THE EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF COMMERCIAL BANKS IN GHANA: THE MEDIATION ROLE OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING, SERVICE QUALITY, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT: *This study examines the effect of emotional intelligence on financial performance of commercial banks in Ghana from the perspective of the mediation role of relationship marketing, service quality and customer satisfaction. It goes further to indicate the relative impacts of these mediating variables on financial performance. A complete picture of the monetary effects of investing in the enhancement of employees' emotional intelligence is hence the core of this paper. The study is a descriptive quantitative study in which a sample of 220 each of service providers and customers in 20 commercial banks in Ghana are used. Pearson's correlation test, partial correlation test and ordinary least squares regression analysis were used to analyse data. According to findings, emotional intelligence positively relates to relationship marketing (r = .804, p = .000), service quality (r = .601, p = .000), customer satisfaction (r = .426, p = .000) and financial performance (r = .734, p = .000). Emotional intelligence also significantly predicts relationship marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction and financial performance by contributing 64.7%, 63.2%, 23.2% and 32% of the variance respectively. It is made evident that relationship marketing provides the most dominant mediation in the relationship between emotional intelligence and financial performance in the face of service quality and customer satisfaction. Commercial banks are therefore encouraged to deploy resources towards equipping their service providers with emotional intelligence.*

KEYWORDS: Emotional intelligence, relationship marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction, financial performance, banks, service providers

INTRODUCTION

In view of the global economic recession and heightened competition in the global banking industry, it is indisputable that managements of banks seek to identify and leverage outstanding service delivery strategies. According to Rahim & Malik (2010), managements of commercial banks, on a global scale, have been responsive to increasing market competition and potential revenue declines by taking services to the doorsteps of customers and offering tailor-made baking products. In addition, absolute focus on existing customers is identified by banks as a primary success strategy in achieving customer satisfaction (Rahim & Malik, 2010; Hashem, 2010), which is the basis of customer retention and financial growth (Hashem, 2010). In other words, the financial performance of banks is based on how well customers perceive services delivered by banks, where banks deliver services using strategies of relationship marketing.

Services are offered in the light of relationship marketing strategies (Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011). Moreover, relationship marketing is seen as a more suitable framework of strategies in serving customers in the banking sector (Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011; Hashem, 2010). Research studies have shown that relationship marketing positively influences service quality perceptions of customers (Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011). Moreover, a good number of theoretical studies have indicated that relationship marketing is the basis of customers' service quality perceptions in the banking industry (Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011; Rahim & Malik, 2010; Hashem, 2010). Interestingly, however, the influence of relationship marketing (RM) on customers service quality perceptions is powered by service providers' emotional intelligence (Danquah & Wireko, 2014; Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011; Rahim & Malik, 2010; Hashem, 2010).

Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined as the ability to identify, assess and control the emotions of oneself, of others and of groups (Harms & Credé, 2010). It is defined by Salovey & Mayer (1997) as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 18). This definition was later modified by Mayer *et al.* (2001) to "the ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotions and to regulate emotions towards personal growth" (p. 233). Other modern definitions and concepts of emotional intelligence are influenced by the above definitions and the works of Goleman (1995).

As acknowledged earlier, services of banking are received through relationships of service providers (e.g. relationship personnel, tellers, etc.) and customers. It is empirically justified that the expected effect of the relationship between the service provider and customer is largely contributed by the emotional intelligence demonstrated by the service provider (Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011; Rahim & Malik, 2010; Hashem, 2010), and sometimes the customer (Kenbach & Schutte, 2005). Since the bank has little control over its customers' EI, emphasis has been laid by researchers on the emotional intelligence of service providers of banks. Moreover, empirical studies show that the EI of the service provider can lead to the expected service quality perception of the customer without the customer's demonstration of EI (Kenbach & Schutte, 2005; Rahim & Malik, 2010; Hashem, 2010). Apart from the basic relationship between emotional intelligence and customers' service quality perceptions (Kim, 2010), research has also shown that the influence of EI is extended to customer satisfaction (Kenbach & Schutte, 2005; Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011; Danquah & Wireko, 2014), customer loyalty (Danquah, 2014a; Kim, 2010); and financial performance (Danquah, 2014a; Rehman *et al.* 2012).

