

The Impact of Occupational Health and Safety Practices on Employees' Performance of Operational Level Employees in Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka

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Abstract: Garment manufacturers and suppliers have earned a worldwide reputation for producing high-quality garments and are trusted by global fashion brands. Apparel sectors in Sri Lanka follow strict occupational health and safety (OHS) standards. It is noted that unhealthy working practices, directly and indirectly, influence the employees' performance. A safe and healthy working environment for employees is a vital challenge the apparel industry faces, which is essential for job performance. The health and safety conditions related to the apparel sector are continuously becoming critical and complex. However, it is still questionable how occupational health and safety influence employee performance in the apparel sector. Convenience sampling was used to select respondents for the study. The researcher collected data from 363 operational-level employees in the apparel sector through a structured questionnaire. Convenience sample technique was used to select the respondents. SPSS 21 statistical package was used to analyze data. Simple linear regression and multiple linear regression analysis methods were used in data analysis to achieve the research objectives. In conclusion, the job performance of the operational-level employees in the apparel sector is intrinsically driven by occupational health and safety practices as employees consider their life safety. The researcher provided several practical and policy implications based on the study's results. Also, the study cleared the path for future research areas on OHS and job performance.

Keywords: *Occupational Health and Safety practices, Job performance, Job satisfaction*

Introduction

The apparel industry in Sri Lanka significantly contributes to the country's economy, with 52% of export revenue in 2021 coming from this sector. The industry is owned by the private sector and employs around 400,000 direct and 2 million indirect employees (Bandara et al., 2022). The industry has seen a growth in exports over the years, with the biggest market share being the USA. The industry has built a solid reputation for producing high-quality clothing trusted by well-known international fashion labels over the past few years (Fernando et al., 2020). The apparel industry in Sri Lanka faces numerous occupational health and safety issues due to dissatisfaction with employment and inadequate implementation of health and safety practices (Kularathna & Perera, 2016). Also, Sri Lanka is further ranked with low occupational health and safety due to the common improvement steps implemented (De Silva & Wimalaratne, 2012).

Kularathna and Perera (2016) emphasize that due to the dissatisfaction associated with employment and the low degree of application of occupational health and safety practices, most workers have left their organizations. The conditions of working in the apparel sector are incompatible with ensuring effective health practices, according to Ahmed and Raihan (2014). The hazardous work is integrated with the organizations that manufacture apparel, as in most other industries (Mostafizur & Sobuj, 2011). The hazardous work, including cotton dust, chemical reagents, dyeing, and washing, harms humans and contributes to low job satisfaction. Poor ergonomics and health hazards also contribute to accidents, which can result in fatalities (Talapatra & Rahman, 2016). Poor health and safety culture practices negatively impact company profitability, leading to low salaries, inadequate benefits, long hours, poor working conditions, unhealthy working environments, lack of job security, and limited opportunities for career advancement (Dheerasinghe, 2009). It is noted that

unhealthy working practices, directly and indirectly, influence the employees' performance (Kumarasinghe & Dilan, 2022). Agreeing with Thatshayini and Rajini (2018), ensuring a safe and healthy working environment for employees is a vital challenge faced by the apparel industry, which is essential for job performance. The health and safety conditions related to the apparel sector are getting critical and complex continuously (Sobuj, 2011).

According to Saravanan (2011), the apparel sector is generally considered a secure workplace, but its expansion in developing countries shows limitations due to workplace hazards. These hazards include burns, puncture wounds, heat and noise, allergies, poor posture, poor nutrition, and psychological risks. These hazards significantly influence workers' health and safety and the company's productivity (Chaturvedi & Kumar, 2015). The authors Crampton and Hodge (2008) argue that the insecurities and instabilities at the workplace have worsened employment conditions in the modern business world. This further led to a reduction in employee job satisfaction during the last decades. Promoting occupational health and safety is vital for worker-intensive production industries, as it prevents workers from health hazards, protects them from adverse health factors, and provides a safe work environment that aligns with human capabilities.

Literature Review

Job Performance

Employee performance is crucial for a company's success and survival, as it determines the effectiveness, quality, and efficiency of output. In the apparel sector, employee performance is high due to meeting deadlines and meeting productivity targets (Meyerson & Dewettinck, 2012). Poor health and safety practices, poor working conditions, and high turnover rates contribute to low productivity. Poor wages, long hours, and harsh working conditions contribute to low employee performance (Opatha, 2009). According to Kumarasinghe and Dilan (2022), high employee turnover, lack of skilled labor, and low employee morale also contribute to poor job performance. The apparel sector also resists change, hindering HR efforts to improve employee performance. Effective communication and training programs are essential for employee development and

Apparel sectors in Sri Lanka follow the strict nature of OHS. Silva and Jayamaha (2012) mentioned that this is one of the significant aspects of allowing companies to manage their workers. Adapting occupational safety and health in the workplace aids in the promotion and maintains the highest level of social but physical and mental well-being in all occupations. The working environment of this sector is mainly connected with a variety of workers, machines, and management. Considering this, it is necessary to reduce and eliminate health risks and standards. However, it is still questionable how occupational health and safety influence employee performance in the apparel sector.

Moreover, the researcher found that the scholar's interest in research on OSH practices and their impact on job satisfaction and performance in Sri Lanka is limited, leading to a lack of published studies on this topic in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, there is an empirical gap related to the influence of OHS on employee performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector. Thus, this study is conducted to identify the impact of occupational health and safety on operational-level employees' job satisfaction and performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector. Therefore, the research question follows:

What is the impact of Occupational health and safety practices on operational-level employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector

job performance (Kelegama & Epaarachci, 2003). Health and safety conditions in the apparel sector are becoming increasingly critical and complex. Addressing these issues is essential for the overall success of the apparel industry. The global apparel industry is implementing various practices to improve employee performance. Miah and Mominul Haque Talukder (2012) highlight through their study that effective performance management, regular evaluations, training, and development are crucial for understanding strengths and weaknesses, boosting motivation, and enhancing job performance.

