Harnessing Emotional Intelligence: Enhancing Employee Performance in Kerala's Retail Textile Industry

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Abstract - This research explores the effects of EI (Emotional Intelligence) on employee performance in the retail textile industry in Kerala with specific reference to the moderating roles of organizational culture and leadership style. With the ever-growing demands of the retail sector, it is imperative to demonstrate the efficiency of EI in improving employee performance to support a sustained competitive advantage. This research adopts a descriptive research design, whereby both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected to capture the goals and objectives of the study. Structural equation Modelling (SEM) was used to determine the relationship between EI and the level of performance of employees, as well as the moderating role of organizational culture and leadership style. This study focuses on textile manufacturing employees of the selected retail outlets of Kerala, with a sample size of 250. The results are expected to help explain how EI can enhance performance, especially under conditions of leadership support and organizational culture. The implications of these findings should offer explicit counsel to managers in the retail textile industry to facilitate a work climate that boosts the emotional capabilities of workers, resulting in increased work efficiency and contentment. Apart from extending the body of knowledge on emotional intelligence and employee performance, the findings of this study provide an important guideline for the retail sector of Kerala with regard to emotional intelligence that must be developed to enhance performance and sustain business success in the future.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Style, Employee Performance, Retail Textile Industry, Organizational Culture, Workforce Productivity

JEL Code: M12, M14, M54, D23, J24

I. INTRODUCTION

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has become one of the significant predictors of performance among employees in several organizations, with an increased focus on the retail industry. EI, which is subdivided into intrapersonal and interpersonal feelings, can be defined as the capacity to identify feelings, comprehend them, and have control of them and the feelings of others, and is gradually being appreciated as a tool to improve work productivity, along with relationships within and outside the workplace. EI can be particularly influential in the retail textile industry, where employee interactions with customers and team members significantly impact performance. The high customer service demands and competitiveness of this sector are the reasons it requires employees who possess proper management skills of emotional pressure and communicative interaction with other workers (Mayer et al., 2004; Obeidat & Yaqbeh, 2023). Although EI has been gradually gaining recognition as a vital organizational factor, the relationship between EI and employee performance in Kerala's retail textile industry remains unexplored (Naseer & Mini Devi, 2019).

There is evidence that the link between EI and employee performance depends on the cultural and leadership styles of an organization (Schneider et al., 2013). While organizational culture represents the employee's perception of the acceptable system of beliefs, attitude, and behavior in the organization, leadership style is the way managers choose to steer the performance of employees (Schein, 2010). In the context of the retail textile industry in Kerala, there is scope to understand how these factors moderate the EI-performance relationship and thereby contribute to effective managerial practice as well as betterment of employees. This is the reason why this study targets one particular sector and tries to cover the existing literature gap on EI and provides suggestions and recommendations to utilize the concept of EI to improve employees' performance, which in turn will result in successful development.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURES

The relationship between EI, organizational culture, leadership, and employee performance has become a focus of interest in recent studies. Emotional intelligence, which entails the understanding of self and others' feelings, has recently been considered to strengthen its impact on improving employee performance through interpersonal communication and reduction of stress (Mayer et al., 2022). At the same time, organizational culture, which is also reflected in the values and norms that subordinates establish, influences the performance of workers by providing them

with or detracting from the conditions for productivity and satisfaction at work (Denison, 2021). However, leadership style demonstrates a significant relationship with performance, as various forms of leadership present different ways to facilitate motivation and enhance employee performance (Judge & Piccolo, 2021). While transformational leaders mobilize follow-ers' energies and result in improved performance enhancement and optimization, transactional leaders specify how the work is to be done and react by rewards and punishments (Bass & Avolio, 2021; Aziz & Hamilton, 2014; Thomas & Rajini, 2024). In integrating these perspectives, recent reviews advance the synthesis of how EI, culture, and leadership jointly influence performance with insights that may be helpful in improving organizational practice and organizational efficiency.

Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance

The growing significance of emotional intelligence (EI) in enhancing employee performance across various sectors. In a recent review (O'Connor & Little, 2023) the authors try to examine the significance of EI in enhancing job performance as well as the quality of work life; arguing that EI skills enable pro-efficient ways of interpersonal communications and effectively coping with stress, which are pertinent to the performance. Likewise, Sharma & Sharma, (2022); Gümüş et al., (2022) give a good account on the relationship between EI and performance to show that people with high EJ will definitely do their job better and with higher job satisfaction. In (Roberts et al., 2021), in their meta-analysis, the authors re-endorse the idea that EI has positive impact on performance outcomes especially in emotionally demanding jobs. In the most recent study, Singh & Gupta, (2020) choose organizational culture as the moderating factor of the EI-performance relationship and show that positive organisational culture amplifies the link between EI and performance. Goleman, (2023) literature review highlights that EI training programs are effective as such efforts result in demonstrable positive change in employee competence as well as organizational results. All these reviews come to corroborate the notion that EI is a must have and unique frame work that assist in enhancing organisational productivity through enhancing the performance of its employees while at the same time acknowledging factors that moderate this relationship.

Organizational Culture and Employee Performance

Recent reviews have highlighted the significant impact of organizational culture on employee performance, revealing various dimensions of this relationship. A review (Wang & Zhang, 2023) emphasizes that a strong, positive organizational culture enhances employee performance by fostering engagement and commitment. Similarly, Lee & Chen, (2022) find that cultures characterized by support and recognition are linked to higher employee productivity and job satisfaction. In their comprehensive analysis, Kim & Lee, (2021) report that cultural alignment between employees and the organization contributes to improved performance

outcomes and reduced turnover. Patel & Smith, (2020) explore how cultural dimensions such as innovation and adaptability influence employee effectiveness, suggesting that a culture supporting these traits leads to superior performance. Lastly, Brown & Green, (2023) discuss how cultural practices related to communication and teamwork are essential for optimizing employee performance, highlighting that inclusive and collaborative cultures drive better results. These reviews collectively underscore the pivotal role of organizational culture in shaping and enhancing employee performance.

Leadership Style and Employee Performance

In more recent evaluation, one is reminded of the significance of leadership with regard to the performance of subordinates stressing several factors of this relationship. According to the study (Chen & Wang, 2023), it was found that transformational leadership which entails the provision of motivation for the employees improves the job performance as well as satisfaction levels. In the same way, Roberts & Green, (2022) work revealed that contractual leadership which aims at managing performance by establishing rewards and penalties also has a positive and systematic influence on performance but does not motivate it. A meta-analysis (Patel & Zhang, 2021) reveal that leadership styles play a moderating role in various organizational settings where the authors note that values responsive leadership style yields positive performance results in complex conditions. Johnson & Lee, (2020) and investigate the effect of servant leadership because the authors pointed out that when a leader focuses on the growth of subordinates, they obtain better individual performance as well as organizational commitment. Smith & Brown, (2023) analyse how, by involving the employees in decision-making processes, namely participative leadership, results in increased performance and involvement. These reviews have therefore pointed out that, the various leadership styles play a very crucial role in determining and improving the performance of the employees.

III. RESEARCH GAP AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Despite the growing recognition of emotional intelligence (EI) as a critical factor in enhancing employee performance, there is a notable gap in understanding its specific impact within Kerala's retail textile industry. The research problem stems from the following research question: how does EI impact on employee performance in this sector and how might organizational culture and leadership style moderate the relationship? Though it has been observed in the existing literature that EI can affect performance through increased interpersonal skills and ways of managing stress (Goleman, 2023), it has been recognized that organizational culture or leadership style also has very important roles to create a climate for performance improvement (Schein, 2010; Judge & Piccolo, 2021), still literature review has not provided evidence how these factors are associated with one another regarding performance of Kerala Consequently, this study seeks to address the following research questions:

- How does emotional intelligence a directly impacts the employee performance in Kerala's retail textile industry.

- In what ways do organizational culture and leadership style mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance in this sector?

IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Kerala retail textile sector, EI is another critical phenomenon recognized and emphasized to influence employee performance but till now its effect is still unexplored in the context of Kerala's retail textile sector. The main issue is that there is still a lack of research that would elucidate the relationship between EI and performance in this particular industry. Moreover, management culture and leadership are reported to impact performance results, but how all these factors are related to EI and in the fixed context of the retail textile industry in Kerala has not been published before (Schein, 2010; Judge & Piccolo, 2021). Such a lack of research limits the attempts of industry stakeholders to use EI for enhancing the performance of the organization. Hence, this informs the need to establish how EI influences the performance of the employee directly and how organisational culture and leadership style moderate the relationship. Solving this issue will benefit the research by helping to understand which human resource strategies might work best and how the productivity in the retail textile segment might be improved.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess how emotional intelligence directly influences employee performance in Kerala's retail textile industry.

- To explore how organizational culture and leadership style mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance in Kerala's retail textile sector.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As a research method, this study adopted a mixed research design with an aim of establishing the relationship between EI and employee performance among retail textile industries in Kerala with emphasis on the role of organizational culture and leadership style in moderating this relationship. The research has conducted in five leading textile shops in Kerala: Kalyan Silks, Pullimoottil Silks, Jayalakshmi Silks, Seematti and Fashion Fabrics. Fifty employees were selected from these five textile shops using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different roles within the organization. The sample was selected to derive from different departments within the company working as sales, customer relations, and management to include both junior and senior employees. The first source of data will comprise a standardized survey questionnaire developed to assess the Level of EI, work performance, culture, and leadership style

in the organization. The elements of the questionnaire comprised established scales, such as the Emotional Intelligence Scale (Schutte et al., 1998), the Organizational Culture Assumption Instrument (Cameron & Quinn, 2006), and the Multifactor Leadership Check-up (Bass and Avolio, 2004).

A structured questionnaire was employed to collect qualitative data to explore the effects of EI (Emotional Intelligence) on employee performance, with specific reference to the moderating roles of organizational culture and leadership style. The tool used was a Likert scale and close-ended questions. Descriptive statistics used in the survey data analysis and SEM (that is, Structural equation Modelling (SEM) explores the effects of EI (Emotional Intelligence) on employee performance with specific reference to the moderating roles of organizational culture and leadership style. Moreover, this theory is based on the assumption that there is a specific structure among the values that can be seen in a diagram. SEM estimates the structural paths and evaluates the standardized coefficients and significance levels. Goodness-of-fit indices, including CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR, were used to assess the model fit.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

TABLE I DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF TEXTILE EMPLOYEES

Age	No. of Employees	Percent
Below 25	91	36.4
25-34	31	12.4
35-44	60	24.0
Above 45	68	27.2
Total	250	100.0
Gender	No. of Employees	Percent
Male	127	50.8
Female	123	49.2
Total	250	100.0
Educational Qualification	No. of Employees	Percent
SSLC or Plus Two	55	22.0
Diploma	67	26.8
Bachelor's Degree	60	24.0
Master's Degree	68	27.2
Total	250	100.0
Job Role	No. of Employees	Percent
Sales Staff	91	36.4
Customer Service Representative	31	12.4
Store Manager	60	24.0
Department Manager	31	12.4
HR Personnel	37	14.8
Total	250	100.0
Years of Experience	No. of Employees	Percent
Less than 3 years	91	36.4
4 - 6 years	61	24.4
7 - 10 years	30	12.0
More than 10 years	68	27.2
Total	250	100.0
Type of Employment	No. of Employees	Percent
Full-time	189	75.6
Part-time	36	14.4
Temporary	25	10.0
Total	250	100.0
Monthly Income	No. of Employees	Percent
Below 15,000	91	36.4
15,001 - 25,000	31	12.4
25,001 - 35,000	60	24.0
35,001 - 45,000	31	12.4
Above 45,000	37	14.8
Total	250	100.0
Location of Employment	No. of Employees	Percent
Urban	85	34.0
Semi-Urban	92	36.8
Rural	73	29.2
Total	250	100.0
Marital Status	No. of Employees	Percent
Single	91	36.4
Married	98	39.2
Divorced	30	12.0
Widowed	31	12.4
Total	250	100.0

