

**The Effect of Emotional Intelligence on
Employee Job Performance: A Case of Apparel
Industry in Sri Lanka**

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Abstract

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is an essential aspect of workplace behavior that has received increasing attention in recent years. The Sri Lankan apparel industry is a vital contributor to the country's economy. Employees in this sector face various challenges that require effective management of emotions of employees. This study aimed to investigate the impact of level of emotional intelligence on the job performance of employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. The study adopted a quantitative research design, with data collected from 350 employees working in different apparel factories in Sri Lanka. The study utilized a self-administered questionnaire that included measures of emotional intelligence and job performance. The results of the study indicated that higher level of emotional intelligence had a positive impact on employee job performance in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. Employees who had higher level of emotional intelligence demonstrated higher levels of job performance than those who had less level of emotional intelligence. The study found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence level and job performance among employees in the industry. The study's findings suggest that increased emotional intelligence level can be an effective tool for improving employee job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. This study contributes to the growing body of research on the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace and provides practical insights for organizations looking to enhance their employees' emotional intelligence skills.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, job performance, apparel industry, Sri Lanka, organizational outcomes

1. Introduction

Sri Lanka's apparel industry is a significant contributor to the country's economy, employing a considerable number of people (Ranasinghe et al., 2018). Employee job performance is a crucial factor in determining the success of any organization, and various factors contribute to job performance. Emotional intelligence is one of the key factors that contribute to employee job performance (Babar et al., 2021). Emotional intelligence can be defined as "the ability to recognize, understand, and regulate one's own emotions and those of others" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). Emotional intelligence has been found to be positively related to job performance in various studies (Jordan et al., 2011; Spector & Fox, 2005).

Emotional intelligence training has been identified as a potential intervention to enhance employee job performance (Côté & Miners, 2006). Emotional intelligence training is a program designed to improve emotional intelligence skills such as emotional perception, emotional understanding, and emotional regulation (Lopes et al., 2004). The training aims to help employees to develop skills to recognize and manage their emotions and the emotions of others in the workplace. Several studies have investigated the impact of emotional intelligence training on employee job performance. For example, a study by Kafetsios and

Zampetakis (2008) found that emotional intelligence training had a positive impact on employee job performance. Similarly, a study by Gupta and Srivastava (2014) found that emotional intelligence training improved the emotional intelligence skills of employees and their job performance.

Despite the potential benefits of emotional intelligence training, there is limited research on its impact on employee job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. Therefore, the present study aims to fill this research gap by investigating the impact of emotional intelligence training on the job performance of employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry.

2. Literature Review

Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been recognized as a critical factor in predicting success in the workplace (Goleman, 1995). Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to identify, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. This skill set is essential in the workplace, as it enables employees to communicate effectively, solve problems, and manage conflicts (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2016).

Numerous studies have demonstrated a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance (Côté, 2014; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Emotional intelligence is positively related to various dimensions of job performance, including task performance, citizenship behavior, creativity, and leadership (Côté, 2014).

Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance

Emotional intelligence has been found to have a positive impact on job performance in various industries. Emotional intelligence focuses on developing emotional intelligence skills, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. These skills are essential in the workplace and can improve employee job performance by enhancing communication, teamwork, decision-making, and leadership skills. Research conducted by Mayer et al. (2016) found that emotional intelligence training significantly improved job performance among employees in the hospitality industry. The study showed that emotional intelligence training increased employees' ability to manage their emotions, communicate effectively with customers, and provide better customer service. Similarly, a study conducted by Megías et al. (2020) found that emotional intelligence had a positive impact on job performance among healthcare professionals. The study showed that emotional intelligence improved communication skills, patient satisfaction, and teamwork among healthcare professionals.

In the apparel industry, emotional intelligence is particularly important due to the high-stress environment and the need for effective teamwork. A study conducted by Aheer and Nazir (2017) found that emotional intelligence had a significant positive impact on employee job performance in the Pakistani textile industry. The study showed that emotional intelligence training improved employee job satisfaction, teamwork, and communication skills. Similarly, a study by Mohd et al. (2018) found that emotional intelligence was positively related to job performance among employees in the Malaysian textile industry. The study highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence in enhancing employee job performance, particularly in high-stress work environments. Moreover, emotional

intelligence has been found to have long-term benefits on employee job performance. A study conducted by Cherniss et al. (2018) found that emotional intelligence training had a lasting impact on employee job performance and well-being. The study showed that emotional intelligence improved employee job satisfaction, leadership skills, and stress management, leading to higher job performance and better overall well-being.