Employees can understand their strengths and weaknesses through regular performance evaluations and goal setting. This can lead to improved performance and increased motivation. Another vital practice that is commonly executed is providing

training and development for apparel sector workers. Training and development are essential for acquiring new skills and improving existing skills while obtaining updated knowledge regarding the industry's growth. It is vital for the improvement of the job performance of the employees (Gammanpila & Kodisinghe, 2020). Promoting employee engagement in the process of decision-making is essential to offering opportunities for apparel workers. Better performance results from improving employee engagement (Ahmed, 2017). Employee engagement, effective communication, incentives, and technology integration are also essential. In the Sri Lankan apparel industry, effective rewards systems, work-life balance, occupational health and safety practices, and training and development are key practices (Andersen & Segars, 2001). These practices help organizations assess employee performance, reduce stress, and improve productivity. The apparel sector must also focus on improving workplace design, reducing workplace hazards, and fostering employee engagement.

Occupational Health and Safety

Occupational health and safety emerged during the Industrial Revolution as a response to concerns about laborer health and safety. A healthy work environment can enhance productivity and profitability, but it is often prioritized over worker safety (Moyce & Schenker, 2018). In the apparel industry, businesses often prioritize productivity over worker safety, working longer hours and in hazardous conditions. Leso et al. (2018) stated it is necessary for an employee to perform their best and work for long periods during instances where a deadline must be achieved by the firm in the apparel industry. This means that businesses try to become more productive at the expense of the safety of their employees by making them work not only longer but harder with increased usage of hazardous conditions that are extreme. However, they only implement measures pertaining to health and safety to keep the cost of compensation down. To improve employee well-being, organizations must invest in equipment, safety measures, facilities design, and job design.

Tompa (2002) emphasizes that investing in safety measures, such as helmets, goggles, clothing, and personal protective equipment (PPE), is crucial for

maintaining a safe working environment. Satisfied and motivated employees contribute significantly to the success of an organization. According to Mahanama and Ratnajeewa (2018), organizations should guard unguarded equipment and reduce overloaded unsafe storage to prevent injuries. Adequate equipment such as goggles, clothing, and helmets is also essential. Employee job satisfaction is primarily impacted by their health conditions. Research done by Health (US), Centers for Disease Control, Prevention (US), & Human Services Dept. (US) (2018) shows that 40% of employees feel stressed or burnt out at work, while 26% feel burnt out. Implementing effective safety and health initiatives can create positive perceptions and promote employee job satisfaction.

Occupational health and safety practices (OHSP) play a vital role in improving the job performance of machine operators, especially in the production sector. OHSP includes training and education, utilization of personal protective equipment, and implementation of wellness programs. Poor application of OHSP can lead to reduced job performance and increased job dissatisfaction among employees (Kularathna & Perera, 2016). In conclusion, OHSP plays a significant role in enhancing job satisfaction and performance in the manufacturing sector. By ensuring employees' health and safety, implementing appropriate policies and procedures, and providing security and comfort, organizations can improve their overall performance and overall organizational success.

Occupational Health and Safety Practices

According to Robson et al. (2012), training related to occupational health and safety is the technique of safety management that was practiced the most. It was realized that the staff who received the training related to occupational health and safety suffered a reduced number of injuries pertaining to work in comparison to those who did not receive the training. Such training helps employees gain increased competencies to control their work. It also aids them in safely performing their job. Training also has the potential to enhance the skills related to solving employees' problems. This also means it indirectly exerts effects on safety. Conducting effective training programs can indeed reduce injuries related to work, amount of deaths, damages to property, legal liability, sickness, and workers' compensation claims in a high manner. It

is necessary for companies to make occupational health and safety training compulsory for the staff from the ground level to the top level. Ratna and Kaur (2016) explained that employees play an essential role in striving for companies to achieve the statement of each and the goals and objectives of the firm. Firms can't attain their goals without the help of human resources. Therefore, human resources management plays an important and critical role.

Bayram (2019) stated that occupational health and safety are critical in human resource management. This has a direct influence on the employees. It also directly affects employee performance (Tengilimoglu et al., 2014). This also guarantees the employees' safety. Engagement in occupational health and safety increases job satisfaction as well as the job performance of the employees. Occupational health and safety will also provide employees with a sense of security and protection and improve job satisfaction. Ratna and Kaur (2016) also explained that most employees leave their companies because of dissatisfaction with their work and decreased performance because of poor occupational health and safety practices. Training provided to the employees related to occupational health and safety practices will make them feel protected. Such a healthy and secure working environment will boost the level of confidence and increase job performance and job satisfaction (Bayram, 2019).

