

## Enhancing Employee Performance in Sri Lanka's Hospitality Industry: The Roles of Organizational Culture, Autonomy, and Counselling

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**Abstract:** The hospitality industry in Sri Lanka is a vital contributor to the economy but faces challenges like high staff turnover, skill gaps, and employee dissatisfaction. This study examines the impact of organizational culture, job autonomy, and counselling on employee performance, focusing on the mediating roles of motivation and organizational commitment. Using a survey of 350 operational-level employees in Colombo city hotels, the research employs quantitative methods, including regression analysis. Findings reveal that job autonomy and counselling significantly enhance employee performance, while organizational culture shows no direct impact. Motivation and organizational commitment mediate the relationships between these variables and performance, highlighting their importance in fostering workforce productivity. These insights provide actionable recommendations for hotel management to improve employee satisfaction and service quality, ultimately strengthening the sector's sustainability and success. This study enriches literature by addressing performance challenges specific to Sri Lanka's hospitality industry.

**Keywords:** *Counselling, Employee Performance, Job Autonomy, Motivation, Organization Commitment, Organization Culture*

### Introduction

Sri Lanka's hospitality sector has grown significantly in recent years, ranking among the top industries in employment and foreign exchange earnings (Jayawardena, 2022). With the expansion of the industry, the demand for skilled and motivated workers has also grown (Arachchi & Gnanapala, 2020). However, despite its growth, the sector continues to face critical challenges, including high staff turnover, skill gaps, inadequate training, and job dissatisfaction, which hinder employee performance and service quality. External pressures, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and economic instability, have further compounded these issues, disrupting workforce stability and productivity (Umasuthan, 2018). These challenges highlight a clear performance gap that threatens the long-term success of the industry and underscores the need for targeted strategies to enhance employee performance.

The hospitality industry is vital to Sri Lanka's economy, contributing significantly to employment and foreign exchange earnings. In 2019, the sector accounted for over 2 million international arrivals and generated LKR 3.013 billion in revenue (SLTDA, 2020). However, the industry is particularly labour-intensive, requiring a motivated and skilled workforce to meet the demands of customer service and operational efficiency (Gnanapala, 2015). Challenges such as employee turnover rates exceeding 30% in some regions (Umasuthan, 2018) and widespread job dissatisfaction (Arachchi & Gnanapala, 2020) make it imperative to explore ways to improve employee performance. These factors justify the focus on Sri Lanka's hospitality industry as the context for this study.

Several factors influence employee performance in the hospitality sector, with organizational culture, job autonomy, counselling, motivation, and organizational commitment identified as the most

critical variables (Hewagama et al., 2019; Gnanapala, 2015; Arachchi & Gnanapala, 2020). Among these, organizational culture is widely cited as a key factor shaping employee attitudes and behaviours. According to Schein (2010), organizational culture refers to shared values, attitudes, and practices that affect employee behaviour. An effective organizational culture fosters motivation and engagement, leading to improved performance (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Jaiswal et al., 2016; Denison et al., 2012; Adam et al., 2020). Studies in the hotel sector have shown that a strong culture positively influences job satisfaction and employee retention (Kim et al., 2020; Guchait et al., 2019), making it a critical area of focus for performance enhancement.

Job autonomy, defined as the degree to which employees control their responsibilities and decision-making, is another critical factor affecting performance. The rationale for focusing on job autonomy stems from its demonstrated ability to enhance motivation, creativity, and engagement in the hospitality sector, which struggles with high turnover and dissatisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Kim et al., 2017; DeVaro & Raulston, 2018). Research specific to hotels has shown that autonomy promotes creativity and job satisfaction, significantly impacting productivity (Kim et al., 2017; Guchait et al., 2019). Additionally, elements like job design, training, and communication can amplify autonomy's effects on performance, making it a crucial area of study for addressing performance gaps (De Spiegelare et al., 2016; Rahaman et al., 2021).

Counselling is another key variable that offers employees guidance and support to overcome work-related challenges and improve performance. Effective counselling strategies can boost motivation

and job satisfaction, although factors like accessibility, type, and effectiveness of counselling services influence its impact (Minter & Thomas, 2000; Neupane, 2015; Robbins & Judge, 2017; Pousa et al., 2017). Its relevance is heightened in the hospitality sector, where the high-pressure work environment often demands additional support mechanisms for employees. Studies in hotel management have shown that counselling interventions can reduce stress and improve overall employee well-being, contributing to better performance (Cuming, 2008; Pousa et al., 2017).

The mediating roles of motivation and organizational commitment are pivotal in understanding the relationship between these factors and employee performance. Motivation, defined as the drive that influences behaviour, and commitment, the degree to which employees identify with and are dedicated to their organization, are critical for enhancing productivity and engagement (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Ryan & Deci, 2014). Research consistently shows that motivated and committed employees perform better, achieve higher job satisfaction, and contribute to organizational success (Deci & Ryan, 2014; Lam et al., 2016; Simatupang & Saroyeni, 2018; Karim et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2021).

This research article aims to address the performance gap by investigating the combined impact of organizational culture, job autonomy, and counselling on employee performance in Sri Lanka's hospitality sector, with a focus on the mediating roles of motivation and organizational commitment. By providing a comprehensive understanding of these factors, the study seeks to offer actionable insights for hotel management to enhance employee performance and drive the industry's success.

