

Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Job Performances with the Mediation Impact of Occupational Stress

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of emotional intelligence on the job performance of the banking employees in Sri Lanka with the mediation impact of occupational stress. The quantitative approach uses the confirmatory survey method, and it was verified. The data has been analyzed by using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The confirmatory factor analysis results, RAMSEA=0.089, CFI=0.920, and χ^2/df , =3.437, show that the proposed conceptual model fit. The findings reveal that emotional intelligence has a direct effect of 0.385 on job performance and an indirect effect of 0.023 through the mediatory path of occupational stress, resulting in a total effect of 0.408, which is significant ($p < 0.05$). Therefore partial mediation can be observed. Even though higher emotional intelligence leads to higher job performance, this positive impact is lowered due to the partial mediation effect of occupational stress. Therefore, it can be stated that to improve the banking employees' performance, and emotional intelligence can be used as a human resource management strategy.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence; occupational stress; job performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, banks are recognized as a major pillar of the financial sector, which contributes to the stability of an economy. The rapid changes in banking sector-related technology, increased competition among banks and other financial institutes, new rules and regulations imposed by the government, changes in the consumption patterns, and the changes in perception towards the financial sector within the customer have made the banking role more complex. Employee job performance plays a crucial role. Job performance of the employees enhances the organizational performance and improves the organizational reputation to achieve organizational goals and objectives while having these complexities [1,2,3,4].

Borman and Motowidlo [5] state that both task performance and contextual performance of the employees are more important in achieving organizational effectiveness. Where task performance contributes to the primary business services and contextual performance contributes to improving other operations that indirectly support the main business. Many factors affect the employee's job performance. The factors such as motivation, communication, supervisory support, organizational culture, financial rewards, training and development, mindfulness, and emotional intelligence have shown the influence they have on employee job performance [6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15]. Among these factors, emotional intelligence has more significance because it influences the individuals' thought process. When employees are more confident about how they feel and how they express their feelings and emotions within the workplace, it ultimately influences healthy interpersonal relationships, motivation and mindfulness, and communication among the employees [16]. As per the studies carried out in the academic field as well as in the business management field, it is identified that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance, whereas higher emotional intelligence has been found to create a positive impact on job performance [17,18,15].

On the contrary, occupational stress is recognized as a factor that diminishes employees' job performance [19,2, Ismail and Hong, 2011; [20]. Cooper and Marshall [21] have categorized the factors that affect occupational stress into six categories. They are intrinsic to

the job, role in the organization, relationships at work, career development, organizational structure and climate, and finally, organizational interface with outside. Occupational Stress eventually reduces employee health and well-being, lowering the employees' job performance and entire organizational performance.

This study aims to identify the impact of emotional intelligence on the job performance of banking employees in Sri Lanka with the mediation impact of occupational stress. Traditional banking services have been changed over time, and today, banks are more focused on green practices, sustainability, and fintech partnerships. These revolutionary changes have made working demands and the working environment challenging for the banking sector employees [22]. Hence, it can be assumed that the banking employees have to endure more occupational stress, which eventually will decrease their job performance. Employees with high emotional intelligence are more flexible and manage their emotions as per the working environment. They work more smoothly, maintaining healthy relationships with co-workers and adjusting to external and internal pressure without failing [23]. Therefore, the need for a workforce that is emotionally intelligent and can handle stressful work requirements without being affected emotionally to enhance the job performance is highlighted.

Moreover, many international scholars have conducted studies on the relationship between emotional intelligence, occupational stress, and job performance [24;25,26,27,17,28,29]. The impact of emotional intelligence on job performance with a mediating effect of occupational stress concerning the banking sector is less addressed in both global and Sri Lankan contexts. The findings of the international studies may vary with the Sri Lankan context due to the differences in the work-related culture, instability of the political environment. Therefore, this study is carried out about the banking sector in Sri Lanka to explore the impact of emotional intelligence on job performance of banking employees in Sri Lanka with mediation impact of occupational stress.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Employee Job Performance