Job Satisfaction

The positive and praising perspectives towards employment are defined as job satisfaction (Armstrong, 2006). Positive emotions about an individual's job generated after assessing its specific features refer to job satisfaction. Individuals with high job satisfaction have positive feelings toward employment (Robbins & Judge, 2009). Job satisfaction focuses on the central emotion. Central emotions are not shared with a single procedure. Therefore, all the other factors influencing overall job satisfaction are concerned (Bakotic & Babi, 2013). An excellent emotional perspective that persuades an individual to love his employment is identified as job satisfaction. The morale of work, discipline, and performance of work are the behavioral aspects that reveal the attitude of satisfied workers, according to Hasibuan and Hasibuan (2016). Different dimensions

of the efforts, opportunities for career expansion, connections between employees, placements of work, and design of the organization that develops the basement require accomplishing performance (Dost, 2012). Wexley and Yukl (2005), as cited by Gamal et al. (2022), reveal that job satisfaction is developed, including seven key features that depend on job characteristics. These features are compensation, bonds with superiors, work itself, bonds with colleagues, conditions of work, opportunities for career advancement or position changes, and security of employment. All these factors are vital for determining job satisfaction. Meager wages, rewards, and salaries make employees dissatisfied. Job satisfaction is influenced when supervision is conducted by paying attention while supporting employees' preferences. Numerous ranges of skills, the identity of the tasks, independence, and feedback obtained through a job affect job satisfaction. The interconnections between employees influence job satisfaction as supportive coworkers' job satisfaction increases. The clean and arranged working environments make employees more comfortable performing their jobs, ensuring high satisfaction (Gamal et al., 2022).

High-performing workers, especially in the apparel sector of Sri Lanka, are challenging to retain due to low salaries, exclusive work pressure, high workload, and low recognition. However, some organizations implement numerous strategies for the retention of talented workers. Job satisfaction among employees is improved by offering charming reward packages for the improvement of job satisfaction among the employees, which leads to employee retention. Employees' intention to search for other job opportunities reduces when an organization has established an effective remuneration system (Harunavamwe & Kanengoni, 2013). Benefits play a significant role in attracting and retaining workers in the long term. Both reward types, monetary and non-monetary, must be offered (Aguinis et al., 2012). When establishing a system of rewards, it is vital to carefully assess the employees' performance at all levels to reward them for improving performance by increasing employee satisfaction (Aktar et al. 2012).

Regarding human resource practices that ensure job satisfaction of apparel sector employees, Piyasena and

Kottawatta (2015) highlight numerous HR practices that can be implemented, as reflected through prior studies. Niazi (2014) emphasizes that career development opportunities and job satisfaction have a significant relationship. Therefore, apparel sector companies ought to provide different career advancement opportunities for employees working at all levels in apparel companies. As for the argument developed by Rasouli, Mooghali, Mousavi, and Rashidi (2013), employee compensation influences employee satisfaction. Hence, apparel companies are focusing on compensating their employees by introducing regular performance evaluation systems, competitive salaries, benefits packages, bonuses, and incentives. The significance of offering balance on employee satisfaction has been emphasized by Jeet and Sayeeduzzafar (2014), Droussiotis and Austin (2007), and Oyeniyi, Afolabi, and Olayanju (2014). Jeet and Sayeeduzzafar (2014) emphasize that employee participation significantly influences job satisfaction, and apparel organizations must focus on participating employees in decision-making (Ray & Ray, 2011). Khan et al. (2012) emphasize that employee empowerment is a vital HRM practice that can improve job satisfaction, as it shows a positive relationship with job satisfaction. Moreover, the establishment of effective HRM practices for the improvement of industrial relations (Khan & Taher, 2008), job design (Majumder, 2012), job rotation (Ray & Ray, 2011), leadership (Sarker, 2014), performance

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

According to the literature review, the researcher identified two independent variables. The study's independent variables are occupational health and safety training and employee attitudes toward occupational health and safety. Employees'

appraisal (Jeet & Sayeeduzzafar, 2014), promotion (Khan et al., 2012), and training and development (Syed & Yah, 2012) are vital as these factors have significant impacts on job satisfaction.

Job demand resource theory (JD – R)

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory integrates seamlessly with occupational health and safety (OHS) concepts to influence job performance. Physical Demands: Jobs with high physical demands, such as heavy lifting or exposure to hazardous materials, can lead to injuries and health problems. Effective OHS practices reduce these risks, decreasing absenteeism and increasing productivity.

Psychological Demands: High-stress environments, emotional labor, and job insecurity are psychological demands that can impact mental health. OHS initiatives like stress management programs and mental health support reduce stress and burnout, leading to better job performance. By integrating the JD-R Theory with OHS practices, organizations can create a balanced work environment where job demands are managed, and job resources are enhanced. This leads to improved employee well-being, which in turn boosts job performance. Effective OHS measures reduce the negative impact of high job demands and amplify the positive effects of job resources, fostering a productive and healthy workforce.

performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector is selected as the study's dependent variable. Based on this, the researcher developed the following conceptual framework.