## Literature Review

### *Hospitality Industry in Sri Lanka*

The hospitality industry, which encompasses the lodging, food and beverage, and tourist businesses, is significant to Sri Lanka's economy. Sri Lanka's natural beauty and extensive cultural past draw a lot of tourists (Chandrasekhar & Pushpakanti, 2017). Serving these guests, assuring their satisfaction, and increasing the nation's image as a tourism destination all depend on the hotel industry (Samaranayake & Fernando, 2017). The industry encompasses many companies, including hotels, resorts, restaurants, and other tourism-related enterprises. The Sri Lankan economy depends heavily on the hotel industry. The Sri Lankan economy primarily benefits from the hotel industry, which accounts for a significant share of employment and GDP in the nation (Chandrasekar & Pushpakanthi, 2017). The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) reports that the sector drew over 2 million visitors and earned USD 3.6 billion in total in 2019. (SLTDA, 2020). The firm offers employment to many Sri Lankans, particularly in rural regions where tourism is a significant source of revenue (Samaranayake & Fernando, 2017). In Sri Lanka, the hotel sector is now experiencing a severe problem. The 2019 Easter bombings, the COVID-19 breakout, and political instability are just a few of the recent difficulties Sri Lanka's hotel sector has suffered (Samaranayake & Fernando, 2017). These challenges have severely impacted the industry, resulting in a drop in arrivals and profitability (SLTDA, 2020). In line with previous findings on operational challenges in the Sri Lankan hotel industry (Prabuddha & Ranasinghe, 2023), our analysis suggests that external pressures, such as those linked to data privacy concerns and digital marketing dynamics further exacerbate the negative impact of political instability

on employee work performance. Other than these the industry has also faced problems with service quality, a need for more skilled workers, and upgrading facilities and infrastructure (Chandrasekhar & Pushpakanti, 2017).

### *Employee Performance*

Employee performance is a critical factor that directly influences the success and sustainability of organizations in the tourism industry. As a service-driven sector, employee performance determines the quality of customer experiences, operational efficiency, and overall brand reputation (Karpen et al., 2015). Employees in this industry often operate in dynamic environments requiring high adaptability, interpersonal skills, and consistent productivity. However, issues like high turnover rates, inadequate training, and job dissatisfaction significantly undermine employee performance in the tourism sector (Stamolampros et al., 2019). In developing nations, including Sri Lanka, the lack of robust employee development frameworks and insufficient motivation strategies exacerbates this challenge, leading to compromised service delivery (Senadheera, 2013). Moreover, employees frequently face long working hours, seasonal workload fluctuations, and limited career growth opportunities, further impacting performance. The increasing reliance on customer-centric models demands a workforce capable of delivering personalized, high-quality experiences. Addressing barriers to employee performance is not only critical for organizational success but also for enhancing the industry's ability to compete in global markets (Horváth & Szabó, 2019). Thus, a detailed examination of performance-related issues and their underlying causes is imperative to ensure sustainable growth in the tourism sector. Similarly, echoing

evidence from agro-tourism research conducted by Weerasinghe et al. (2023), our results indicate that income level plays a critical mediating role, partially buffering the detrimental effects of political instability on work performance.

### ***Organization Culture and Employee Performance***

A corporation's "organizational culture" refers to its shared beliefs, norms, customs, and practices. It impacts how people behave and how well an organization performs (Schein, 2010). He offers his staff freedom and guidance while acting as the organization's interface. Values, beliefs, behaviors, and artifacts are the four fundamental components of corporate culture, according to Cameron and Quinn (2011). Performance of Employees and Organizational Culture Organizational culture significantly impact employee performance. According to studies, a strong company culture may boost commitment, job satisfaction, and employee engagement and all of which improve performance (Denison et al., 2012; Jaiswal et al., 2016). In today's competitive business environment, employees must have innovation, creativity, and adaptability, and a positive workplace culture may promote these qualities (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The hospitality industry is distinct and requires a specific emphasis on client pleasure and service. As a result, the elements affecting organizational culture in the hospitality sector may be unique from those in other sectors. According to studies, organizational culture in the hotel sector may be influenced by leadership style, organizational structure, organizational communication, and organizational support (Kim and Kim, 2015; Zhang et al., 2018). Organizational culture has a significant impact on employee motivation and

organizational commitment. An efficient organizational culture focusing on employee well-being, recognition, and career growth may increase employee motivation and commitment (Kim & Kim, 2015). Also, a solid organizational culture that promotes belonging and shared purpose may increase staff employees' commitment to the company (Denison et al., 2012). Contrarily, a negative workplace culture characterized by a lack of trust, poor communication, and low morale may reduce employee commitment and motivation (Jaiswal et al., 2016). To bridge these identified gaps, this study proposes following hypothesis, "H1 – There is a positive effect of Organization Culture on Employee Performance", "H4 – There is a positive effect of Organization Culture on Motivation" and, "H7 – There is a positive effect of Organization Culture on Organization Commitment."