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Empirical studies of Danquah (2014b) and Rehman *et al.* (2012) similarly indicate that the effects of RM, service quality and customer satisfaction on financial performance of service firms reduce or become insignificant when EI is treated as a covariate. This practically means that RM, service quality and customer satisfaction provides mediation in the relationship between EI and financial performance. Thus, for banks to make financial progress RM must provide a medium for service providers to demonstrate their EIs in serving customers, and this must lead to customers' service quality perception and satisfaction to impact financial performance. As much as EI influences the effectiveness of RM, service quality and customer satisfaction (Danquah 2014b; and Rehman *et al.* 2012), EI also needs the mediation of RM, service quality and customer satisfaction in its relationship with financial performance. However, there is little evidence to this causality phenomenon.

Currently, no identifiable research has been conducted to examine the effect of EI on RM, service quality, customer satisfaction and financial performance of service firms while assessing the mediation of RM, service quality and customer satisfaction in the EI and financial performance relationship at the same time. It is believed that a research of this kind would give much strength to the current literature available on the subject. Though culture and other demographic variables have been found to significantly influence the effect of EI on service quality and financial performance (Danquah, 2014b; Rouhani, 2008; Fernández-Berrocal *et al.* 2012), the number of studies upholding this evidence is small. Moreover, EI research has less been conducted on the banking sector, one of the most dominant service sectors in the world.

In view of the above-mentioned gaps in the current body of researches on EI, the author seeks to provide empirical evidence on the relationship between EI and RM, service quality, customer satisfaction and financial performance while assessing the mediation of RM, service quality and customer satisfaction in the EI and financial performance relationship.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to assess the effect of EI on RM, service quality, customer satisfaction and financial performance while assessing the mediation of RM, service quality and customer satisfaction in the EI and financial performance relationship.

This study provides a complete understanding of the relevance of emotional intelligence to effective relationship marketing and achieving expected service quality, customer satisfaction and financial performance. The study contributes a quota to enhancing the limited level of academic debate on the subject from an African perspective and provides suggestions for future research work in the subject area.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Relationship marketing has been considered both at the levels of theory and empirical studies as the basis of customer relationship management in service organisations (Porcu *et al.* 2012). In the financial sector, banks largely deliver services through relationship marketing or personal selling (Porcu *et al.* 2012; Manisha, 2012). As a result, business performance is practically an outcome of relationship marketing and personal selling practices in the financial services sector (Porcu *et al.* 2012). The effectiveness of personal selling and relationship marketing in banks' service delivery is impacted by service providers' competences and communications (Manisha, 2012). Moreover, service providers' competences and skills are largely made up of emotional intelligence (Hashem, 2011; Kenbach & Shutte, 2005).

The performance of relationship employees of banks and how it impacts service quality, customer satisfaction and organisational performance is underpinned by Goleman's (1995) model of mixed emotional intelligence. It argues that emotional competences are not innate talents; rather they can be learned. This implies that people can be trained to acquire emotional intelligence. Similarly, some personal experiences and education equip people or service providers with emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Khalili, 2011). Meanwhile Goleman's (1995) model argues that emotional intelligence needs to be demonstrated by service providers if it must enhance service delivery or customers' service quality perceptions. This means that service providers who have EI but are unable to demonstrate it cannot impact customers' service quality perception. Though the credibility of Goleman's (1995) model has been challenged from different conceptual standpoints (Mayer *et al.*, 2001), it remains the most acceptable derivative for understanding the dynamics of business relationships, especially when supported with the works of Mayer *et al.* (2001) and Boyatzis *et al.* (1998).

The model of Goleman (1995) was modified to consist of five main EI constructs or elements by him. These five constructs are explained by Goleman (1995) and Yaghoubi *et al.* (2011) in the context of customer service delivery as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

Boyatzis *et al.* (1998) later reduced the above five constructs to four, namely self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness and social skill. The model of the five constructs came with 25 emotional and social competences. The four constructs model, made up of 19 emotional competences, has become the modern framework of measuring EI (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).