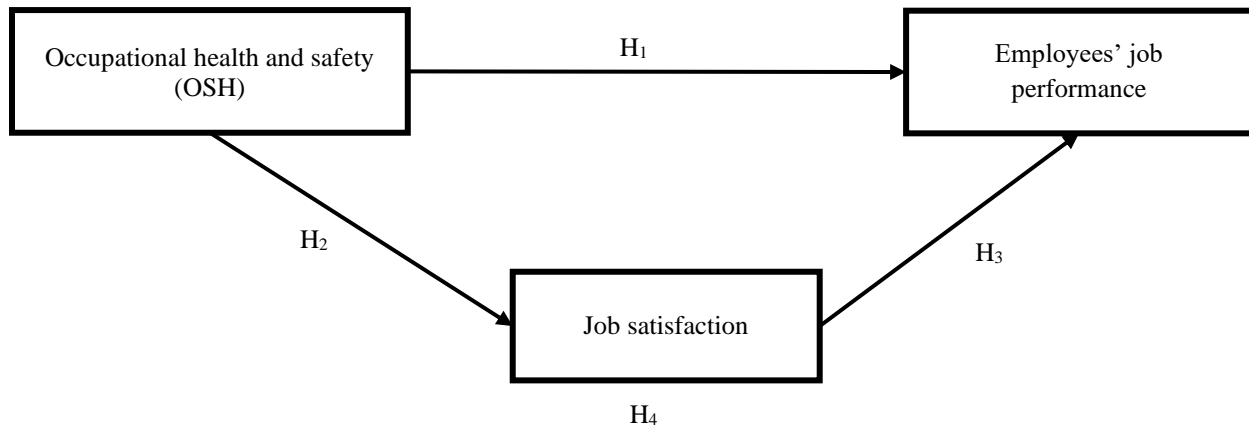


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source: Author

Hypothesis Development

study by Ahmad et al. (2017) statistically proved the impact of occupational health and safety (OHS) on employee performance within the construction industry in Ghana. Ahmad et al. (2017) also mentioned in their study that employers operating within the construction industry can optimize the productivity of their workforce by prioritizing occupational health and safety concerns within their work environment. Additionally, evidence suggests that enhanced workplace safety can lead to improved employee performance. Amponsah-Tawiah & Mensah's (2016) findings indicate that neglecting attention to occupational health and safety policies may lead to increased occupational accidents and diseases within the sector, resulting in adverse impacts on the lives and performance of employees. The results validate the conclusions drawn by previous studies conducted by Funmilayo (2014) and Ahmad et al. (2017), which indicate that employee performance is influenced by occupational health and safety. According to Bayram (2019), providing security and comfort by production staff in the workplace has enhanced employee job performance. According to Amponsah-Tawiah & Mensah's (2016) research, the implementation of occupational health and safety protocols not only promotes employee safety and security but also

decreases workplace accidents and improves job performance.

Yusuf et al. (2012) also mentioned the efficacy of employee performance is also impacted by the execution of the Occupational Safety and Health (OHS) framework. According to Ahmad et al. (2017), maintaining optimal levels of employee safety and health is crucial as it can significantly influence employee and organizational performance. Accordingly, the following hypothesis has been constructed.

H1 – Occupational health and safety impact operational-level employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector.

A strong relationship exists between job satisfaction and the job performance of employees. It is necessary for the employees to be happy and satisfied to increase their level of performance. This was depicted by the research conducted by Gamal et al. (2022) and that of Dizgah et al. (2012), which mentioned a similar concept where a strong relationship was displayed between job satisfaction and job performance of the employees. The results of the study conducted by Gamal et al. (2022) stated that it is when employees become satisfied with their jobs and tend to have positive attitudes towards their jobs. These employees tend to perform work on time, are highly concerned about their targets, perform their work free of errors

and omissions, and are more loyal and committed to their jobs.

A positive impact exists between job satisfaction and the job performance of the employees. This was determined from research conducted by Dizgah et al. (2012). Similar research that was conducted focusing on these two variables also mentioned the fact about the existence of a positive impact on job satisfaction on the job performance of the employees (Kilic & Selvi, 2009; Bayram (2019); Bayram et al., 2017: Amponsah-Tawiah & Mensah, 2016). This means that when the level of job satisfaction increases, the performance level of the employees rises. Accordingly, the following hypothesis has been constructed.

H2 – Occupational health and safety impact the job satisfaction of operational-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel sector.

Job satisfaction positively impacts various aspects of employee behavior and work outcomes, including morale, discipline, loyalty, motivation, and performance. Implementing this measure has been shown to decrease unexplained absences, stress-related leaves, and employee turnover (Kilic & Selvi, 2009; Dizgah et al., 2012; Yusuf et al., 2012). According to Dizgah et al. (2012) study, it has been suggested that occupational health and safety (OHS) issues have a direct negative impact on worker productivity, leading to a high incidence of work-related injuries. In a comparable study, it was observed that there exists a positive correlation between the degree of industrial health and the level of employee job performance. Accordingly, the following hypothesis has been constructed.

Methodology

The study's independent variable is occupational health and safety practices, with employee performance as the dependent variable and job satisfaction as the mediator variable. Also, the researcher developed four hypotheses for the study. The convenience sampling method will be used to select respondents for the study. According to Bolonne (2020), will be 400,000 employees working in the Sri Lankan Apparel sector by 2019. Therefore, the population size of the study is 400,000. Therefore, the

H3 – Job satisfaction impacts employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector.

Researchers work to categorize many aspects of job satisfaction, rank each aspect's relative importance, and examine how these aspects affect job performance (Riyanto et al., 2021). According to Idris et al. (2021), job satisfaction plays a pivotal role in enhancing the performance of employees. This provides both enthusiasm and high motivation to increase productivity in the employees. Job satisfaction also has an impact on the working conditions of the environment as well as the performance of the employees.

Pudyaningsih et al. (2020) stated that job satisfaction could either directly or indirectly be the mediator for the relationship between the work environment as well as the performance of the employee. A positive relationship exists between job performance and job satisfaction. A worker showing high job performance is a worker who is highly satisfied with his job. Similarly, a worker unsatisfied with his job will show less job performance. Job satisfaction can be considered one of the key factors for the staff to work optimally (Pudyaningsih et al., 2020). The studies conducted by Ahmad et al. (2017) and Gamal et al. (2022) have determined that job satisfaction is a mediator in the correlation between Occupational Health and Safety and job performance.