Employee performance is an official and systematic appraisal produced by an employee

against what has been expected by the company, which this expected criteria must be communicated [1]. It was stated that any employee's performance is not reflected through the outcome of the said employee, but the performances reflected through the employee's conduct. In contrast, the focus of the performance depends not only on the outcome but also on how the employee behaves, creating a higher impact on the performance [30]. Further, it has been argued that no relationship can be identified between productivity and performance, whereas the citizenship behavior of an employee indicates the performance (Organ, 2016). Not only should performance be perceived as an action, but it should also be described as an evaluative process [31]. Shamsuddin and Rahman [32] agreed, adding that peripheral factors such as social and political elements and human resources must be considered in job performance. External factors, such as organizational culture and economic viability, resource availability, and social and political factors, should also be highlighted. As a result, various models describing job performance exist in order to evaluate job performance fairly. Borman and Brush [33] created a framework based on critical incident analysis in which managerial work performance is described using technical activities and management mechanisms, interpersonal dealings and communication, leadership and supervision, and useful personal behavior and skills (e.g. persistence, handling crisis and stress as well as organizational commitment). Finally, Borman and Motowidlo [5] distinguished between task and contextual job performance. The proficiency with which an individual completes a task is referred to as task performance.

2.2 Occupational Stress

It was stated that the resources, opportunities, and demands open employees as the main reason for work stress. The level they wish to have in all these three and their level or generate results in the Stress [34]. Stress is defined as a situation that generates within an employee as a sequence of his or her abilities in handling a given situation that the employer demands. In the long term, stress may create behavioral, physical, or mental problems [35]. The studies have identified work stress creating a negative impact on all the employees irrespective of the company, irrespective of the position, and country, which resulted in work stress being a global issue [36].

2.3 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined as "the ability to reason about emotions in order to improve one's thinking." It includes the ability to perceive emotions, access accurately and generate emotions to aid thought, understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and regulate emotions reflectively to promote emotional and intellectual growth" [37]. Moreover, they can classify among those emotions to guide how a person behaves, thinks, and takes actions. A person's capacity to recognize their own feelings and the feelings of others in motivating themselves can be separated from cognitive intelligence that is measured through IQ tests and academic intelligence, which is commonly measured through performances that are produced academically [38]. Previously, EI was defined as a group of social intelligence to observe one's own and other people's emotions [39]. Those with a high level of EI would be able to distinguish between these emotions and use the information they gathered at the same time.

2.4 Emotional Intelligence, Occupational Stress, and Job Performance

The studies have been carried out on validating Emotional Intelligence contributes to improving employee performance and has identified a positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence and employee performance, whereas higher emotional intelligence has been found to create a positive impact on job performance [40,17,41, Shamsuddin and Rahman, 2014; Praveena, 2015; [15]. Similarly, a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and job performance of banking employees in both global and Sri Lankan platforms is observed (Greenidge et al., 2014; [27]; [42]; [43]; [44].

According to the researches conducted in the area of emotional intelligence and occupational stress also identified a negative relationship and stated that it is effective in reducing the occupational stress within the employees [45,46,47,48,44]. The employees who are aware of their emotions and adequately expressing them are less likely to suffer from occupational stress, and they are better at coping with stressors as well as are flexible and face more relaxed manner to job-related demands [49, 50, 51, 25, 52].

Moreover, the studies that have been conducted relating to occupational stress and job

performance has found out that there is a negative correlation between both variables [53,54,2,55,56,57,58]. The employees experiencing higher stress are likely to suffer from diseases like high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, depression, anxiety, and cancer [20]. There is a negative relationship between stress and performance. It makes organizations bear the costs, including payment for sick leaves, additional costs on recruitment, selection, induction, and training off new employees (Ismail and Hong, 2011). In contrast, the extra time, workload, pressures, and lack of recognition by immediate supervisors, interpersonal relationships with peer employees, and lack of growth opportunities have the highest impact on the level of stress of banking officers [57,58].

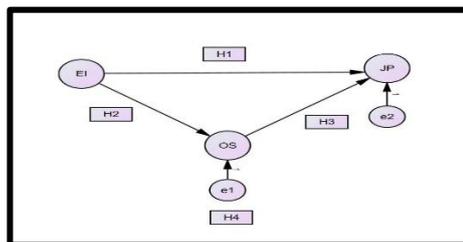


Fig. 1. Hypothesized Model

Source: Author's illustrations; Where, EI = Emotional Intelligence; OS = Occupational stress; JP = Job Performance

2.5 Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

Based on the above literature, it can be stated that there are relationships among emotional intelligence, occupational stress, and job performance. Therefore to examine the impact of emotional intelligence on the job performance of the banking employees in Sri Lanka with the mediation impact of occupational stress, a conceptual model was developed (Fig. 1), and the following four hypotheses were derived.