The original works of Goleman (1995), Mayer *et al.* (2001) and Boyatzis *et al.* (1998) converge at a common knowledge of the relevance of emotional intelligence in service delivery. Apart from the general belief that emotional intelligence helps service providers to serve customers satisfactorily, this knowledge has been confirmed empirically in different dimensions. Firstly, empirical studies such as those of Yaghoubi *et al.* (2011), Rahim & Malik (2010) and Hashem (2010) confirm the most basic relationship, which has to do with the positive influence of EI on RM. In addition, another group of studies indicate that service providers' EI positively affects customers' service quality perceptions or simply service quality (Danquah, 2014b; Komlosi, 2013; Kenbach & Schutte, 2005). Empirical evidences also point to the positive effect of EI on customer satisfaction (Kenbach & Schutte, 2005; Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011; Danquah & Wireko, 2014). Another batch of studies indicates that EI positively influences financial performance of organisations (Danquah, 2014a; Rehman *et al.* 2012). In the relationship between EI and financial performance, RM, service quality and customer satisfaction serve as mediating variables (Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011; Danquah, 2014a). The final dimension of the influence of EI on RM is the effects of elements of culture and demographics of service providers. In this respect, Danquah (2014b), Fernández-Berrocal *et al.* (2012) and other researchers found that the effect of EI on service quality is affected by the majority of the elements of culture, gender and other demographic variables. In Table 1 is a summary of the dimensions of the effect of EI on RM or/and financial performance, where Figure 1 is a conceptualisation of these effects.

Table 1: Dimensions of the Effect of EI on RM and Financial Performance

	Dimension	Author(s)
1	EI & Relationship Marketing	Yaghoubi *et al.* (2011), Rahim & Malik (2010); Hashem (2010)
2	EI & Service Quality	Danquah, (2014b); Komlosi, (2013); Kenbach & Schutte, (2005)
3	EI & Customer satisfaction	Kenbach & Schutte, (2005); Yaghoubi *et al.* (2011); Danquah & Wireko, (2014); Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi (2014)
4	EI & Financial performance	Danquah, (2014a); Rehman *et al.* (2012)
5	EI & Cultural and demographic moderators	Danquah (2014b), Fernández-Berrocal *et al.* (2012)

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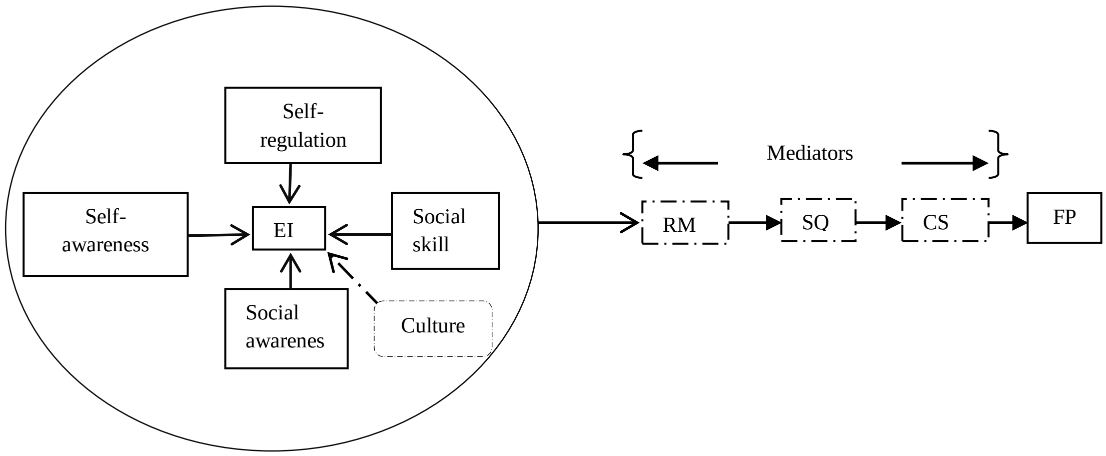
Figure 1: Conceptualisation of the Relationship between EI and Financial Performance: With Primary and Secondary Moderators



KEY: EI – Emotional intelligence; RM – Relationship marketing; SQ – Service quality; CS – Customer satisfaction; FP – Financial Performance

Based on evidences in Table 1 and Figure 1, the following alternative hypotheses are tested in this study at 5% significance level:

H_1: Relationship marketing is positively influenced by service providers' emotional intelligence in the banking sector of Ghana.

H_2: Service quality is positively influenced by service providers' emotional intelligence in the banking sector of Ghana.

H_3: Customer satisfaction is positively influenced by service providers' emotional intelligence in the banking sector of Ghana.