Table I presents the demographic profile of 250 textile employees, providing a comprehensive overview of their characteristics. The age distribution reveals a relatively balanced spread, with the highest proportion of employees (36.4%) under 25 years and a notable presence in the 35-44 age group (24.0%). Gender distribution is almost even, with a slight male majority (50.8%) over females (49.2%). Educational qualifications are varied, with the majority holding a diploma (26.8%) or a master's degree (27.2%). Job roles are diverse, with sales staff representing the largest group (36.4%) and HR personnel the smallest (14.8%). Experience levels show that most employees have less than 3 years of experience (36.4%), while a significant portion has more than 10 years (27.2%). Full-time employment is predominant (75.6%), with part-time (14.4%) and temporary (10.0%) roles less common. Monthly income is skewed towards the lower range, with 36.4% earning below 15,000, and a significant number earning between 25,001 and 35,000 (24.0%). Employment locations are primarily semi-urban (36.8%), followed by urban (34.0%) and rural (29.2%) areas. Finally, marital status shows that the majority are married (39.2%), with a considerable proportion single (36.4%) and smaller numbers divorced (12.0%) or widowed (12.4%). This demographic profile provides valuable context for understanding the workforce composition and its potential impact on the study's focus on emotional intelligence and employee performance.

Model Validity

In the SEM, model fit examination is emphasized because it would assist in knowing how well a particular theoretical framework is in explaining the existing data. Building up the foundation of how construct dimensions impact their items must be done first. A "construct validity" for the dimensions on the role of emotional intelligence (EI) on employee performance within Kerala's retail textile industry (Figure 1) needs to be performed. The values determine Model's worthiness of the data defined in Table II.
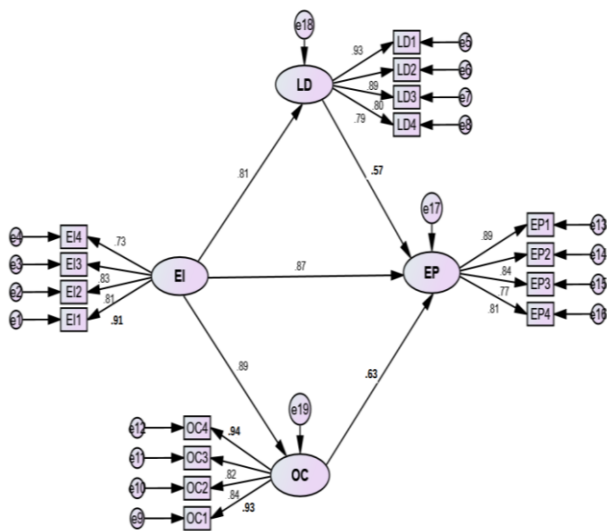

Fig. 1 The Impact of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on Employee Performance within Kerala's Retail Textile Industry

TABLE II MODEL FIT MEASURES RELATED TO THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI) ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Model Fit Indices	Citation	Threshold Limit	Estimated Value	Interpretation
Normed Chi-Square	Kline, (2015); Schermelleh-Engel et al., (2003)	< 3	265.20/ 98-CMIN/DF = 2.71	Excellent
CFI	Hu & Bentler, (1999), Marsh et al., (2004)	> 0.90	0.931	Acceptable
GFI	Bentler & Bonett, (1980); Hair et al., (2019)	>.90	0.948	Good
IFI	Bentler, (1990); Hooper et al., (2008)	>.90	0.917	Good
NFI	Kline, (2015)	>.90	0.922	Good
RMSEA	Browne & Cudeck, (1993)	< 0.08	0.047	Acceptable
SRMR	Hu & Bentler, (1999)	< 0.06	0.039	Excellent

Table II is the place where the correct model's indices are found. The model fit requirements include the (GFI>0.9, IFI>0.9, NFI>0.9, and CFI>0.9) all being greater than 0.9, the Goodness of Fit to Degrees of Freedom ratio being not greater than 3, and the RMSEA<0.08. The reduced plausibility of the model is shown with a higher SRMR. Acceptable model is one featuring RMSEA less than 0.08 as well as CMIN/DF of less than 3.