- H₁: There is a significant impact of emotional intelligence on job performance.
- H₂: There is a significant impact of emotional intelligence on occupational stress.
- H₃: There is a significant impact of occupational stress on job performance.
- H₄: Occupational Stress mediates the impact of emotional intelligence on job performance.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Population and Sample

The population of this study is the employees who work for either licensed commercial banks

or licensed specialized banks in Sri Lanka. Using Krejcie and Morgan's [60] table to determine sample size, 384 employees were selected as the statistical sample using a non-probability convenience sampling technique. Out of 384 questionnaires were distributed, and 310 were responded. Thus, the study findings are depended on 310 respondents.

3.2 Measures

The data was collected through a questionnaire which was consisted of four sections. The first section was designed to gather the respondents' demographic information, and the other three sections measured job performance (20 items), occupational stress (25 items), and emotional intelligence (15 items), respectively. Job performance was measured through adapting the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) by Koopmans et al. [61]. Occupational Stress was measured by adapting the questionnaire Ahmed and Ramzan [57] and Chinyere et al. [59]. In order to measure emotional intelligence, the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale of Law et al. [62] was used. All the items except section one were rated through 5- point Likert scale.

3.3 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic profile of the respondents. The reliability and validity were measured Cronbach's alpha and Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin (KMO) value using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in AMOS 26 (Analysis of Moment Structures – version 23), to run the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with multiple regression analysis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The sample of 310 respondents consisted of 62.6% female respondents and 37.4% male respondents. Most of the respondents were in the age category of 20 -30 years, with 58.7%. Married respondents were 48.1%, while single respondents were 51.9%. Among them, 60.6% of respondents have acquired either Bachelor's degree or a master's degree. A total of 46.5% of respondents work under Non-Executive Grade while 64.5% were represented private sector banks and 35.5% work in the government sector

banks. The majority of the sample were from the 1 -5 years' working experience category, with 54.8%. In summary, this analysis shows that the majority of the sample are young, married, and have completed either a Bachelor's degree or master's degree with the working experience of 1-5 years in private banks. The analysis is shown in Table 1.

4.2 Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity of the questionnaire were measured through Cronbach's alpha test

and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value test, respectively. Cronbach's alpha value over 0.7 is considered as an acceptable value (Cronbach, 1951), and the KMO value should be over 0.60. If it is closed to 0.90, it is stated to be perfect [63]. All the variables were recorded more than 0.7 Cronbach's alpha value and more than 0.6 KMO value confirming that the questionnaire is reliable and validated to carry out the hypothesis test. The results of reliability and validity tests are shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	194	62.6
	Male	116	37.4
	Total	310	100.0
Age Group	20 – 30 Years	182	58.7
	31 – 40 Years	124	40.0
	41 - 50 Years	4	1.3
	Total	310	100.0
Marital Status	Married	149	48.1
	Single	161	51.9
	Total	310	100.0
Educational Qualifications	Bachelor's and Master's Degree	188	60.6
	Certificate and Diploma Level	104	33.5
	GCE Advanced Level and below	18	5.8
	Total	310	100.0
Employed In	Government sector bank	110	35.5
	Private sector bank	200	64.5
	Total	310	100.0
Job Position	Non-Executive Grade	144	46.5
	Executive Grade	116	37.4
	Assistant Manager and Manager Grade	47	15.2
	Senior Manager or above	3	1.0
	Total	310	100.0
Experience in Banking Industry	1 – 5 Years	170	54.8
	6 – 10 Years	97	31.3
	11 – 15 Years	35	11.3
	16 – 20 Years	4	1.3
	Over 20 Years	4	1.3
	Total	310	100.0

Source: Author's calculations.

Table 2. Summary of Reliability and Validity test results

Variable	Cronbach's alpha value	KMO value
Emotional Intelligence	0.872	0.803
Occupational Stress	0.773	0.846
Job Performance	0.901	0.806

Source: Author's calculations.

Table 3. Results of the Model Fit of the final best fitted structural model

Name of Category	Name of index	Obtained value	Required value	Reference	comment
Absolute fit	RAMSE A	0.089	<0.1	Browne & Cudeck, (1993)	The required level is achieved
Incremental fit	CFI	0.920	>0.9	Bentler & Bonett (1980)	The required level is achieved
Parsimonious fit	X ² /df	3.437	<5.0	Tabachnick, Fidell, & Ullman (2007)	The required level is achieved

Source: Author's calculations.