H_4: Financial performance in terms of return on investment is positively influenced by service providers' emotional intelligence in the banking sector.

H_5: The influence of EI on RM is moderated by some demographics and elements of culture.

H_6: The influence of EI on financial performance is mediated by RM, service quality and customer satisfaction.

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METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive/quantitative research technique. The quantitative research technique constituted a platform for testing hypotheses, deducing reliability estimates for this study and ensuring rigor in using random sampling methods in generalising findings over the banking sector of Ghana.

The population of this study was customers and employees of 20 banks in Ghana. Though there were about 28 banks recognised by the Central Bank of Ghana, the researcher used data on 20 of them. The research was limited to 20 banks out of 28 as a result of the fact that data on business performance in terms of return on investment (ROI) were not accessible for all banks in the sector.

The specific population was made up of employees and customers who have been respectively working and banking with the 20 Ghanaian banks for at least five (5) years. Participating employees and customers with at least, five (5) years relationship experience with the banks were used to ensure that outcomes of measuring constructs were driven by ample experience and knowledge of participants, setting the foundation for data validity.

Participating employees were relationship officers or front desk staff members of the banks. Relationship employees and customers were used in this study owing to the fact that measurement of constructs of emotional intelligence, relationship marketing, service quality (i.e. outcome of service delivery) and customer satisfaction is based on perceptions of customers and behavioural patterns of employees' service delivery.

A sample size of 220 for each of employees and customers was chosen from the group of 20 participating banks. The sample size was reached using probability sampling methods, namely simple random and stratified sampling, which together allowed for generalizing findings over the Ghanaian banking sector. The determination of the sample size was informed by the theoretical sample size table of Krejcie & Morgan (1970).

A self-made questionnaire was used which tapped different measures like demographic information, culture and emotional intelligence and customer satisfaction. Banks' emotional intelligence acquired was measured by using a 25-item EI scale. The scale contained 5 factors that include intrapersonal skills (items 1-5), stress management (items 6-10), adaptability (items 11-15), general temperament (items 16-20) and interpersonal skills (items 21-25). Customer satisfaction and service quality were measured with customers' questionnaire, which was based on the Zeithml *et al.* (1990) Service Delivery scale. Both the EI and customer satisfaction questionnaires were reliable in the sense that their respective reliability coefficients obtained in SPSS were .872 and .866. Relationship marketing was measured using the Standard Questionnaire of Bennet (2005).

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In data collection, customers (of the sample) at the various banking premises were asked to respond to questionnaires after they had just been attended to by the participating relationship officers, after which employees were issued with questionnaires for completion. This strategy was to ensure that customers provided information based on their current experiences with service delivery. Employees were made to provide responses after customers had done so to avoid employees' self-favoured responses caused by their prior knowledge of the data collection exercise. As a result of the relatively small sample of respondents used and some ethical measures observed, a perfect response rate was reached in this study. With regard to banks' return on investment (ROI), secondary data were used for the period 2011-2013. These data were retrieved from the annual reports of participating banks for 2013.

As a result of its robustness, data analysis was done using SPSS. The first, second, third and fourth research hypotheses were analysed using Pearson's product moment correlation test and ordinary least squares regression. The fifth and sixth research hypotheses were tested using partial correlation test. These statistical tools were used owing to the fact that data used in this study were continuous and normally distributed. Moreover, each hypothesis testing is a form of relational analysis that requires relational inferential statistical tools. The Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality was used to verify the normality of continuous data in the face of the assumption that continuous data employed in this study were normally or approximately normally distributed.

RESULTS

At this stage, findings of this study are presented. Emphasis is laid on testing the six alternative hypotheses stated earlier. As a reminder, these hypotheses are tested with the assumption that continuous data employed are normally or approximately normally distributed. Table 1 comes with results of testing this assumption.

Table 2: Test of Data Normality

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Customer satisfaction	.212	220	.565
ROI	.565	220	.198
Emotional intelligence	.194	220	.653
Service quality	.117	208	.732
RM	.307	220	.365

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Table 2 shows results of the Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality of data. By principle, the null hypothesis of this test is that data associated with each variable in Table 1 is normally or approximately normally distributed. Using a level of significance of 5%, this hypothesis is confirmed for all variables: customer satisfaction (p = .565); ROI (p = .198); emotional intelligence (p = .653); service quality (p = .732) and RM (p = .365). Therefore, the assumption that continuous data employed in this study are normally or approximately normally distributed is satisfied. This provides a firm basis for making valid conclusions based on results of this study.