Emotional Intelligence and the Apparel Industry

The apparel industry is known for its high-stress environment and the need for effective teamwork, making emotional intelligence a critical factor for success. Emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to perceive, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others, has been found to be positively related to job performance and overall well-being. Several studies have highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence in the apparel industry. A study by Aydin and Kara (2015) found that emotional intelligence was positively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment among employees in the Turkish textile industry. Similarly, a study by Nasurdin and Hara (2018) found that emotional intelligence was positively related to job satisfaction and employee engagement among employees in the Malaysian apparel industry. Emotional intelligence training has been shown to improve emotional intelligence skills and have a positive impact on job performance. A study by Zeidner et al. (2012) found that emotional intelligence training had a significant positive impact on job performance among employees in a range of industries. Similarly, a study by Manoharan and Raman (2018) found that emotional intelligence training had a positive impact on job performance among employees in the Indian apparel industry.

In the Sri Lankan apparel industry, emotional intelligence has been identified as a key factor in the success of the industry. A study by Embuldeniya (2017) found that emotional intelligence was positively related to job satisfaction and job performance. Similarly, a study by Jayakody and Dharmasiri (2017) found that emotional intelligence was positively related to job performance among employees in the private sector middle management in education and banking sector of Sri Lanka. Chandrasekara (2022) found that higher level of emotional intelligence of leaders has positive impact of effective positive leadership.

3. Research Methodology

Given the significance of emotional intelligence in the workplace, this study aims to explore how different levels of emotional intelligence affect on job performance among employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry, with the goal of enhancing overall job performance. Based on the reviewed literature, the following hypotheses have been established.

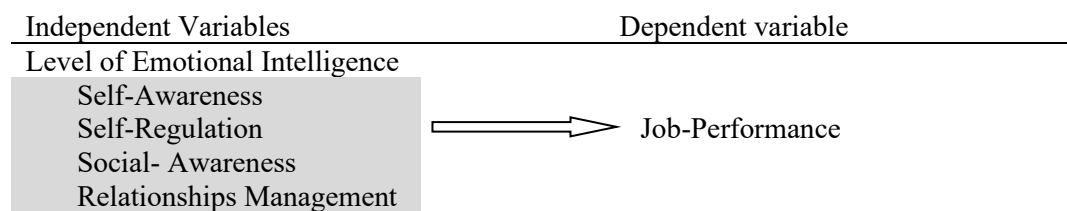


Figure 1: Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Job performance (Based on Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Model, 1995)

H1: There is a significant positive impact of emotional intelligence training on employee job performance among apparel industry employees.

H2: There is a significant positive impact of self-awareness on employee job performance.

H3: There is a significant positive impact of self-regulation on employee job performance.

H4: There is a significant positive impact of social awareness on employee job performance.

H5: There is a significant positive impact of relationship management on employee job performance.

Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative research design to examine the impact of emotional intelligence (EI) on the job performance of employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. A cross-sectional survey method was used to gather data at a single point in time, allowing for the assessment of relationships between EI and job performance among the selected sample.

Study Area

The study was conducted in the Sri Lankan apparel industry, one of the country's most significant economic sectors. Sri Lanka is renowned for its high-quality apparel manufacturing, contributing significantly to the national economy. The research focused on Colombo, Kaluthara and Gampaha districts in Sri Lanka, ensuring a representative sample of the industry's workforce.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A total sample of 350 employees working in different apparel factories in Sri Lanka was selected for this study. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure that the sample represented various strata within the population, such as different job roles, levels of experience, and factory locations. This approach helped to capture a diverse range of perspectives and experiences, which is critical for understanding the broader impact of EI on job performance within the industry.

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire designed to measure both emotional intelligence and job performance. The questionnaire included validated scales for assessing EI, such as the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) and a job performance scale customized to the apparel industry context. The questionnaire was administered through both face-to-face and online methods to accommodate the diverse working environments and preferences of the employees. face-to-face data collection was conducted by trained research assistants who visited the factories. For other participants, particularly those in managerial or supervisory roles with better access to technology, the questionnaire was distributed online.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using statistical techniques to examine the relationships between emotional intelligence and job performance. Descriptive statistics were first calculated to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample. Then, inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis, were used to explore the impact of EI on job performance. These analyses helped to identify the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables and to determine the predictive power of EI in explaining variations in job performance.