H4 – Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between Occupational health and safety and employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector.

researcher selected 384 as the sample size for this study based on the Morgan table (Chaokromthong & Sintao, 2021). The researcher collected data from 363 operational-level employees in the apparel sector through a structured questionnaire. The questions were adopted as Occupational health and safety (OHS) by Jane (2018) & Okumu (2016), Job performance by Fernández-del-Río et al. (2019) and job satisfaction by Raziq & Maulabakhsh (2015). In the data analysis, the researcher employed SPSS software. Simple linear

regression and multiple linear regression analysis methods were used in data analysis to achieve the

research objectives. The operationalization of the variables is given as follow

Variable	Dimension	Indicators	Source	
Occupational health and safety (OHS)	OHS training.	The company that I work for provides sufficient OHS training to the employees. The first aid training provided by my company is improving my OHS skills at work. My company frequently evaluates the employees' training regarding OHS.	Jane (2018)	
	Protective clothing	My company provides sufficient knowledge about using protective clothing during work. The company provides protective clothing to the staff. The company provides protective equipment to the employees.	Okumu (2016).	
	Working environment	I'm satisfied with the physical working conditions. I'm satisfied with the current maintenance of the buildings in my workplace. I'm satisfied with the hygiene maintenance of the workplace.	Raziq & Maulabakhsh (2015)	
Job satisfaction	Sense of ownership	I'm satisfied with the work activated compared to my skills. I'm satisfied with the opportunities given by the company to improve my competency. I'm satisfied with access to the necessary equipment for performing my tasks.		
	Work Performance	Task performance	I manage to plan my work so that I finish it on time. I keep in mind the work result I need to achieve. I am able to carry out my work efficiently.	Fernández-del-Río et al. (2019)
		Contextual performance	I work on keeping my job-related knowledge up to date. I work on keeping my job-related skills up to date. I come up with creative solutions for new problems.	

Table1: Operationalization

Source: Developed by researcher, 2023

Analysis

In this section, the researcher presented the results obtained from the SPSS analysis. First, the researchers screened the data and then analyzed the demographic information of the respondents through the frequency

analysis that comes under the descriptive analysis. Then, the researcher conducted a simple linear regression analysis and multiple regression analysis to achieve the research objectives. All results are shown graphically, and figures and tables are explained

Demographic variable		Responses	Response rate
Overall working experience	Less than 05 years	102	28.1
	05 – 10 years	160	44.1
	11 – 15 years	66	18.2
	More than 16 years	35	9.6
Working experience in the current organization	Less than one year	77	21.2
	01 – 03 years	89	24.5
	04 – 06 years	9	2.5
	07 – 09 years	143	39.4
	10 or more years	45	12.4
Age	18 – 25 years	126	34.7
	26 – 35 years	127	35.0
	36 – 45 years	73	20.1
	46 – 55 years	33	9.1
	56 or above	4	1.1
Marital status	Single	126	34.7
	Married	154	42.4
	Separated	23	6.3
	Divorced	18	5.0
	Widowed	18	5.0
	Living together	24	6.6
Education	Up to O/L	180	49.6
	O/L	147	40.5
	A/L	24	6.6
	Diploma	6	1.7
	Graduate or above	6	1.7
Monthly Income	Up to LKR 20,000	16	4.4
	LKR 20,001 - LKR 30,000	122	33.6
	LKR 30,001 - LKR 40,000	133	36.6
	LKR 40,001- LKR 50,000	53	14.6
	LKR 50,001 or above	39	10.7
Gender	Male	168	46.3
	Female	195	53.7

Table 2: Respondent profile

Source: Developed by researcher, 2023

Reliability statistics An adequate level of reliability is indicated by a Cronbach Alpha value of at least 0.7. The Cronbach Alpha scales from zero to one. High scores show that the tool is accurate, reliable, and steady in measuring the idea of interest. By computing the Cronbach Alpha coefficient for each construct or dimension of an instrument, researchers can determine the reliability of the scale.

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha Value
Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)	6	0.847
Job performance	6	0.918
Job satisfaction	6	0.882

Table 3: Reliability test

Source: SPSS results (2023)

The researchers used a six-item scale to gauge Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) as the first study variable. Cronbach's alpha for this variable came in at 0.847, showing a high degree of internal consistency across the different items. Cronbach's alpha for this second variable, "Job performance," was 0.918. This measure used a six-item scale. The internal consistency of the third variable, "Job satisfaction," was found to be good, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.882 and a sizeable sample size of six items. Cronbach's alpha values above 70 indicate that the scales used to measure the variables in this research have high internal consistency, which bodes well for the validity of the results.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Occupational Health and safety practices	3.2	0.444
Job performance	3.83	0.646
Job satisfaction	3.41	0.509

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

Source: SPSS results (2023)

The research conducted this study to achieve three objectives. The first objective was to examine the

relationship between occupational health and safety and operational level employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector. The second objective of the study was to examine the influence of occupational health and safety on operational-level employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector. The third objective of the study was to analyze the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between occupational health and safety and operational level employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector. The existence of the mediation effect has been proved using the Baron and Kenny approach. The Sobel test can assess its significance. The values obtained by the regressions in Baron and Kenny's approach are required and shown below.

Hypothesis testing

The relationship between OHS and job performance.

The researcher conducted a simple linear regression analysis using OHS as the independent variable and job performance as the dependent variable. The researcher analyzes the effect of OHS on the job performance of operational-level employees in the Sri Lankan garment sector and presents the results of linearity, homogeneity, model summary, ANOVA table, and coefficients.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.705 ^a	.497	.495	.45859
a. Predictors: (Constant), OHS				

Table 4: Model summary for the impact of OHS on job performance.