Table 2 contains results that address the first four research hypotheses of this study. For the sake of clarity, these hypotheses are restated as follows:

H_1: Relationship marketing is positively influenced by service providers' emotional intelligence in the banking sector of Ghana.

H_2: Service quality is positively influenced by service providers' emotional intelligence in the banking sector of Ghana.

H_3: Customer satisfaction is positively influenced by service providers' emotional intelligence in the banking sector of Ghana.

H_4: Financial performance in terms of return on investment is positively influenced by service providers' emotional intelligence in the banking sector.

Table 3: Correlations

		Emotional intelligence	Relationship marketing	Service quality	Customer Satisfaction	ROI
Emotional intelligence	Pearson Correlation	1	.804**	.601**	.426**	.734**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	220	220	220	220	220

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

Results of the four hypotheses restated are in Table 3. With respect to the first one, emotional intelligence is strongly positively related to relationship marking at 5% level of significance, r (220) = .804, p = .000. This means that as service providers demonstrate an increasing level of

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emotional intelligence, relationship marketing impacts better on customers at a high rate. In essence, effective relationships cannot be built with customers through service delivery without emotional intelligence.

Similarly, emotional intelligence is strongly positively related to service quality at 5% level of significance, r (220) = .601, p = .000. This suggests that as service providers increasingly demonstrate emotional intelligence in service delivery, service quality improves at a high rate. This relationship is obviously driven by the fact that EI provides an effective customer-service provider relationship that leads to expected customer service quality perception. Comparatively, the relationship between EI and RM (r = .804) is stronger than that between EI and service quality (r = .601). This is because EI is practically needed and demonstrated at a higher extent at the level of customer relationship building. Thus EI exerts much of its strength at the level of relationship marketing, where the relationship between EI and service quality is practically an outcome of the relationship between EI and RM.

The relationship between EI and customer satisfaction is positive but quite weak at 5% significance level, r (220) = .426, p = .000. This practically means that as service providers demonstrate a higher level of emotional intelligence, customers become more satisfied with services delivered to them, though the rate of change is not high. This relationship provides evidence about the falling trend of the strength of the relationship between emotional intelligence and the three customer-oriented dependent variables, namely RM, service quality and customer satisfaction. This trend is practically justifiable, as the strength of EI would decrease from the stage of relationship building through service quality to customer satisfaction. At the stage of relationship building with customers, EI would have a dominant role to play, but this role would become weak as far as customers' perception and satisfaction is concerned. This is practically because other equally dominant factors (e.g. air-conditioned banking halls, availability of ATMs, access to e-banking facilities etc.) drive service quality perceptions and customer satisfaction apart from EI.

Figure 2 shows a trend of the falling strength of the relationship of EI with RM, service quality and customer satisfaction.

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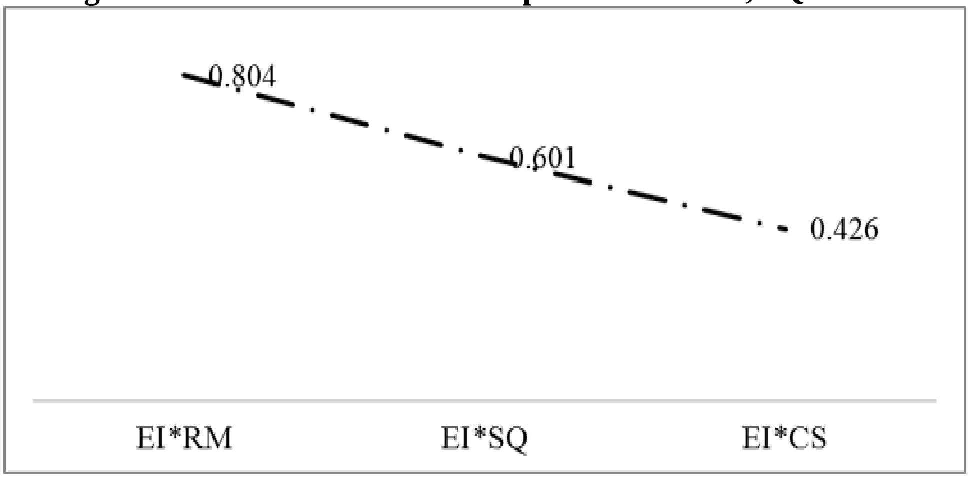
Figure 2: Trend of the Relationship of EI with RM, SQ and CS