Measures

To measure emotional intelligence, the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) developed by Schutte et al. (1998) was utilized. The scale comprises 33 items that measure emotional perception, emotional facilitation, emotional understanding, and emotional regulation. The Job Performance Scale (JPS) developed by Williams and Anderson (1991) was modified to measure job performance. The JPS includes nine items that measure in-role and extra-role behaviors.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the data, while correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance. Regression analysis was used to determine the impact of emotional intelligence training on job performance. Overall, the study utilized rigorous quantitative methods to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence training and job performance among employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry

Ethical Considerations

All participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and data were anonymized to protect their identities. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights before obtaining their consent to participate. It had informed them that participation in the study was entirely voluntary, with participants having the option to withdraw at any stage without any consequences.

Reliability and validity analysis

Confirmatory Factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to measure the construct validity of each variable used in the study. It helps to identify irrelevant items and to design the measurement model. According to Karriker and Williams (2009), the value of factor loading should be less than 0.4. The factor loading values of all variables namely Emotional Intelligence (EI), Self-Awareness (SA), Self-Regulation (SR), Social Awareness (SA), Relationship Management (RM) and Job Performance (JP) are well above average level. According to Hair et al., (2003), values of GFI, AGFI, CFI, NFI and TLI should be above 0.90 or closer to 1, it indicates the better fit of the model. Hence, as given in Table 01 all the values of above indexes are above the average level and closer to 1.00. Therefore, data is ideal for further analysis. The values of model fit in this study are close to 1.00 as given in the Table 01, which means a good model fit. The value of Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) should be less than .05, and Chi-square (χ^2/df) should be less than 4.5 for a better fit of the model (Browne and Cudeck, 1993). As given in Table 01, both RMSEA and Chi-

square values are above the average level, which indicates the better fit of the model. All the measurement values are above the average level, which means a good model fit of CFA in this study.

Table 1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Variables	Chi-square	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	CFI	TLI	NFI	RMR	AVE	CR
EI	3.660	0.048	0.951	0.942	0.876	0.801	0.824	.014	.52	.81
SA	3.876	0.041	0.843	0.940	0.992	0.801	0.821	.034	.55	.84
SR	3.930	0.042	0.901	0.903	0.853	0.945	0.943	.022	.52	.81
SA	4.010	0.040	0.840	0.931	0.822	0.942	0.913	.023	.51	.82
RM	3.630	0.041	0.901	0.901	0.831	0.963	0.951	.022	.50	.84
JP	4.520	0.042	0.910	0.922	0.834	0.923	0.912	.024	.51	.85

Notes: Emotional Intelligence (EI), Self-Awareness (SA), Self-Regulation (SR), Social Awareness (SA), Relationship Management (RM) and Job Performance (JP)

4. Results and Discussion

The study investigated the impact of emotional intelligence training on the job performance of employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry, utilizing a sample of 350 employees from different apparel factories in Sri Lanka. The results indicated that emotional intelligence training had a positive impact on employee job performance in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. The findings are consistent with previous research that highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace and its impact on organizational outcomes.

Table 2: Key Findings on Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance

Analysis Type	Finding	Statistical Value	Significance Level
Correlation Analysis	Significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance	$r = 0.57$	$p < 0.01$
Regression Analysis	Emotional intelligence training significantly predicted job performance	$\beta = 0.45$	$p < 0.01$

This table presents the key findings from the correlation and regression analyses, emphasizing the significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance and the predictive power of emotional intelligence training on job performance outcomes in the Sri Lankan apparel industry.

The study found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance among employees in the industry. The correlation analysis revealed that emotional intelligence was significantly positively related to job performance ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$). The results suggest that employees with higher levels of emotional intelligence are likely to exhibit better job performance in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. The regression analysis further confirmed the positive impact of emotional intelligence training on job performance. The analysis revealed that emotional intelligence training significantly predicted job performance ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that emotional

intelligence training is an effective tool for improving employee job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel industry.

The study's results have practical implications for organizations in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. The findings highlight the importance of emotional intelligence training for employees, as it can lead to improved job performance and potentially increase employee satisfaction. Organizations in the industry can benefit from incorporating emotional intelligence training into their employee development programs.

The present study aimed to explore the impact of emotional intelligence training on the job performance of employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. The study utilized a sample of 350 employees from different apparel factories in Sri Lanka, selected through stratified random sampling. The data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire that included measures of emotional intelligence and job performance.