### ***Job Autonomy and Employee Performance***

Job autonomy is the degree to which workers have the freedom and discretion to decide how they will carry out their duties on the job (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). It is critical to measure employees' overall performance, motivation, and job satisfaction (DeVaro & Raulston, 2018). Job autonomy has consistently been linked in research to higher employee performance. Moreover, autonomy at work boosts levels of creativity and invention, two crucial components for attaining long-term economic success, according to a meta-analysis by De Spiegelaere et al. (2016). (Oldham and Cummings, 1996). Various factors impact job autonomy in the hotel sector, including organizational structure, management philosophy, and employee abilities (Kim et al., 2017). For instance, job autonomy may be constrained by a hierarchical organizational structure and stringent

rules and regulations. On the other hand, a participatory management style and flat organizational structure may promote work autonomy and raise motivation and employee engagement (DeVaro & Raulston, 2018). The potential for job autonomy affects motivation (Gagne & Deci, 2015) to provide workers with a sense of self-determination and control. Employees are more likely to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for their work when they have the flexibility to make choices and act independently, which increases their desire to work effectively (Kanfer et al., 2017). Also, it has been shown that organizational commitment, which refers to a worker's connection and dedication to their firm, and job autonomy are positively connected (Meyer & Allen, 2017). When workers have a high degree of job autonomy, they are more likely to feel appreciated and trusted by their employers, which leads to a solid commitment to the business (Laschinger et al., 2019). The link between job autonomy, employee motivation, and organizational commitment may also be influenced by other variables, such as job demands, job resources, and individual variance (Bakker et al., 2018). Companies must consider these factors when creating new jobs and managing their workforces to reap the rewards of job autonomy fully. Therefore, to bridge these identified gaps, this study proposes following hypothesis, “H2 – There is a positive effect of Job Autonomy on Employee Performance”, “H5 – There is a positive effect of Job Autonomy on Motivation” and, “H8 – There is a positive effect of Job Autonomy on Organization Commitment.”

### ***Counseling and Employee Performance***

Employees get direction and support from a third-party during counseling to help them resolve their personal or professional issues. According to Robbins

and Judge (2017), guiding is essential for enhancing employee well-being, work satisfaction, and productivity. It involves the counselor and employee having a one-on-one chat during which the counselor listens, counsels, and assists the employee in coming up with new solutions to difficulties. Workplace counseling has been shown to improve employee performance. Research by Al-Qatab et al. found that counseling aids staff members in identifying their strengths and weaknesses, setting objectives, and developing solutions to enhance their performance. According to a study published in 2019, counseling approaches may lower stress levels while boosting workers' self-esteem and job happiness. Counseling may take many different forms in the hospitality sector. Employee assistance programs (EAPs), which provide workers access to qualified counselors for both personal and work-related difficulties, are one kind of counseling. Coaching is a different kind of counseling that takes a more organized approach to enhance employee performance via feedback and training (Neupane, 2015; Robbins & Judge, 2017). Also, some hotels could provide staff with conflict resolution or stress management training. Studies show that work autonomy and employee motivation are closely associated (Neupane, 2015; Parker & Wall, 2019; Hu et al., 2020). When given a chance to make decisions and control their job, employees are more likely to experience a feeling of belonging and responsibility, which may increase motivation. This is particularly true for employees who value independence and growth as individuals (Gupta & Sharma, 2021). More organizational commitment correlates with job autonomy (Mansour et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2021). When workers have greater control over their job, they may feel more a part of the organization and its objectives. High loyalty and

commitment may result from this feeling of connection and belonging. It is essential to understand that there are nuances in the relationship between organizational commitment and professional autonomy. Research shows that too much autonomy at work can make workers less engaged, incredibly overworked, or unsupported (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2020). To address these needs, this research hypothesizes, “H3 – There is a positive effect of Counseling on Employee Performance”, “H6 – There is a positive effect of Counseling on Motivation” and “H9 – There is a positive effect of Counseling on Organization Commitment.”

### **Motivation**

Gagné and Deci (2015) define *motivation* as a psychological condition that causes someone to act in a specific manner to accomplish a particular goal or aim. It is a comprehensive idea that is affected by internal and external influences and contextual, situational, and personal considerations (Deci & Ryan, 2014). Motivation is often seen as a crucial element in the workplace, influencing dedication to the business, job happiness, and employee performance (Li & Wong, 2019). Several research studies have examined the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance. Many of these studies have indicated that organizational culture significantly impacts employee motivation, job satisfaction, and performance (Denison & Mishra, 2017; Huang et al., 2021). A theoretical framework called Self-Determination Theory (SDT) has been proposed to explain this connection (Deci & Ryan, 2014). According to SDT, employees are more likely to be motivated if they feel confident, independent, and linked to others. Organizational cultures that adhere to these standards are more likely to promote employee

engagement and performance (Gagné & Deci, 2015). Job autonomy is the degree of authority and discretion an employee has over how they carry out their duties (Lam et al., 2016). According to studies (Karim et al., 2019), job satisfaction and employee motivation are positively connected with job autonomy. A theoretical framework called the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) has been put out to explain this connection (Hackman and Oldham, 2018). According to JCM, job autonomy is one of the vital employment characteristics that may boost employee motivation, enhance job satisfaction, and enhance performance. As part of the workplace counseling process, employees get support, direction, and counseling to assist them in dealing with challenges in their personal and professional lives (Greenberg & Baron, 2017). According to studies, counseling may enhance staff well-being, reduce stress, and boost job satisfaction, resulting in improved work output (Fernandez et al., 2016). A theoretical framework called the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R) has been put forward to explain this connection (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The JD-R model classifies mentoring as a career resource since it may enhance job performance by boosting employee engagement and lowering workplace stress. theories have been put up to explain the connection between employee performance and motivation. One such theory is the self-determination theory (SDT), which asserts that self- motivation, or drive from inside, outperforms extrinsic motivation, or drive generated from rewards, in terms of motivation. SDT contends boosting people's self-motivation and performance by meeting their fundamental psychological demands for autonomy, competence, and relationship (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Goal setting theory is another theory that examines the relationship between performance and

