently agreed that emotional intelligence contributes significantly to guest loyalty within the hospitality industry. Friendly communication, empathy, respect, and personalized service encouraged guests to revisit the hotel and recommend it to others. Observation findings further confirmed that emotionally intelligent employees established stronger emotional connections with guests through genuine care and professional behaviour. These findings indicate that emotional intelligence is not only important for enhancing immediate guest satisfaction but also serves as a strategic tool for developing long-term customer loyalty and strengthening the reputation of hotels in Pokhara.

2.5 Challenges in Practising Emotional Intelligence

The fourth theme that emerged from the interviews was the challenges employees faced while practising emotional intelligence. Although participants acknowledged the importance of empathy and positive communication, they explained that maintaining emotionally intelligent behaviour was sometimes difficult during busy working hours. Heavy workloads, demanding guests, and time pressure occasionally affected their ability to provide personalized attention.

2.5.1 Workload and Managing Guest Expectations

Participants commonly reported that busy periods made it challenging for hotel employees to provide every guest with the same level of emotional attention.

Employees acknowledged that they always strived to remain polite and professional, even while managing multiple responsibilities. Anjali, a Front Office Employee, shared, "During peak seasons, we have many guests arriving at the same time. It becomes challenging to give everyone enough time, but we still try to remain calm and helpful." Similarly, Manoj, a 38-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, stated, "The staff were polite, but during busy hours they seemed under pressure, so sometimes I had to wait longer for assistance."

On the basis of my observations, operational challenges can influence the consistent practice of emotional intelligence. During the observation period, employees were seen handling several guest requests simultaneously, particularly during check-in and check-out hours. Despite these challenges, most employees remained respectful and professional. These findings indicate that while emotional intelligence is important, organizational factors such as workload and staffing levels also influence service delivery. Similar findings were reported by Goleman (1998), who emphasized that emotional regulation becomes more challenging under workplace stress.

2.5.2 Maintaining Emotional Control

Participants frequently emphasized that remaining calm while handling complaints or dissatisfied guests required patience, emotional control, and professionalism. Employees believed that managing their emotions helped prevent conflicts and maintain positive relationships with guests. Rita, a Front Office Employee, stated, "Sometimes guests become upset because of situations beyond our control. We stay calm, listen carefully, and try to solve the problem politely." Similarly, Dinesh, a 35-year-old guest at Pokhara Hotel, explained, "I appreciated that the receptionist remained patient even when another guest was complaining loudly."

on the basis of my Observations, emotional self-regulation is an essential aspect of hospitality service. Observation showed that employees generally remained composed while handling complaints and responded professionally despite difficult situations. This behaviour reflects one of the key competencies of emotional intelligence and contributes to maintaining positive guest experiences.

Conclusion: Overall, participants agreed that practising emotional intelligence is not always easy, particularly during busy periods and challenging

service situations. However, employees believed that patience, emotional control, and professional communication enabled them to overcome these challenges and continue providing quality service to guests.

2.6 Main Findings

2.6.1 Hotel employees demonstrated emotional intelligence during guest interactions.

The study found that hotel employees demonstrated emotional intelligence through warm greetings, empathy, active listening, and respectful communication. These behaviours helped create positive first impressions and made guests feel welcomed and valued.

2.6.2 Emotional intelligence enhanced guest satisfaction.

The findings showed that emotionally intelligent behaviours, including patience, empathy, and personalized service, contributed to higher guest satisfaction. Guests appreciated employees who treated them with care and professionalism.

2.6.3 Emotional intelligence encouraged guest loyalty.

The study found that friendly communication and personalized service encouraged guests to revisit the hotel and recommend it to others. Positive interactions helped build trust and strengthen guest loyalty.

2.6.4 Employees faced challenges in practising emotional intelligence.

Participants explained that busy working hours, heavy workloads, and demanding situations sometimes made it difficult to provide consistent emotional support. However, employees continued to maintain professional and respectful service.