With reference to Table 3, the trend breaks at the level of return on investment (ROI). Thus EI makes a strong positive relationship with return on investment at 5% significance level, r (220) = .734, p = .000. This implies that as banks ensure that their service providers demonstrate increasing level of EI, financial returns also increase at a high rate. Surprisingly, this rate of change is higher relative to the relationship of EI with SQ and CS. This scenario could have some practical bases. Firstly, banks' ROI is largely dependent on services provided to customers. As a result, a good relationship with this customers can lead to high short-term patronage regardless of whether other drivers (e.g. air-conditioned banking halls, availability of ATMs, access to e-banking facilities etc.) influence customers' service quality perceptions or not. Secondly, EI could empower employees and top managements to relate well with shareholders and other stakeholders, a relationship that could lead to access to needed capital and consequently improved business growth.

Having identified these positive correlations, it is important to know if they are sufficiently strong to engender the prediction of RM, SQ, CS and ROI by EI in the light of other statistical considerations. Table 4 comes with estimates of an ordinary least square regression analysis in this respect.

Table 4: Regression Estimates

Outcome variable	R Square	ANOVA		Coefficient			
		F	Sig.	Constant	B	t	Sig.
RM	.647	399.05	.000	1.33	.566	19.98	.000
Service quality	.632	373.75	.000	.703	.764	19.33	.000
Customer satisfaction	.232	64.94	.000	1.29	.461	8.12	.000
ROI	.320	102.81	.000	2.31	4.53	10.14	.000

Predictor: Emotional intelligence

Table 4 shows regression estimates associated with the prediction of RM, SQ, CS and ROI by EI. From the table, EI accounts for 64.7% of variance in RM and significantly predicts it at 5% significance level (t = 19.98, p = .000). EI similarly predicts service quality at 5% significance level (t = 19.33, p = .000), accounting for 63.2% of the variance in SQ. At the same level of significance, EI predicts CS (t = 8.12, p = .000) and ROI (t = 10.14, p = .000), contributing 23.2% and 32% of the variance respectively. Obviously, EI significantly predicts RM, SQ, CS and ROI. As seen at the level of correlation, the strength of the model formed between EI and RM is the highest relative to those formed between EI and SQ, CS and ROI. At this stage, there is sufficient evidence to accept the first four hypotheses stated. Tables 5 and 6 come with results of the fifth and sixth hypotheses.

Table 4: Partial Correlations for RM*EI

Variable pair	N	Covariate	Original r	Controlled r	Change in r	Sig.
RM*Emotional intelligence	220	Education	0.804	0.243	0.561	0.001
	220	Language	0.804	0.543	0.261	0.000
	220	Religion	0.804	0.785	0.019	0.000
	220	Tribe	0.804	0.765	0.039	0.000
	220	Age	0.804	0.697	0.107	0.000
	220	Income status	0.804	0.378	0.426	0.000
	220	Gender	0.804	0.784	0.020	0.000
	220	Temperament	0.804	0.353	0.451	0.000

Table 5 shows results associated with the fifth alternative hypothesis. This hypothesis states that the influence of EI on RM is moderated by some demographics and elements of culture. The demographics and elements of culture of interest include education, language, religion, tribe, age, income status, gender and temperament. From the table, the relationship between EI and RM has a coefficient of .804. Upon controlling for the effect of each of the demographics and elements of culture, the respective coefficients decrease largely or slightly. This gives a general indication that controlling for each of the variables largely or slightly reduces the strength of the relationship between EI and RM. Controlling for education, language, income status and temperament, however, makes quite larger reducing effects on the relationship between EI and RM. This means that these variables largely empower the relationship between EI and RM relative to the others. However, controlling for each of the variables does not render the relationship between EI and RM insignificant at 5% significance level. So even if the effects of education, language, religion, tribe, age, income status, gender and temperament are taken into consideration, EI still positively influences RM. Yet, it is evident that the influence of EI on RM is moderated by education, language, religion, tribe, age, income status, gender and

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temperament, where the influence of education, language, income status and temperament is quite stronger.