employee motivation (Locke and Latham, 1990). Another theory that examines the connection between performance and employee motivation is the idea of goals (Locke and Latham, 1990). This hypothesis states that setting clear and defined goals will increase performance because motivated workers are more likely to succeed in their objectives. According to goal-setting theory, encouragement and constructive criticism motivate employees to meet their objectives and enhance their performance. Several empirical investigations have examined the mediating function of motivation in the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance. For example, research by Li and Wong in 2019 showed that organizational culture significantly improves employee engagement, increasing employee performance. Huang et al. came to similar results. They discovered in their 2021 study that organizational culture positively impacted employee engagement, job happiness, and motivation, all of which helped employees perform their jobs more effectively. Several studies have emphasized the significance of job autonomy as a crucial element in determining workers' motivation and productivity (Deery et al., 2017; Ghitulescu, 2019; Karami

& Faraji, 2020). The freedom to make decisions and carry out tasks in line with one's personal and professional objectives leads to high levels of intrinsic motivation and work satisfaction (Ghitulescu, 2019; Karami & Faraji, 2020). The role of motivation as a mediator in the connection between employee performance and job autonomy has also been researched recently. For instance, studies by Alshammari and Almutairi (2021) and Ghazi et al. (2021) discovered that motivation significantly mediates the positive link between job autonomy and employee performance. This shows that job

autonomy, directly and indirectly, improves employee performance via increased motivation levels. Counselling has increased employee performance while enhancing mental and emotional well-being (Houkes et al. et al., 2003; Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005). Moreover, mentoring has improved job satisfaction and staff engagement (Tehseen et al. et al., 2017). According to studies, mentoring may mitigate the connections between job stress, employee engagement, and job satisfaction (Shimazu et al., 2015). Also, it has been shown that counseling increases mentees' self-awareness, self-confidence, and stress tolerance (Fryer, 2018; Zamanian & Jafari, 2016). Results include increased job satisfaction and performance (Kim, Beehr, & Joo, 2017). Jiang and Probst's (2016) study found that employee job satisfaction moderates the relationship between counseling and employee performance. Studies show that employee motivation and performance positively correlate (Bagraim, 2016; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Judge & Bono, 2001). Workers are more likely to be motivated to put in extra effort to accomplish defined objectives that may improve performance, according to a study by Latham and Pinder from 2005. According to the study, praise and acknowledgment are crucial in encouraging employees to meet their objectives and enhance their performance. Several research (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000) have shown that self-motivation significantly impacts behavior and performance more than external motivation. Ryan and Deci's (2000) study found that intrinsically driven participants outperformed extrinsically motivated participants and reported greater levels of pleasure.

According to the research study, organizational culture, job autonomy, counseling, motivation, and organizational commitment are crucial elements of employee success in the hotel business. Sri Lankan

hospitality companies should endeavor to develop a corporate culture that prioritizes worker happiness and encourages a feeling of community among its staff. They should also allow employees to show job autonomy by choosing their own job and the resources they need to succeed.

### ***Organization Commitment***

Organizational commitment is an individual's psychological connection with a firm and what drives them to continue working there. A worker's dedication, connection with the organization's values and aims, and desire to work there for an extended period are vital factors (Meyer & Allen, 2017). The social exchange hypothesis states that employee performance and organizational culture may impact workers' commitment to their employer. Organizational culture refers to shared principles, norms, and practices that shape employees' attitudes and actions inside a firm (Chatman and Eunyoung, 2015). A positive organizational culture promotes employee loyalty to the firm, which enhances worker performance (Denison, 2018). The level of control an employee has over their work and decisions is called autonomy at work. Several theories contend that job autonomy enhances organizational commitment and employee performance (Parker & Wall, 2016). According to self-determination, employees with greater control over their job are more likely to feel motivated and committed to their organization (Deci & Ryan, 2014). Employees needing assistance managing their personal and professional issues may get counseling. Mentoring may increase a company's commitment, which enhances employee performance (Harms and Roebuck, 2016). By assisting the employee in managing stress and other workplace-related concerns, counseling may increase their loyalty

to the organization. Employee Performance and Organizational Commitment: Theoretical Basis Research has shown that organizational commitment improves employee performance in the hospitality sector. According to Meyer and Allen (1997), organizational commitment is a worker's emotional attachment to and loyalty to the firm that motivates them to stick around and try to achieve the company's objectives. The three elements that make up organizational commitment are affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. "Emotional commitment" refers to a worker's emotional connection to and desire to remain with the organization. Employees' commitment to remain with the organization is determined by their perception of the high cost of leaving. An employee's responsibility to remain employed by a corporation for moral or ethical grounds is called normative commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997). According to a study, an excellent organizational culture may boost worker loyalty to the business and thus enhance productivity (Denison, 2018; Kim, 2015). According to Kim's (2015) study, for instance, workers' loyalty and productivity to the firm were both enhanced by a robust organizational culture.