2.6.5 Continuous training strengthened emotional intelligence.

The findings indicated that regular training, teamwork, and supportive management helped improve employees' emotional intelligence and service quality. Participants believed these practices would further enhance guest experiences.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings indicate that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in enhancing guest experiences in Pokhara hotels. Participants consistently emphasized that warm greetings, empathy, active listening, respectful communication, and personalized service contributed to guest satisfaction and loyalty. Although employees faced challenges such as heavy workloads and busy working hours, they continued to demonstrate professionalism and emotional awareness while serving guests. Participants also highlighted the importance of regular training, teamwork, and organizational support in strengthening emotional intelligence and improving the quality of hospitality service.

2.6.6 Summary

"An Ethnographic Study of Emotional Intelligence Practices to Enhance Guest Experience in Pokhara Hotels" was conducted to examine how emotional intelligence (EI) is practiced by hotel employees and how it contributes to improving guest experiences in selected hotels in Pokhara. The hospitality industry is highly dependent on interpersonal relationships, making employees' emotional competencies an important factor in delivering quality service. Since hotel employees interact continuously with guests from different backgrounds, emotional intelligence plays a significant role in creating positive customer experiences and maintaining long-term relationships.

The study adopted a qualitative ethnographic research design because it allowed the researcher to understand employees' emotional behaviours within their actual working environment. Information was collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, informal discussions, field notes, and document review. Both primary and secondary sources were used to obtain comprehensive information regarding emotional intelligence practices in the hospitality industry. The collected information was analysed through thematic analysis to identify common patterns and themes related to emotional intelligence and guest experiences.

The findings indicate that emotional intelligence is an important element of service delivery in Pokhara hotels. Most guests reported that employees welcomed them politely, communicated respectfully, showed empathy, and responded positively

to their requests and concerns. These behaviours helped guests feel comfortable, respected, and emotionally connected with the hotel. The study also found that employees who demonstrated emotional intelligence were more successful in resolving guest problems, maintaining professional behaviour during difficult situations, and creating memorable hospitality experiences.

Another important finding is that emotional intelligence has a direct influence on guest satisfaction and customer loyalty. Guests who experienced friendly and emotionally supportive service expressed greater satisfaction with the hotel and showed stronger intentions to revisit and recommend the hotel to others. Positive communication, empathy, patience, and professionalism were identified as the major emotional intelligence competencies contributing to customer loyalty. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence provides hotels with a competitive advantage by strengthening customer relationships and enhancing the hotel's reputation.

However, the research also identified several challenges affecting emotional intelligence practices. Employees often experienced stress due to staff shortages, high workloads, and increased responsibilities during busy tourism seasons. These operational difficulties sometimes reduced their ability to provide personalized emotional support to every guest. Participants therefore emphasized the need for continuous emotional intelligence training, supportive leadership, and improved organizational practices to maintain high service standards.

Overall, the study demonstrates that emotional intelligence is not merely an individual characteristic but an organizational asset that improves service quality, customer satisfaction, employee performance, and business sustainability. Investing in emotional intelligence development can therefore help hotels in Pokhara strengthen their competitive position within Nepal's growing tourism industry.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Conclusion

This study concludes that emotional intelligence has become an essential component of effective hotel management and service delivery. Employees who possess emotional competencies such as empathy, self-awareness, emotional regulation, motivation, and interpersonal communication are better able to understand guests' expectations and provide services that exceed customer expectations. As hospitality services rely heavily on direct human interaction, emotional intelligence enables employees to create welcoming environments, resolve conflicts effectively, and establish meaningful relationships with guests.

The findings clearly indicate that guests highly value emotional aspects of service in addition to physical facilities and technical efficiency. Friendly greetings, respectful communication, personalized attention, active listening, and genuine concern for guest well-being significantly improve customer satisfaction and create memorable hotel experiences. Such emotionally positive interactions encourage repeat visits, increase customer trust, strengthen hotel reputation, and generate positive recommendations among travellers.