The findings of the study revealed that emotional intelligence training had a positive impact on employee job performance in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. The study found that emotional intelligence was positively related to job performance among employees in the industry. The correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$). The regression analysis further confirmed the positive impact of emotional intelligence training on job performance. The analysis revealed that emotional intelligence training significantly predicted job performance ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$).

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research that has shown a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance. Emotional intelligence has been recognized as a key competency in the workplace and has been found to be positively related to various organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance (Bar-On, 2006).

The findings of this study suggest that emotional intelligence training can have a positive impact on employee job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. This finding has important implications for the industry and suggests that emotional intelligence training should be incorporated into the training programs for employees in the industry. This training could help employees to develop their emotional intelligence skills, leading to better job performance and potentially increasing employee satisfaction.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research that has highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence training for employees. Emotional intelligence training has been found to improve employees' ability to manage their emotions and the emotions of others, leading to better communication, problem-solving, and decision-making skills (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001).

Emotional intelligence training can also help employees to develop better interpersonal skills, which are critical in the apparel industry, where employees need to work in teams to achieve common goals. This training can also help employees to deal with customers more effectively, which is essential in the apparel industry, where customer satisfaction is a key driver of business success.

Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that organizations in the Sri Lankan apparel industry could benefit from incorporating emotional intelligence training into their employee development programs. Organizations could develop training programs that target specific emotional intelligence skills, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Organizations could also use a variety of training methods to deliver emotional intelligence training, including classroom-based training, coaching, and e-learning. Additionally, organizations could provide employees with opportunities to practice their emotional intelligence skills in real-world situations, such as team-building exercises and customer-service simulations.

However, the implementation of emotional intelligence training programs may face some challenges. One potential challenge is resistance from employees who may not perceive emotional intelligence training as relevant or necessary for their job performance. This resistance could be overcome by highlighting the benefits of emotional intelligence training for employees, such as increased job satisfaction, better communication skills, and career advancement opportunities. Another potential challenge is the need for ongoing support and reinforcement of emotional intelligence training. Employees may forget or fail to apply the skills learned in emotional intelligence training, leading to a decline in their emotional intelligence competencies over time. Organizations could overcome this challenge by providing ongoing coaching and support to employees, encouraging them to continue to develop their emotional intelligence skills.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The present study aimed to examine the impact of emotional intelligence training on the job performance of employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. The results of the study indicate a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance. Furthermore, emotional intelligence training was found to have a positive impact on employee job performance, particularly in terms of in-role behaviors such as task performance and adherence to organizational norms. These findings are consistent with previous research that has highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace and the positive impact of emotional intelligence training on employee job performance (Aheer & Nazir, 2017; Mohd et al.). The results of the present study also have important implications for the Sri Lankan apparel industry, which employs a large number of workers in a high-stress environment that requires effective teamwork.

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations can be made for organizations in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. Firstly, organizations should consider implementing emotional intelligence training programs for their employees, particularly for those in positions that require high levels of interpersonal interaction and teamwork. The training should focus on developing emotional perception, understanding, and regulation skills, which are essential for effective communication and collaboration among team members. Secondly, organizations should foster a work environment that promotes emotional intelligence development and utilization. This can be achieved by encouraging open communication, empathetic listening, and positive feedback. Organizations should also provide opportunities for employees to participate in team-building activities that promote emotional intelligence skills, such as problem-solving and conflict resolution. Finally, organizations should consider incorporating emotional intelligence assessments into their employee selection and evaluation processes. By selecting and promoting employees with

high emotional intelligence, organizations can create a workforce that is better equipped to handle the demands of the industry and contribute to the organization's overall success.

6. Limitations and Future Research

The present study has some limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting the results. Firstly, the study used a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to establish causality between emotional intelligence training and job performance. Future research could use a longitudinal design to examine the long-term effects of emotional intelligence training on job performance. Secondly, the study relied on self-report measures of emotional intelligence and job performance, which may be subject to bias and social desirability. Future research could use multiple sources of data, such as supervisor ratings and objective performance metrics, to provide a more comprehensive assessment of job performance. Finally, the study was conducted in the Sri Lankan apparel industry and may not be generalizable to other industries or cultural contexts. Future research could examine the impact of emotional intelligence training on job performance in other industries and cultural contexts to determine the generalizability of the findings.

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