According to studies, job autonomy enhances organizational commitment and employee performance (Parker & Wall, 2016; Shantz et al., 2016)—for instance, Shantz et al. study's (2016). Employees' emotional connections to the organization were shown to be favorably connected with job autonomy, which resulted in improved performance. Research indicates that counseling positively impacts employee loyalty to the organization, which enhances employee performance (Harms & Roebuck, 2016; Yu & Kim, 2017). For instance, Yoo and Kim's (2017) study discovered that counseling boosted employee

commitment to the business, enhancing work satisfaction and performance. A positive relationship between organizational commitment and employee performance has been shown in several research. For instance, Choi and Kim's (2016) study of the Korean hospitality sector discovered a link between organizational commitment and employee behavior. According to a study, employees with high organizational commitment levels exhibit superior work satisfaction and performance than those with low organizational commitment levels. The Korean hospitality sector study by Lee and Choi (2018) also showed that organizational commitment positively impacts employee performance. According to a study, employees who believe their bosses are dedicated to them report better job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviors, and performance. The hotel industry in Pakistan, was studied by Ali et al. in 2021, and they discovered that organizational commitment had a significant influence on worker performance. According to research, those who are happy about the organization are likelier to report high work satisfaction, job completion, and community engagement.

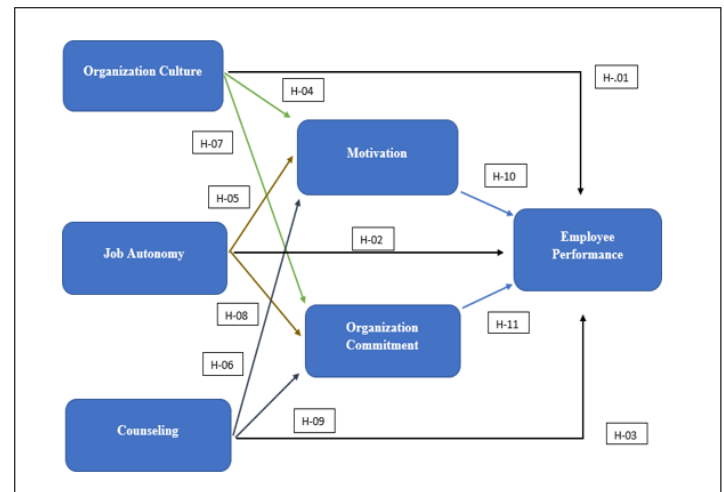
**Hypothesis Development**

- H1 – There is a positive effect of Organization Culture on Employee Performance
- H2 – There is a positive effect of Job Autonomy on Employee Performance
- H3 – There is a positive effect of Counseling on Employee Performance
- H4 – There is a positive effect of Organization Culture on Motivation

- H5 – There is a positive effect of Job Autonomy on Motivation
- H6 – There is a positive effect of Counseling on Motivation
- H7 – There is a positive effect of Organization Culture on Organization Commitment
- H8 – There is a positive effect of Job Autonomy on Organization Commitment
- H9 – There is a positive effect of Counseling on Organization Commitment
- H10 – There is a positive effect of Motivation on Employee Performance
- H11 – There is a positive effect of Organization Commitment on Employee Performance

**Conceptual Framework**

**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework**



Source: Developed by the Researcher base on the literature (2024)

## Methodology

This study aimed to explore the relationship between organizational culture, job autonomy, and counseling on employee performance in the hospitality industry in Sri Lanka, with motivation and commitment as mediating factors. A quantitative approach was employed, involving survey data collected from 350 operational-level employees working in food and beverage, front office, kitchen, and housekeeping departments of 3-, 4-, and 5-star hotels in the Colombo district. Colombo was chosen due to its high concentration of Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA)-registered hotels. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's table, with a confidence level of 95% and a 5% margin of error (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Since the population size was undefined, the sample size was based on statistical guidance suitable for large populations. Purposive sampling was critically justified as it allowed the selection of knowledgeable participants who were directly involved in operational-level activities, ensuring relevant insights into the research variables (Fellows & Liu, 2021). Data collection was conducted through an online self-structured questionnaire in Sinhala and English to overcome language barriers. The operationalization of constructs was developed based on prior literature and included organizational culture, job autonomy, and counseling as independent variables, motivation and commitment as mediators, and employee performance as the dependent variable. Statistical analysis included descriptive and multiple regression methods to test hypotheses and describe respondent demographics. Ethical considerations were upheld, with informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation ensured, as approved by the institute's ethical committee. Limitations included the use of

purposive sampling, restricting generalizability to the broader population, potential social desirability bias in self-reported data, and the inability of the cross-sectional design to establish causality.

## Results

### *Measurement Model Evaluation*

#### **Reliability test – indicator level – first order model**

To assess measurement model or outer model, at first should be measure the internal consistency of the measuring observed latent construct and indicators with each other. Indicator reliability describes that the which part of underlying construct has been explained by indicators' variance (Götz et al., 2010). To inspect this most frequently use absolute correlations (i.e., standardized outer loadings) which should be greater than 50 % described by the latent construct (Chin, 1998). Though according to the (Henseler et al., 2009) suggested that value greater than 0.7 is adequate. Consequently, in the current study Smart PLS V 3.0 was used to test reliability assess Internal consistency of the measurement instrument of the model. Table 4.1 depicted the indicator outer loadings of each latent construct.