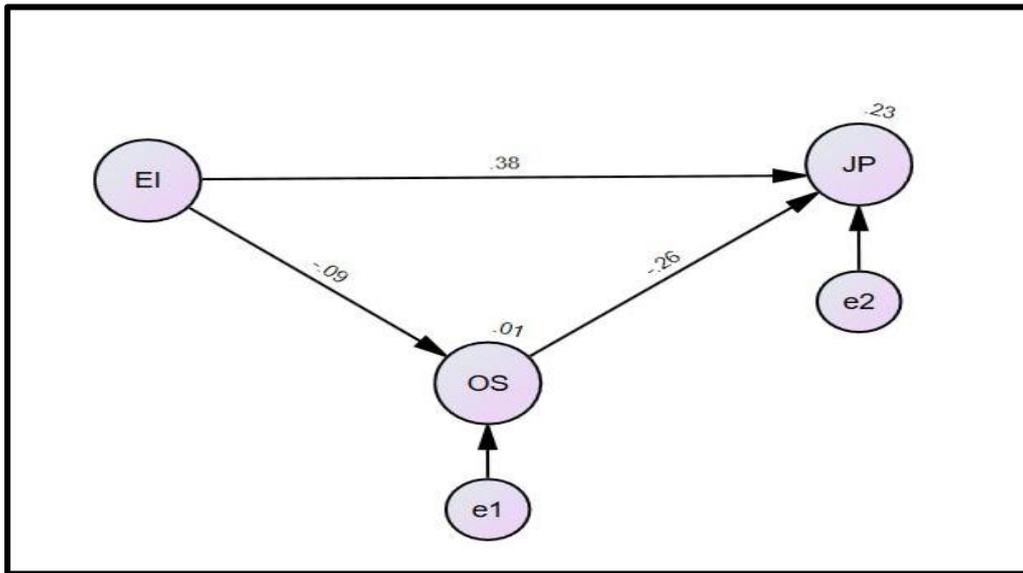


Fig. 2. The Structural Model Path Diagram Developed for Model

Source: Author's illustrations

Table 4. Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypot he sis	Path	Path	The Actual Beta Value	S.E	C.R.	P	Decision
H1	Job Performance	← Emotional Intelligence	0.409	0.077	5.287	***	Accepted
H2	occupational stress.	← Emotional Intelligence	-0.197	0.146	- 1.344	0.179	Rejected
H3	Job performance	← occupation al stress.	-0.126	0.031	- 4.053	***	Accepted

Source: Author's calculations.

Table 5. Mediating impact of occupational stress

Hypothesis	From	Mediation	To	Direct Effect	Indire ct Effect	Total effect
H4	Emotional Intelligence	Occupational Stress	Job Performance	0.385	0.023	0.408

Source: Author's calculations.

4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The confirmatory factor analysis is conducted in order to improve the model fit of the proposed conceptual model. The absolute fit, Incremental fit, and Parsimonious fit were measured. Several indicators of the main variables to improve the model fit were removed from the proposed model as some of them were recorded factor loadings less than 0.5, and some of them were recorded standardized residual covariance more than value 0.4. The results of the model fit are mentioned in Table 3.

4.4 Regression Analysis and Hypotheses Testing

The structural equation modeling technique analyzes the structural relationships among the variables; emotional intelligence, job performance, occupational stress, and multiple regression analysis.

After conducting the multiple regression analyses, the coefficient of determination for occupational stress and job performance were 0.1 and 0.23, respectively, stating that the structural model slightly affects the proposed model. The structural model path diagram developed for the model is shown in Fig. 2, and the hypotheses testing results are shown in Tables 4 and 5.

According to the study results, H₁ is accepted, stating that there is a significant positive impact of emotional intelligence on the job performance of the banking employees in Sri Lanka. This is in line with the previous studies done in different contexts other than banking setting [40, 24, 17, 64, 32, 65, 15]. When considering the banking sector, it is also found out that emotional intelligence is positively associated with improving the job performance of banking employees [41, 18, 42, 43, 44].