Table 6: Partial Correlations for ROI*EI

Variable pair	N	Mediator(s)	Original r	Controlled r	Change in r	Sig.
ROI*Emotional intelligence	220	RM	0.734	0.569	0.165	.000
	220	Service quality	0.734	0.619	0.115	.000
	220	Customer satisfaction	0.734	0.714	0.02	.000
	220	RM, Service quality, Customer satisfaction	0.734	0.124	0.61	.562

Table 6 shows results of the sixth alternative hypothesis. This hypothesis states that the influence of EI on financial performance is mediated by RM, service quality and customer satisfaction. From the table, RM as an individual variable contributes .165 of the coefficient of the relationship between EI and ROI. Also, service quality alone accounts for .115 of the coefficient between EI and ROI, where customer satisfaction accounts for .02 in this relationship. However, the relationship between EI and ROI is significant even when each of RM, SQ and CS is controlled for. This means that even if RM does not serve as a medium of service delivery, EI still promotes ROI, once service quality and customer satisfaction are prevalent. Possibly, there are other factors that make the level of SQ and CS among banks considerable when RM does not serve as a medium of service delivery. Interestingly, when RM, SQ and CS are all controlled for, the relationship of EI to ROI is rendered very weak and insignificant at 5% significance level. This implies that EI cannot promote ROI appreciably when there is no RM, SQ and CS mediation. On this account, the sixth alternative hypothesis is confirmed.

DISCUSSION

According to findings of this study, emotional intelligence positively relates to relationship marketing (r = .804, p = .000), service quality (r = .601, p = .000), customer satisfaction (r = .426, p = .000) and financial performance (r = .734, p = .000). Table 1 shows a selection of major research studies that provide supporting evidence to these relationships identified in this study. The positive relationship between relationship marketing and emotional intelligence in this study is buttressed by Yaghoubi *et al.* (2011), Rahim & Malik (2010) and Hashem (2010). Also, the positive effect of emotional intelligence on service quality is supported in the studies of Danquah (2014b), Komlosi (2013) and Kenbach & Schutte (2005), while Kenbach & Schutte (2005), Yaghoubi *et al.* (2011), Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi (2014) and Danquah & Wireko (2014) provide a background for the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and customer satisfaction. For the effect of emotional intelligence on financial performance, Danquah (2014a) and Rehman *et al.* (2012) provide supporting findings.

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Meanwhile, a large body of empirical and theoretical studies has grounded the effect of emotional intelligence on RM, SQ, CS and financial performance from varying perspectives. Firstly, the effect span a majority of the geographical regions, namely Europe (e.g. Furnham & Petrides, 2003; Sjoberg & Littorin, 2003; Komlosi, 2013 etc.), Africa (e.g. Awwad & Ali, 2012; Bester *et al.* 2013; Danquah & Wireko, 2014, etc.), Asia (e.g. Horri *et al.* 2013; Goyal & Arkhilesh, 2007; Radha & Prasad, 2013; Yaghoubi *et al.* 2013; etc.), Australia (e.g. Kenbach & Schutte, 2005; Ciarrochi *et al.* 2000; etc.) and North America (e.g. Freshman & Rubino, 2002; Brooks et al. 2006; Libbrecht *et al.* 2013; etc.). This means that the relevance of service providers' emotional intelligence to effective relationship marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction and financial performance is not bound to one geographical area.

In addition, the positive effect of service providers' emotional intelligence on service delivery and firms' growth, as found in this study, has also been confirmed by researchers from the perspective of various sectors. From a banking sector perspective, Danquah (2014a), Danquah (2014b), Hashem (2010), Radha & Prasad (2013) and other researchers provide this evidence. Moreover, these evidence touches on the health (e.g. Martins *et al.* 2010; Freshman & Rubino, 2002; etc.), hospitality (e.g. Komlosi, 2013; Ghalandari *et al.* 2012) and small businesses (e.g. Khalili, 2011) sectors.