**Table 4.1: First order Model – Indicator Outer Loadings**

	Outer		Outer
Indicator	Loading	Indicator	Loading
AD1	0.877	MO3	0.952
AD2	0.847	OC1	0.902
AD3	0.864	OC2	0.909

AL1	0.864	OC3	0.961
AL2	0.901	Q2	0.725
AL3	0.862	Q3	0.516
DM1	0.740	S1	0.869
DM2	0.828	S2	0.839
DM3	0.881	S3	0.811
EP1	0.817	SV1	0.831
EP2	0.815	SV2	0.865
EP3	0.752	SV3	0.719
EP4	0.873	TV1	0.829
EP5	0.844	TV2	0.883
F1	0.801	TV3	0.894
F2	0.757	TY1	0.779
F3	0.715	TY2	0.835
MO1	0.958	TY3	0.795
MO2	0.695		

Source: Smart Pls Output (2024)

According to the results of Smart PLS V 3.0, table 4.7 indicated that the outer loading of measuring indicators was greater than the minimum threshold criterion 0.70 except MO2 and Q3. The outer loading ranging from 0.516 - 0.961 and it was meet the requirements of psychometric reliability measurements (Henseler, Ringle et al. 2009).

**Reliability test – Construct Level – First order Model**

In this study, the reliability of the construct level was assessed using two commonly used measures: Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) (Hair, Ringle et al., 2014). These measures provide an indication of the internal consistency and reliability of the constructs.

Table 4.2 in the study presents the Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability values for each latent variable. It is observed that the Cronbach's alpha values for all variables are greater than the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Cronbach, 1951). This indicates a high level of internal consistency, suggesting that the indicators within each latent variable are reliably measuring the underlying construct. Similarly, the Composite Reliability values for all variables are higher than the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair, Ringle et al., 2014). This further confirms the reliability of the constructs at the construct level, indicating that the indicators chosen for each latent variable have a strong and consistent relationship with the construct they are intended to measure.

**Table 4.2: First order Model – Construct Reliability & validity**

Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
0.883	0.888	0.908	0.557
0.88	0.889	0.912	0.675

0.944	0.948	0.953	0.692
0.845	0.919	0.907	0.769
0.915	0.919	0.946	0.855
0.956	0.957	0.962	0.739

Source: Smart Pls Output (2023)

**Validity test – Convergent Validity – First order Model**

In this study, convergent validity was assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) method, which is a widely accepted approach in the scholarly literature (Hair, Ringle et al., 2014). The AVE represents the amount of variance captured by a construct's indicators, indicating the degree to which the construct is converging in measuring the underlying variable.

Table 4.8 in the study displays the AVE values for each underlying variable. It is observed that the AVE values for all variables are greater than the acceptable threshold of 0.50 (50%). This suggests that each underlying variable in the study explains more than half of the variance in its corresponding measuring indicators, indicating a satisfactory level of convergent validity. In other words, the indicators of each variable consistently converge to measure the intended construct.

**Validity test – Discriminant Validity – First order Model**

The Fornell-Larcker criteria and cross-loadings are two commonly used metrics in social science research to assess discriminant validity. Additionally, the

Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) correlation ratio is another method that has been found to be more sensitive and specific in assessing discriminant validity compared to the Fornell-Larcker and cross-loadings criteria.

In the current study, Tables 4.3 and 4.4 present the findings related to discriminant validity and HTMT. These results indicate that the model in the study meets the criteria for discriminant validity, suggesting that the constructs are distinct from each other and measure different underlying concepts. This finding is important as it indicates that the measurement model used in the study is effective in distinguishing between the constructs being investigated.

**Table 4.3: Model – Fornell & Lacker Criterion**

	Counselling (CO)	EMP Performance (FP)	Job Autonomy (JA)	Motivation (MO)	Organization Commitment (OCO)	Organization Culture (OCU)
CO	0.746					
EP	0.562	0.821				
JA	0.841	0.543	0.832			
MO	0.806	0.650	0.769	0.877		
OCO	0.597	0.890	0.480	0.615	0.924	
OCU	0.753	0.698	0.772	0.703	0.728	0.860

Source: Smart Pls Output (2024)



**Table 4.4: Model – HTMT**

	Counselling (CO)	EMP Performance (EP)	Job Autonomy (JA)	Motivation (MO)	Organization Commitment (OCO)	Organization Culture (OCU)
CO						
EP	0.596					
JA	0.913	0.586				
MO	0.885	0.736	0.815			
OCO	0.64	0.965	0.488	0.674		
OCU	0.819	0.741	0.805	0.744	0.766	

Source: Smart Pls Output (2024)

**Structural Model Evaluation**

**Collinearity assessment of the model**

To detect any collinearity issues within the model, the authors recommended examining the variance inflation factor (VIF) of the structural model. The VIF should ideally fall within the range of 0.2 to 5.0 (Hair, Ringle et al., 2014). In the current study, the Smart PLS analysis revealed that all indicators had VIF values between 0.2 and 5.0 (refer to Appendix A, Table A1), indicating that collinearity was not a significant concern in the model.