In general, studies conducted in the area of emotional intelligence and occupational stress are shown a significant negative relationship between the two variables [49, King and Gardner, 2006; 52, 42, 44]. However, remarkably this study showed a non-significant negative impact of emotional intelligence on occupational stress. Hence, H₂ was rejected. Nevertheless, this was supported by the study done by Newton et al. [66]. It is found out that employees who have high emotional intelligence suffer from stress due to role underload where the role

overload and role underload were identified as a stressor in the study conducted by Shultz et al. [67]. They explained that the less emotionally intelligent employees perceived role underload as an advantage rather than a disadvantage. They consider it an opportunity to be socialized with co-employees and an opportunity to be relaxed. Furthermore, the research carried out in Spain involving the nurses has found out that the nurses who gave close attention to the emotions experienced more work stress [24]. The findings of Limonero's study in 2004 and Extremera's study in 2003 (as cited in [24] are also in line with the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress.

The current study found a significant negative impact of occupational stress on the job performance of the banking employees in Sri Lanka. Thus, H₃ is accepted. This is also supported by the results of similar studies carried out in both global context and Sri Lankan context [53, 54, 2, 55, 42, 68, 57, 69, 58, 70]. Moreover, when considering the banking field, their findings align with the negative relationship between occupational stress and job performance [71, 72, 59].

As shown in table 5, emotional intelligence has a direct effect of 0.385 on job performance. It has an indirect effect of 0.023 through the mediatory path of occupational stress, resulting in a total effect of 0.408, which is significant ($p < 0.05$). Therefore partial mediation can be observed. Even though higher emotional intelligence leads to higher job performance, this positive impact is lowered due to the partial mediation effect of occupational stress. Hence, H₄ is also accepted.

5. CONCLUSION

From the results of the analysis and discussion, this study concluded that the emotional intelligence of banking employees in Sri Lanka impacts job performance with the mediation impact of occupational stress. The banking employees who are more aware of their own emotions and the emotions of others and regulating their own emotions well are likely to perform better in the work setting even though their performance is partially mediated by occupational stress.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The current study has a few implications for management, particularly those working in

service organizations. First, it has been discovered that emotional ability influences job role, career role, and team role across various service settings. Second, self-emotion appraisal ability is required for banking employees to perform well in their roles. Banking employees should be able to use their emotions effectively to perform well in their job, career, and team roles. Emotional management strategies such as emotion recognition and acceptance, emotion amplification, and emotion amplification can be learned.

As suggested in the study, emotional intelligence has a positive impact on job performance. Therefore, organizations can implement emotional intelligence as a tool to improve the job performance of the employees. In every stage, emotional intelligence can be implemented within the organization through different human resources management practices, from the recruitment process to the retirement process. The management can assess the emotional intelligence level of the applicant in the employee selection procedure. It can have an impression on how he/she will maintain both personal and professional relationships with the work setting. Apart from that, management can organize different workshops and training programs to improve their current employees' level of emotional intelligence. This will eventually result in lowered grievances, enhanced work relationships, leading to improved job performance.

Occupational stress has a negative impact on the job performance of the banking employees in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the management can reduce the unfavorable outcomes by implementing flexible work schedules, job redesigning, developing and promoting wellness programs, counseling sessions, and training programs regarding stress management. Mindfulness is another strategy for equipping banking employees with strong emotional intelligence. Simply put, mindfulness is being aware of one's current situation and circumstances. It necessitates an attitude of curiosity, openness, and acceptance on the part of employees. The employee will accept the task with an open mind after some mental deliberation on the subject.

Training, coaching, and mentoring are other strategies advocated by many authors and researchers. According to Davis and Nichols [73], EI can be developed through training to satisfy management in terms of EI abilities in the

workplace. As a result, proper EI training should be provided. Special consideration should be given to addressing the lacking abilities to assist their employees in meeting their performance objectives. A coaching and mentoring program for service members will help them clarify their personal and career goals, plan strategies to achieve these goals, and track their progress.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The current study contains several limitations. The self-reported data is used to analyze the impact of emotional intelligence, occupational stress, and job performance. If different reporting techniques were used with the self-reported data will enhance the ability to explain the relationships through hypotheses. The next limitation is that the found impact of emotional intelligence on job performance as well as the impact of occupational stress on job performance were statistically significant. It recorded a low coefficient of determination. It indicates that there are other variables out there that affect determining the found impacts. Hence, future studies can be conducted on researching other affecting variables in deciding the mentioned impacts. At the same time, new studies can be carried out to make the cross-cultural comparison to understand how these cross-cultural differences affect found associations among emotional intelligence, occupational stress, and job performance. Furthermore, futures research can be conducted on the recommendations provided by this study in order to measure the effectiveness of the proposed human resource management strategies.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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