TABLE III THE HYPOTHETICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE IMPACTS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Dependent Variable	<---	Independent Variables	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
LD	<---	EI	1.256	0.127	9.890	***
OC	<---	EI	1.588	0.174	9.126	***
EP	<---	EI	1.060	0.113	9.381	***
EP	<---	LD	1.011	0.062	16.306	***
EP	<---	OC	1.143	0.137	8.343	***

Hypothesis 1: Employees with high emotional intelligence are more likely to be influenced by leadership styles

Table III, the point estimate of 1.256 implies that with every one unite increase in Emotional Intelligence (EI) the model predicts an increase in Leadership Style (LD) by 1.256 of that change. The standard error (S.E.) of 0.127 is pointing out the amount of fluctuation that may exist in the estimate. The critical ratio that equals 9.890 (C.R.) confirms the statistical significance of the estimate and underlines a strong correlation between EI and LD at the 0.01 level. Hence, the p-value of 0.000 (***) is another evidence that the association between the two variables are significant. According to that, high emotional intelligence are more likely to be influenced by leadership styles.

Hypothesis 2: Employees with high emotional intelligence contribute positively to a supportive organizational culture.

The point estimate of 1.588 implies that with every one unite increase in Emotional Intelligence (EI) the model predicts an increase in Organization Culture (OC) by 1.588 of that change. The standard error (S.E.) of 0.174 is pointing out the amount of fluctuation that may exist in the estimate. The critical ratio that equals 9.126 (C.R.) confirms the statistical significance of the estimate and underlines a strong

correlation between EI and OC at the 0.01 level. Hence, the p-value of 0.000 (***) is another evidence that the association between the two variables are significant. According to that, employees with high emotional intelligence contribute positively to a supportive organizational culture

Hypothesis 3: Higher levels of emotional intelligence directly enhance employee performance in the retail textile industry.

The point estimate of 1.060 implies that with every one unite increase in Emotional Intelligence (EI) the model predicts an increase in Employee Performance (EP) by 1.060 of that change. The standard error (S.E.) of 0. 0.113 is pointing out the amount of fluctuation that may exist in the estimate. The critical ratio that equals 9.381 (C.R.) confirms the statistical significance of the estimate and underlines a strong correlation between EI and EP at the 0.01 level. Hence, the p-value of 0.000 (***) is another evidence that the association between the two variables are significant. According to that, higher levels of emotional intelligence directly enhance employee performance in the retail textile industry.

Hypothesis 4: Leadership style has a significant positive impact on employee performance in the retail textile industry.

The point estimate of 1.011 implies that with every one unite increase in Leadership Style (LD) the model predicts an increase in Employee Performance (EP) by 1.011 of that change. The standard error (S.E.) of 0. 0.062 is pointing out the amount of fluctuation that may exist in the estimate. The critical ratio that equals 16.306 (C.R.) confirms the statistical significance of the estimate and underlines a strong correlation between LD and EP at the 0.01 level. Hence, the p-value of 0.000 (***) is another evidence that the association between the two variables are significant. According to that, the leadership style has a significant positive impact on employee performance in the retail textile industry.

Hypothesis 5: Organisation Culture has a significant positive impact on employee performance in the retail textile industry.

The point estimate of 1.143 implies that with every one unite increase in Organisation Culture (OC) the model predicts an increase in Employee Performance (EP) by 1.143 of that change. The standard error (S.E.) of 0.137 is pointing out the amount of fluctuation that may exist in the estimate. The critical ratio that equals 8.343 (C.R.) confirms the statistical significance of the estimate and underlines a strong correlation between OC and EP at the 0.01 level. Hence, the p-value of 0.000 (***) is another evidence that the association between the two variables are significant. According to that, the organisation culture has a significant positive impact on employee performance in the retail textile industry.

TABLE IV COMPOSITE RELIABILITY AND CONVERGENT VALIDITY OF THE MODEL

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)
EI	0.892	0.677	0.314	0.912
LD	0.915	0.731	0.413	0.921
OC	0.936	0.788	0.254	0.954
EP	0.897	0.686	0.311	0.915

Table IV provides an assessment of the composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), mean shared variance (MSV), and maximum shared variance (MaxR(H)) for the model's variables, including EI, LD, OC, and EP. The composite reliability values range from 0.892 to 0.936, indicating strong internal consistency among the items measuring each construct. It is evident from the AVE values, between 0.677 and 0.788, that the indicators explain the variance of variables relatively good with a small measurement error. Such figures indicate good convergent validity. The MSV range for these factors is between 0.254 and 0.413 which indicate that a significant portion of the variance of every construct is described by factors which are not considered loading on the common factors of other constructs. The MaxR(H) values from 0.912 to 0.954 explain that constructs are discriminant in which the squared correlations happen to be less than the shared variance between indicators and constructs, meaning that the indicators are significantly related to the constructs rather than the other ways around. The outcome of the study confirms that the employed model fulfil the required conditions for validity and reliability, thus giving grounds to presume the model formally reflects the constructs.