**Significance and relevance assessment of the model**

The significance of the path relationships between the exogenous and endogenous variables was evaluated through the estimation of hypothetical relations, also known as path estimation (Hair, Ringle et al., 2014). In essence, the path connections within the inner model were assessed using regression coefficients ( $\beta$ ), which were derived from t-values and p-values generated through the Smart PLS bootstrapping procedure with 5000 sub-samples (Hair, Ringle et al., 2014). The PLS bootstrapping results for the current study are presented in Table 4.5

**Table 4.5: Path Coefficients & significance**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
CO → EP	-0.286	-0.285	0.055	5.181	0.000
CO → MO	0.493	0.492	0.073	6.790	0.000
CO → OCO	0.382	0.380	0.093	4.082	0.000
JA → EP	0.266	0.263	0.058	4.572	0.000
JA → MO	0.244	0.244	0.073	3.362	0.001
JA → OCO	-0.449	-0.446	0.070	6.421	0.000
MO → EP	0.181	0.183	0.051	3.523	0.000
OCO → EP	0.849	0.849	0.038	22.483	0.000
OCU → EP	-0.037	-0.038	0.052	0.712	0.477
OCU → MO	0.143	0.145	0.056	2.561	0.010

OCU	→					
OCO		0.788	0.787	0.071	11.151	0.000

Source: Smart Pls Output (2024)

The results of the analysis indicate that the relationship between Organization Culture and EMP Performance was found to be statistically insignificant. However, all other relationships in the model were found to be positively significant at a 95% confidence level. Additionally, the bias-corrected confidence intervals did not include zero for these significant relationships. Therefore, the findings suggest that Hypothesis 9 (H9) was not supported, while all other hypotheses were accepted.

**R<sup>2</sup> of the model**

The R<sup>2</sup> value represents the percentage of variance in the endogenous variable that is explained by the exogenous variables (Hair, Ringle et al., 2014). The number of measured exogenous variables plays a role in determining the R<sup>2</sup> value. Specifically, a larger number of exogenous factors leads to a higher R<sup>2</sup> value, while a smaller number result in a lower R<sup>2</sup> value (Chin, 1998).

Moreover, R<sup>2</sup> values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are considered significant, moderate, and weak, respectively (Hair, Ringle et al., 2014). In the present study, the R<sup>2</sup> value is calculated to be 0.830. This means that the endogenous variable, EMP Performance, is influenced by the exogenous variables Counselling, Job Autonomy, Motivation, Organization Culture and Organization Commitment and that these variables collectively account for a 83.0% change in EMP Performance.

**F<sup>2</sup> of the model**

Within the structural model, various endogenous constructs can exert an influence on an exogenous construct, both in the inner model and outer model. When an independent variable is removed from the conceptual model, the dependent variable is expected to be affected accordingly. The change in the R<sup>2</sup> value, denoted as F<sup>2</sup>, indicates the impact of removing an independent variable from the model. To assess the effect of removing independent variables, the F<sup>2</sup> statistic is employed, and its effect size is categorized as small (≥0.02), medium (≥0.15), or large (≥0.35) based on Cohen's (1988) guidelines. In this study, the F<sup>2</sup> values are presented in Table 4.6. The findings reveal that the effect size of the model on the endogenous variable was reduced when the independent variables Organization Culture were removed. However, it is worth noting that the introduction of additional paths or exogenous variables, such as Organization Commitment, may contribute to observable effects, thereby explaining the relatively mild influence on the effect size.

**Table 4.6: F<sup>2</sup> of the Model**

	F2 Value of EMP Performance
Counselling	0.103
EMP Performance	
Job Autonomy	0.084
Motivation	0.056
Organization Commitment	1.627
Organization Culture	0.002

Source: Smart Pls Output (2023)

### *Q<sup>2</sup> of the model*

To assess the predictive skills of the model within the structural model, it is important to examine the agreement between the observed values and the estimated values generated by the model itself. In this regard, the Q2 value, introduced by Stone-Geisser (Stone, 1974; Geisser, 1975), plays a crucial role as it measures the predictive relevance of the endogenous variable's measurement indicators. The Q2 criteria enable the assessment of cross-validation redundancy (CV) by employing the sample reuse approach (Chin, 1998; World, 1982). According to Hair, Ringle, et al. (2014), a Q2 value greater than zero indicates that the model is predictively relevant, whereas a Q2 value of zero or less suggests a lack of predictive relevance.

In the current study, the Q2 value of the model is calculated to be 0.534. This value being greater than zero indicates that the model possesses a significant level of predictive relevance. This finding implies that the model successfully predicts the measurement indicators of the endogenous variable, further reinforcing the validity of the model in the study.

### *Model Fit*

In the final stage of the analysis, the effect size of path estimation and the predictive relevance capabilities of the model were assessed. Additionally, the overall fit of the model was evaluated using the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) as the approximation model fit criterion, following the guidelines of PLS path modeling (Henseler et al., 2016). Traditionally, SRMR values of 0.05 and above have been considered indicative of acceptable model fit indices (Byrne, 2008). However, recent research suggests that SRMR values of 0.06 and higher can also be considered acceptable for fully defined models (Henseler et al.,

2016). Moreover, a threshold value of 0.08, as proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999), is used in this study. Upon examining the results presented in Table 4.16, it is evident that the SRMR value of the current study's model is above the acceptable threshold of 0.08. This indicates that the overall fit of the model in the current study can be considered satisfactory.