Source: SPSS results (2023)

The model summary for the impact of OHS on job performance is shown in Table 2. A relatively high positive connection was found between OHS and job performance (R = 0.705). Approximately 49.7% of the variation in job performance can be accounted for by the predictor variable (OHS), as shown by the

coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.497. Taking into consideration the total number of predictors, the adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted R Square) is stated to be 0.495. The estimate's standard error, written out in row 2, is 0.45859. The standard deviation shows how much the observed values of the dependent variable (job performance) deviate from the average OHS from the regression model. The Model Summary indicates that a significant amount of job performance variance may be accounted for by the regression model that includes OHS as a predictor. With an R-squared value of 0.497, OHS can be shown to explain 49.7% of the variation in Job performance.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	74.941	1	74.941	356.350	.000 ^b
Residual	75.919	36	.210		
Total	150.859	36			

a. Dependent Variable: Job performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), OHS

Table 5: ANOVA for the impact of OHS on job performance.

Source: SPSS results (2023)

The influence of OHS on job performance was analyzed using Analysis of Variance (Table 3). The total squares, df, mean squares, F-statistic, and related significance level (Sig.) are all broken out in the table. The sum of squares is shown as 74.941 with 1 df in the Regression column. The extent to which OHS contributes to the explanatory power of the regression model for predicting future behavior. The reported value for the F-statistic is 356.350, the ratio of the regression's mean square to the residual's mean square. The importance of the regression model is measured by this statistic. The resultant F-value is statistically significant (p .000), suggesting that the OHS predictor in the regression model adequately accounts for the variation in job performance.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1 (Constant)	.557	.175		3.181	.002
OHS	1.025	.054	.705	18.877	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

Table 6: Coefficients for the impact of OHS on job performance.

Source: SPSS results (2023)

Table 4 displays both the unstandardized (B) and the standardized (Beta) coefficients, together with their standard errors, t-values, and degrees of significance. As the intercept of the regression equation, the constant term (Constant) is a must-have variable. Here, the constant term of 0.557 represents the projected value of job performance under conditions of zero OHS. Error in the constant term is calculated to be 0.175. OHS has a significant predictive value of 1.025. A one-unit increase in OHS results in an estimated one-unit shift in job performance, as seen by this unstandardized coefficient. The OHS coefficient standard deviation is 0.054. When all other factors are controlled for, this coefficient indicates how much of an impact OHS has on explaining job performance. Taking the estimated coefficient and dividing it by the margin of error yields a t-value of 14.934 for the perceived usage coefficient. Moreover, the significance value is recorded as 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. As shown by the t-value and the P-value, the coefficient is statistically significant. The researcher identified a positive correlation between OHS and operational-level employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector. Moreover, the OHS significantly impacts the operational level of employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector.

The relationship between OHS and job satisfaction.

Model	R	Adjusted Square	R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.842 ^a	.708	.708	.27545

a. Predictors: (Constant), OHS

Table 7: Model Summary for the impact of OHS on Job satisfaction.

Source: SPSS results (2023)

The model summary for the effect of OHS on job satisfaction is shown in Table 5. Data on the model's goodness of fit and its ability to predict job satisfaction using the OHS variable is provided in the table. The R-value is recorded as 0.842. Therefore, the researcher identified a strong positive correlation between OHS and job satisfaction. According to R-squared, the variation in the effort expectation variable accounts for around 70.8% of the variance in job satisfaction. Based on these results, it seems that OHS is only highly predictive of job satisfaction. An adjusted R-squared of 70.8% indicates that the model fit has been enormously enhanced by adding OHS as a predictor.

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	66.570	1	66.570	877.380	.000 ^b
Residual	27.390	36	.761		
Total	93.960	36			

a. Dependent Variable: Job satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), OHS

Table 8: ANOVA for the impact of OHS on job satisfaction.

Source: SPSS results (2023)

The effects of OHS on job satisfaction are shown by analysis of variance in Table 6. The significance of the regression model and the individual variables in predicting job satisfaction is shown in the table. The significance value is recorded as 0.000, indicating that the whole regression model is statistically significant for making predictions about job satisfaction.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1 (Constant)	.327	.105		3.109	.002
OHS	.966	.033	.842	29.621	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job satisfaction

Table 9: Coefficients for the impact of OHS on Job satisfaction.

Source: SPSS results (2023)

The coefficients for the effect of OHS on job satisfaction are shown in Table 7. The table includes both raw and adjusted coefficients, as well as P values. The unstandardized coefficient for the variable of OHS is 0.966. Keeping all other predictors the same, this coefficient measures the shift in the job satisfaction score for each unit increase in OHS. OHS has a standardized coefficient of 0.842. To evaluate the relative relevance of various predictors, this coefficient stands in for the standardized impact of OHS on job satisfaction. The t-value of 11.243 for the OHS coefficient indicates statistical significance. The significance level (Sig.) shown in the last column indicates how likely it is that the observed t-value was generated randomly. With a significance level of .000, the influence of OHS on job satisfaction is shown to be statistically significant.

In summary, the researcher identified a positive correlation between OHS and operational-level employees' job satisfaction in the Sri Lankan apparel sector. Moreover, the OHS has a significant impact on the operational level of employees' job satisfaction in the Sri Lankan apparel sector.

The relationship between job satisfaction and job performance

Model	R	Adjusted Square	R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.774 ^a	.599	.598	.40914

a. Predictors: (Constant), JS
b. Dependent Variable: WP

Table 10: Model Summary for the impact of job satisfaction on job performance

Source: SPSS results (2023)

According to the results indicated in Table 8, the correlation value between job satisfaction and job performance is recorded as 0.774. Therefore, it can identify a strong positive correlation between job satisfaction and job performance. Moreover, the Adjusted R-square value is recorded as 0.598. Therefore, it can be concluded that job satisfaction accounts for 59.8% of the job performance of operational-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel sector.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	90.429	1	90.429	540.203	.000 ^b
Residual	60.431	36	.167		
Total	150.859	36			

a. Dependent Variable: WP
b. Predictors: (Constant), JS

Table 11: ANOVA for the impact of job satisfaction on job performance.