The study also reveals that although emotional intelligence is generally practiced successfully in Pokhara hotels, maintaining consistent emotional performance remains challenging under conditions of staff shortages, heavy workloads, and seasonal business fluctuations. These operational pressures affect employees' emotional well-being and reduce opportunities for personalized guest interactions. Consequently, emotional intelligence should be supported not only through individual effort but also through organizational policies that promote employee well-being, teamwork, motivation, and continuous learning.

Furthermore, emotional intelligence should be recognized as a strategic management tool rather than simply a personal characteristic. Hotels that invest in emotional intelligence training, supportive leadership, and customer-centered organizational culture are more likely to improve service quality, increase employee satisfaction, strengthen guest loyalty, and achieve sustainable business growth. Therefore, integrating emotional intelligence into hotel management practices will

contribute significantly to enhancing the overall competitiveness of Pokhara's hospitality industry.

3.2 Recommendations

1. Provide Regular Emotional Intelligence Training

Hotels should organize regular training programs on emotional intelligence, customer service, and communication skills. These programs should focus on developing empathy, self-awareness, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution so that employees can handle guest interactions more effectively.

2. Create a Supportive Organizational Culture

Hotel management should promote a positive work environment that encourages teamwork, respect, open communication, and employee motivation. A supportive organizational culture will help employees perform confidently and provide better emotional support to guests.

3. Ensure Adequate Staffing and Workload Management

Hotels should maintain sufficient staffing levels, particularly during peak tourist seasons, to reduce employee stress and workload. Proper workforce planning will allow employees to provide more personalized and attentive service to guests.

4. Integrate Emotional Intelligence into Human Resource Practices

Emotional intelligence should be considered during recruitment, employee orientation, performance appraisal, and promotion. Selecting and developing emotionally competent employees will improve service quality and guest satisfaction.

5. Strengthen Guest Feedback Systems

Hotels should regularly collect guest feedback through surveys, online reviews, and suggestion systems. Management should analyze this feedback to identify service gaps and make continuous improvements in customer service.

6. Promote Employee Well-being

Hotels should provide a healthy working environment by reducing workplace stress, offering counselling when necessary, and recognizing employees' achievements. Employees with better emotional well-being are more likely to deliver excellent hospitality services.

7. Enhance Leadership and Supervisory Skills

Managers and supervisors should practice emotionally intelligent leadership by

supporting employees, providing constructive feedback, and encouraging teamwork. Effective leadership creates a positive workplace culture and improves employee performance.

8. Improve Cross-Cultural Communication Skills

Since Pokhara welcomes both domestic and international tourists, hotels should train employees to understand different cultures, communication styles, and guest expectations. This will help employees provide more personalized and culturally sensitive services.

9. Invest in Continuous Employee Development

Hotel management should allocate sufficient resources for professional development through workshops, seminars, and hospitality training programs. Continuous learning will improve employees' technical knowledge and emotional competencies.

10. Encourage Future Research

Future researchers should conduct similar studies using larger samples, different categories of hotels, and mixed research methods. Comparative studies in different tourism destinations of Nepal would provide a broader understanding of emotional intelligence practices in the hospitality industry.

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APPENDIX

Guest Questionnaire

1. What is your age group?

☐ Under 25 ☐ 25–30 ☐ 30–40 ☐ Above 40

2. How would you rate the emotional intelligence of front desk staff (e.g.,
behaviour,
calmness, empathy)?

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Average ☐ Poor

3. Did you feel emotionally understood or valued during your stay?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. In your words, what impressed or disappointed you about the front office
staff?

5. Do you believe staff with high emotional intelligence provide better
service?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. What suggestion would you give to improve the emotional connection
between
staff and guests?

Interview Questions for hotel employees

1. How do you welcome guests?

2. How do you build trust with guests?

3. How do you identify guests' emotional needs?
4. What communication techniques do you use?
5. How do you create a memorable guest experience?
6. What should management do to improve emotional intelligence?
7. How can hotels improve guest experience?
8. What organizational changes would benefit employees?