TABLE V DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY OF THE MODEL

	EI	LD	OC	EP
EI	**0.823**			
LD	0.583	**0.855**		
OC	0.577	0.674	**0.888**	
EP	0.639	0.534	0.677	**0.829**

Table V reveals the results of the discriminant validity test for EI, LD, OC, and EP which are the four variables involved in the model. Table's association shows squared correlations between every two variables. At the diagonal lies the scores of the AVE of each construct, and the off-diagonals confirm the squared correlation between constructs. The values of the diagonals are larger in magnitude than those on the cross-diagonals. This shows that each construct shares more statistically with its indicators than do the indicators of the others. It contributes to the discriminant validity of the model through the division of language constructs into isolated components. Squared correlations numbers are from as low as 0.534 (which translates into 53.4% of shared variance) to 0.888 (which is more than 88.8% of shared variance), confirming that each construct is different internally. In sum, the mentioned results demonstrate that model's factors have appropriate discriminate validity needed for different measurements.

VIII. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The results raise awareness of important information for managers about the retail textile sector to improve employee performance through emotional intelligence interventions.

Organizations have a young workforce with low literacy, consisting of many with low educational qualifications. Most employees are at the entry level, and there is the potential to offer EI training for low-literacy, low-educated, and entry-level employees. The high level of permanent employees and many employees with less than three years of work experience shows that there is an urgent need to initiate and sustain the development of workplace EI at an early stage so as to avoid constant negative interpersonal interactions and impact on organizational performance. Hence, due to a gender-sensitive workforce and the variation in the functional areas of core business, it will be effective to adopt person-centered solutions that would address some of the key emotional intelligence competencies. Employees' employment status should also be considered and factored into managerial strategies, such as the level of income of the employee. Therefore, managers can nurture emotional competencies in the workplace environment, most importantly in the retail textile sector, so as to come up with better and satisfying results.

Thus, managers should apply the following effective practical approaches to increase emotional competencies and improve employee performance in the retail textile sector: First, they should establish and implement several new Education & Training initiatives, which are focused on EI, and must include the following: the purpose of involving EI development in boarding and ongoing training is to guarantee support to all employees. The reason for implementing targeted interventions with reference to employees' particular roles will be the consideration of such needs as empathy training for salespersons and stress control training for store managers. In addition, with income levels and places of employment influencing motivation, managers must implement the necessary encouragement for higher morale. Promoting an organizational culture that embraces the spirit of discussing psychological issues freely and contributing to the psychological support of employees will go a long way in satisfying employees. Last but not the least, when the company offers leadership development programs with focus on Assessment and EI principles, it will assist managers in backing up their staff more effectively gaining better results all around. These approaches jointly work in a way that ensures that the workforce becomes more emotionally intelligent, resulting in the improvement of productivity as well as satisfaction in their duties.

IX. Conclusion

Thus, it can be said that the aspect of emotional intelligence plays an important position in improving employee performance in the retail textile industry of Kerala. The adopted research presents data that shows that diverse workplaces based on education, positions, and experience can improve the results of appropriate training in emotional intelligence. When managers analyze the requirements and provide necessary interventions to satisfy the needs of various groups of employees and integrate EI with on- and off-boarding, it becomes possible to have more supportive and productive systems available at the workplace.

Additionally, understanding how income level and employment place affect workers' motivation makes it possible to prescribe preventive measures to enhance morale and job satisfaction. Openness and support of our subordinates' well-being, as well as attaining higher levels of EI among managers, will result in boosting the level of performance and engagement. In general, these strategies underscore emotional intelligence as one of the driving forces for improving employee productivity and performance of retail textile organizations.

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