Input:	Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a .966	Sobel test: 9.64950137	0.07878563	0
b .787	Aroian test: 9.64448659	0.07882659	0
s _a 0.033	Goodman test: 9.65452398	0.07874464	0
s _b 0.077	Reset all	Calculate	

mediation effect is 9.64950137, and the standard error is 0.07878563. The P-value is recorded as 0.000. Since the P-value is recorded as less than 0.05, it can be concluded that job satisfaction has a significant

Figure 2: Sobel test results

Source: SPSS results (2023)

Source: SPSS results (2023)

According to the results of the ANOVA table, the model is significant. The P-value is recorded as 0.000.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1 (Constant)	.483	.146		3.316	.001
JS	.981	.042	.774	23.242	.000

a. Dependent Variable: WP

Table 12: Coefficients for the impact of job satisfaction on job performance

Source: SPSS results (2023)

The results revealed that job satisfaction has 0.981 of unstandardized coefficient B value. The significant value is recorded as 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. Therefore, this result revealed that when job satisfaction is increased by one unit, the job performance of operational-level employees in the Apparel industry in Sri Lanka is increased by 0.981 units.

Mediator analysis

The researcher employed the Sobel test to identify the significance of OHS and the job performance of operational-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel sector based on the data available in Table 4.11. The Sobel test value of the

indirect effect on the relationship between OHS and the job performance of operational-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel sector

Discussion

According to the study results, the correlation value between the OHS and operational-level employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector was 0.705, and the results were significant. Therefore, the researcher identified a strong positive correlation between OHS and operational-level employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector. The findings of the current study's simple linear regression show that the unstandardized coefficient beta value for OHS is 1.025. Furthermore, the p-value of 0.000 indicated that these results were significant. Additionally, the findings of the multiple linear regression analysis showed that the unstandardized coefficient beta value for OHS was 0.265, and this finding was also deemed significant. Therefore, the current study determined that the OHS practices of the Sri Lankan garments have a positive impact on the operational-level employees' job performance.

The present study results support the existing literature suggested by Ahmad et al. (2017), Amponsah-Tawiah & Mensah (2016), Funmilayo (2014), and (Bayram, 2019). Amponsah-Tawiah & Mensah's (2016) findings indicate that neglecting attention to occupational health and safety policies may lead to an increase in occupational accidents and diseases within the sector, resulting in adverse impacts on the lives and performance of employees. The aforementioned results validate the conclusions drawn by previous studies conducted by Funmilayo (2014) and Ahmad et al. (2017), which indicate that employee performance is influenced by occupational health and safety. According to Bayram (2019), the provision of security and comfort by production staff in the workplace has been found to enhance employee job performance. According to Amponsah-Tawiah & Mensah's (2016) research, the implementation of occupational health and safety protocols not only promotes employee safety and security but also decreases workplace accidents and improves job performance. Accordingly, the researcher identified a positive correlation between OHS and operational-level employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector. Moreover, the OHS significantly impacts the operational level of employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector.

"Occupational health and safety impact operational-level employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector."

According to the study results, the correlation value between the OHS and operational-level employees' job satisfaction in the Sri Lankan apparel sector was 0.842, and the results were significant. Therefore, the researcher identified a strong positive correlation between OHS and operational-level employees' job satisfaction in the Sri Lankan apparel sector. The current study's simple linear regression findings show that the unstandardized coefficient beta value for OHS is 0.966. Furthermore, the p-value of 0.000 indicated that these results were significant. Additionally, the multiple linear regression analysis findings showed that the unstandardized coefficient beta value for OHS was 0.787, which was also deemed significant. Therefore, the current study determined that the Sri Lankan garments' OHS practices positively impact the operational-level employees' job satisfaction. Consequently, it can be stated that the present study results support the existing literature suggested by Yusuf et al. (2012), Funmilayo (2014), Bayram et al. (2017); Kilic and Selvi (2009); Dizgah et al. (2012).

There is a close relationship between occupational health and safety and job satisfaction. A positive impact exists between occupational health and safety and job satisfaction. This was according to the research conducted by Dizgah et al. (2012). Bayram (2019), in his research, confirmed the presence of a positive impact among the two variables. Moreover, the OHS significantly impacts the operational-level employees' job satisfaction in the Sri Lankan apparel sector.

"Occupational health and safety impact the job satisfaction of operational-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel sector."

According to the study results, the correlation value between job satisfaction and operational-level employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector was 0.774, and the results were significant. Therefore, the researcher identified a strong positive correlation between job satisfaction and operational-level employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector. The current study's simple linear regression findings show that the unstandardized

coefficient beta value for job satisfaction is 0.981. Furthermore, the p-value of 0.000 indicated that these results were significant. Additionally, the multiple linear regression analysis findings showed that the unstandardized coefficient beta value for job satisfaction was 0.787, which was also deemed significant. Therefore, the current study determined that the job satisfaction of the operational-level employees in the Sri Lankan garments positively impacts the operational-level employees' job performance. Therefore, it can be stated that the present study results support the existing literature suggested by Kilic & Selvi (2009), Bayram (2019), Bayram et al. (2017), and Amponsah-Tawiah & Mensah (2016). The results of the study conducted by Gamal et al. (2022) stated that it is when employees become satisfied with their jobs and tend to have positive attitudes toward their jobs. Similar research that was conducted focusing on these two variables also mentioned the fact about the existence of a positive impact on job satisfaction on the job performance of the employees (Kilic & Selvi, 2009; Bayram (2019); Bayram et al., 2017: Amponsah-Tawiah & Mensah, 2016).