An outstanding part of this study's result is the moderation of the effect of EI on RM by education, language, religion, tribe, age, income status, gender and temperament. In the study of Danquah (2014b), these variables influence the effect of EI on service quality, not RM. Since RM serves as the most dominant medium of delivering services (Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011), this study focuses on the moderating effect of these variables on RM, instead of service quality. From a personal viewpoint, the result of the variables' effect is fairly the same regardless of whether RM or service quality is used. This is because this study's findings are largely similar to results in the study of Danquah (2014b) and Fernández-Berrocal *et al.* (2012). In the study of Danquah (2014b), for instance, service providers who are fluent in native languages are able to demonstrate a higher level of EI. This is possibly because a majority of customers are able to express themselves better using native languages. Moreover, service providers with a high income status demonstrate a lower level of EI in service delivery. Similar to what is found in this study, Fernández-Berrocal *et al.* (2012) found that increasing education enhances the level of EI demonstrated. These are few examples of the dynamics that form the basis of the moderation of the effect of EI on service quality in Danquah's (2014b) study, where the study of Fernández-Berrocal *et al.* (2012) provides a similar dimension of the moderating effect of temperament, income, age and language on the effect of EI on service quality. In essence, firms would need to put into consideration the education, language, religion, tribe, age, income status, gender and temperament of service providers before making employment and EI-focused training decisions on service providers.

In terms of the mediation of RM, SQ and CS in the relationship between EI and financial performance, no single research has provided evidence in this respect. However, a personal

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survey of empirical studies (e.g. Furnham & Petrides, 2003; Sjoberg & Littorin, 2003; Komlosi, 2013; Awwad & Ali, 2012; Bester *et al.* 2013; Danquah & Wireko, 2014; Danquah (2014a); Danquah (2014b); Horri *et al.* 2013; Goyal & Arkhilesh, 2007; Radha & Prasad, 2013; Yaghoubi *et al.* 2013; Kenbach & Schutte, 2005; Ciarrochi *et al.* 2000; Freshman & Rubino, 2002; Brooks *et al.* 2006 and Libbrecht *et al.* 2013) indicate that this mediation exist in separate researches. Even so, RM is found in this study as the dominant and basic mediator, as argued by Yaghoubi *et al.* (2013). The implication of this mediation is that the EI of service providers is needed in service delivery to leverage investment in relationship marketing among commercial banks.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on results of this study, relationship marketing is the dominant medium in which service providers in commercial banks can demonstrate emotional intelligence to promote service quality, customer satisfaction and financial performance. This argument is based on the empirical evidence that emotional intelligence positively relates to relationship marketing ($r = .804$, $p = .000$), service quality ($r = .601$, $p = .000$), customer satisfaction ($r = .426$, $p = .000$) and financial performance ($r = .734$, $p = .000$). Moreover, these relationships translate into the prediction of relationship marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction and financial performance by emotional intelligence. Generally, therefore, emotional intelligence is needed largely in service delivery in the banking sector in Ghana.

In addition, the influence of emotional intelligence on relationship marketing is moderated by education, language, religion, tribe, age, income status, gender and temperament, where the influence of education, language, income status and temperament is quite stronger. Nonetheless, relationship marketing still serves as a dominant medium of savouring emotional intelligence even when the effects of education, language, religion, tribe, age, income status, gender and temperament are controlled for.

Emotional intelligence still significantly influences financial performance among commercial banks when there is service quality and customer satisfaction but the mediation of relationship marketing is taking away. This situation is possible as a result of the fact that service quality and customer satisfaction come from other factors (e.g. air-conditioned banking halls, availability of ATMs, access to e-banking facilities etc.) apart from relationship marketing. However, when the mediation of relationship marketing, service quality and customer satisfaction is removed, emotional intelligence does not make any significant influence on financial growth.

In essence, commercial banks ought to give priority to achieving and sustaining service quality and customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, achieving service quality and customer satisfaction requires that relationship marketing is used to build satisfactory customer-bank relationship. As seen in the study, relationship marketing takes a greater part of its effect on service quality and customer satisfaction from emotional intelligence. It is therefore recommended that banks deploy resources towards equipping their service providers with emotional intelligence. Banks also

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ought to take into consideration the education, income status, personality type and language of service providers particularly front line staffs before making employment and training decisions.

It is suggested that this study is conducted on other service sectors such as telecommunication, insurance, health and hospitality to provide a stronger basis for generalising this study's results. Customer loyalty can also be introduced to assess its relationship with emotional intelligence.

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