**Table 4.7: Results of Model Fit Indices**

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.135	0.135
d_ULS	12.83	12.893
d_G	4.223	4.266
Chi-Square	7473.028	7487.639
NFI	0.603	0.602

*Source: Smart Pls Output (2023)*

### **Discussions**

The discussion of the study integrates the hypothesis testing results with the analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationships among the variables. The results indicate that Organization Culture has no statistically significant impact on Employee Performance, as evidenced by the path coefficient (-0.037) and a p-value (0.477) that exceeds the 0.05 threshold, thereby rejecting H1. However, Job Autonomy positively influences Employee Performance ( $\beta = 0.266$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H2, and Counseling negatively affects Employee Performance ( $\beta = -0.286$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), contradicting H3. On Motivation, Organization Culture demonstrates a significant positive effect ( $\beta = 0.143$ ,  $p = 0.010$ ), supporting H4, while Job Autonomy

( $\beta = 0.244, p = 0.001$ ) and Counseling ( $\beta = 0.493, p < 0.001$ ) also exhibit positive and significant relationships, supporting H5 and H6, respectively. Furthermore, Organization Culture has a substantial positive effect on Organization Commitment ( $\beta = 0.788, p < 0.001$ ), affirming H7, while Job Autonomy shows a significant negative relationship ( $\beta = -0.449, p < 0.001$ ), refuting H8, and Counseling positively impacts Organization Commitment ( $\beta = 0.382, p < 0.001$ ), supporting H9. Additionally, Motivation positively affects Employee Performance ( $\beta = 0.181, p < 0.001$ ), supporting H10, and Organization Commitment strongly influences Employee Performance ( $\beta = 0.849, p < 0.001$ ), validating H11. The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.830 for Employee Performance indicates that 83.0% of its variance is explained by the exogenous variables, reflecting the robustness of the model. These findings underscore the intricate relationships among the constructs and highlight areas where organizational interventions can be strategically targeted to enhance Employee Performance, Motivation, and Organization Commitment. While most hypotheses were supported, the insignificant effect of Organization Culture on Employee Performance warrants further exploration to identify potential mediating or moderating factors that could influence this relationship on.

## Conclusions

This study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing employee performance in Sri Lanka's hospitality industry, with a particular focus on the roles of organizational culture, job autonomy, and counselling. By exploring the mediating effects of motivation and organizational commitment, the research presents a comprehensive analysis of the complex relationships among these variables. The

findings reveal that job autonomy positively impacts employee performance, highlighting its importance in empowering employees and fostering productivity. Similarly, counselling demonstrates a significant positive relationship with motivation and organizational commitment, though its direct effect on employee performance is unexpectedly negative. This nuanced result suggests that while counselling benefits the broader organizational framework, its implementation requires careful consideration to avoid potential unintended consequences. Interestingly, organizational culture shows no significant direct impact on employee performance but plays a critical role in enhancing motivation and organizational commitment. This finding suggests that organizational culture's influence on performance may be indirect, mediated by other variables, such as employee motivation or engagement. Future research should further explore these mediatory pathways and investigate contextual factors unique to Sri Lanka's hospitality sector. The mediating roles of motivation and organizational commitment are pivotal. Both factors significantly enhance employee performance and bridge the relationships between organizational culture, job autonomy, counselling, and performance outcomes. The strong influence of organizational commitment, as evidenced by its robust effect size, underscores its critical role in sustaining high performance levels and workforce stability in the hospitality industry. The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.830 for employee performance demonstrates the model's robustness, indicating that a substantial proportion of performance variance is explained by the studied variables. This reinforces the practical relevance of the research findings for management practices in the hospitality sector.

## Implications of the study

The findings of this study hold significant implications for the management of Sri Lanka's hospitality industry. Enhancing employee performance requires a strategic focus on job autonomy and counselling, as these factors directly and indirectly influence employee outcomes. Providing employees with greater autonomy in decision-making fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, which translates into improved productivity and satisfaction. Counselling services, when implemented thoughtfully, can address employee well-being, enhance motivation, and strengthen organizational commitment, although care must be taken to ensure these interventions are aligned with performance objectives. While organizational culture does not directly affect employee performance, its role in shaping motivation and commitment cannot be overlooked. Managers should strive to build a supportive culture that nurtures trust, collaboration, and employee engagement, thereby creating an environment conducive to sustained workforce productivity. These insights offer practical guidance for hospitality managers to design targeted interventions that address skill gaps, reduce turnover, and promote a committed and motivated workforce, contributing to the overall success of the industry.

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## Future Research Directions

The study opens several avenues for future research to deepen the understanding of employee performance in the hospitality sector. The unexpected finding that organizational culture has no direct impact on performance warrants further exploration, particularly to identify potential mediating or moderating factors such as leadership styles, team dynamics, or cultural differences. Similarly, the negative relationship between counselling and performance suggests the need to examine how counselling programs are perceived and delivered, as well as their short-term versus long-term effects on employee outcomes. Future research could also expand the scope to include diverse geographical regions or other segments of the hospitality industry, such as resorts or boutique hotels, to capture a broader perspective. Qualitative studies could provide richer insights into the lived experiences of employees, uncovering nuances that quantitative methods may overlook. By addressing these gaps, future research can build on the findings of this study to develop a more comprehensive framework for enhancing employee performance in the hospitality industry.

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