"Job satisfaction impacts employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector."

According to the study results, the researcher identified a strong positive correlation between OHS and operational-level employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector. Moreover, the Sobel test revealed a significant mediator impact of job satisfaction on the relationship between OHS and the job performance of operational-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry. The Sobel test value was recorded as 9.64950137, and the standard error is 0.07878563. The P-value is recorded as 0.000. The studies conducted by Ahmad et al. (2017) and Gamal et al. (2022) have determined that job satisfaction is a mediator in the correlation between Occupational Health and Safety and job performance. Consequently, it can be stated that the present study results support the existing literature suggested by Kilic and Selvi (2009), Dizgah et al. (2012), Yusuf et al. (2012); Ahmad et al. (2017); Gamal et al. (2022).

Moreover, the third objective was to analyze the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between occupational health and safety and

operational level employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector. According to the results, the researcher identified a positive mediation effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between OHS and the job performance of operational-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry.

"Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between Occupational health and safety and employees' job performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector."

Implications

Theoretical Implications

Theoretical implications of occupational health and safety (OHS) on job performance involve understanding how OHS principles and practices impact organizational behavior, employee psychology, and overall performance from various theoretical perspectives.

The theoretical implications address the JD – R theory, where the theory suggests that a good balance between job demands and job resources is crucial. Too many demands and not enough resources can lead to stress and burnout. On the other hand, having enough resources helps employees deal with demands, stay engaged, and perform the given duty. This study implies OHS measures can be viewed as resources that help employees manage job demands. Organizations reduce stress and burnout by providing a safe environment, enhancing job performance. High demands with inadequate safety measures can lead to strain and decreased performance. Effective OHS policies can balance demands and resources, promoting better performance.

Practical Implications

Overall, implementing comprehensive policies and practices related to occupational health and safety can improve job performance among operational-level employees in Sri Lanka's apparel sector. These policies and practices can help to create a safer and more productive workplace environment, leading to improved job satisfaction and retention of employees.

A focus on safety reduces the number of workplace accidents, leading to less downtime and more consistent productivity. Employees who do not have to worry about safety can focus better on their tasks,

improving overall performance. A healthy and safe workforce is more likely to produce high-quality work consistently. Employees in a safe environment are more likely to engage in creative problem-solving and innovation, contributing to the company's growth. Employees are likelier to stay with a company prioritizing their health and safety, reducing turnover and associated recruitment and training costs. A strong OHS program fosters trust between employees and management, leading to higher engagement. Safety programs often involve team efforts and training, which can enhance team cohesion and cooperation.

Limitations and Future Studies

The researcher was able to successfully achieve all three research objectives. Moreover, the researcher contributed to the existing literature and provides policy implications and practical implications for improving the occupational functioning and job performance of level employees in the apparel sector in Sri Lanka. However, this research study contains several limitations. However, the researcher overcomes this limitation by choosing a cross-sectional study design. However, if the researcher chooses a longitudinal research design, the researcher can better understand the operational-level workers' perceptions of occupational health and safety practices.

Moreover, the researcher won't be able to study the changes in workers' behavior when occupational health and safety practices are established over time. Several industries play a crucial role in Sri Lanka's national economy. However, the researcher limited this study to the apparel sector in Sri Lanka. However, due to time limits and capacity, the researcher chose to examine employee performance-related issues in this research. Also, this study is limited to operational-level employees among all other categories of employees in the apparel sector.

Moreover, as many other scholars have suggested, several factors also determine employee performance. However, the researcher chose occupational health and safety practices as an independent variable because scholars have conducted limited studies using occupation and health and safety as independent variables in studying employee performance. Hence, this study is limited to one dependent independent

variable and one mediator variable. In addition, the study is limited to the Sri Lankan context and is limited to 363 samples.

Considering the current study's limitations, the researcher suggests that scholars conduct longitudinal research studies to identify the perceptions of operation and level employees regarding occupational health and safety practices of garments and how they improve job satisfaction and performance. Moreover, the researcher suggests that in future studies, scholars can focus on studying other levels of employment and their job performance in relation to occupational health and safety practices in the apparel industry. Also, the researcher suggests the scholars conduct research in the future by considering other industries, such as tourism, agriculture, and the manufacturing industry, where they can study occupations and health and safety practices and their impact on employee performance. Besides that, scholars can conduct studies using different variables to study employee performance, such as organization culture, compensation, monitoring and non-monetary rewards, teamwork, learning capabilities, and more.

Conclusion

According to the study results, the researcher identified that occupational health and safety practices offered by Sri Lanka's apparel sector positively impact operational-level employees' job performance in Sri Lanka's apparel sector. Moreover, the results review that occupational health and safety practices positively influence the job satisfaction of operational-level employees in Sri Lanka's apparel sector. Also, job satisfaction positively impacts operational-level employees' job performance in Sri Lanka's apparel sector. Finally, the results revealed that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between occupational health and safety practices and operational-level employees' job performance in Sri Lanka's apparel sector. In conclusion, the job satisfaction and performance of the operational-level employees in the apparel sector of Sri Lanka are intrinsically driven by occupational health and safety practices as employees consider their life safety.

Moreover, job satisfaction plays a mediator role and positively impacted by the occupational health and safety practices provided by organizations towards the

job performance in the apparel industry. In conclusion, if the apparel manufacturing organizations increase its occupational health and safety procedures, it will

boost job satisfaction and performance of the operational-level employees in the apparel industry, Sri Lanka.

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