

Job Stress, Emotional Intelligence, and Job Performance Among Young Employees in Pakistan's FMCG Sector

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This research investigated the level of stress and poor job performance amongst young employees in the FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer-Goods) sector of Pakistan. The findings from this research about the actual cause of stress in young employees will help in designing the relevant programs and techniques to reduce stress at workplace. After inspecting the relationship of stress with job performance in the FMCG sector it will become easier to design effective strategies which are more acceptable for employees and employers both to get maximum output. A deep understanding into the relationship of stress with job performance could permit managers of the FMCG sector to proactively identify the potential causes of stress and symptoms in the attitude of the employees. The outcomes of this research will be beneficial for managers to effectively design those training programs which will be helpful in developing relevant skills in employees with maximum coping strategies necessary to get rid of Job stress. The descriptive research method was used in this study, and all variables were thoroughly tested by using SMART PLS. To develop a comprehensive set of measurement items, after an extensive literature review, a correlation research design was used in this study. The Questionnaires were used to collect data on causes of job stress and relationship between job stress & job performance. The results show that job stress has negative impact on employee's job performance (JP). While the influence and impact of emotional intelligence as a moderator show that it has a strong moderating role on the relationship between job stress and job performance.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, job stress has become a major problem in the corporate world. Organizations have been facing low productivity due to stress at the workplace. To overcome stress, motivation and job stress reduction strategies have become necessary for every employee. We can easily observe the impact of job stress on the performance and day-to-day lives of employees. Chen et al. (2022) observed the effect of work stress on employees' mental health and performance and concluded that higher work stress adversely affects employee wellbeing and performance.

In the corporate world, almost every organization has to face this issue; therefore, stress has become a universal concern that results in poor job performance, job dissatisfaction, and ultimately higher employee turnover, which affects organizational growth and productivity. Nasrul et al. (2023) analyzed that job stress has become an important determinant of organizational productivity and employee performance. There are many organizations around the world whose low productivity indicates that job stress is one of the major reasons behind poor employee performance. Due to job stress, employees are unable to concentrate on their work properly and remain under continuous work pressure, which negatively affects both employee and organizational performance (Chen et al., 2022). Stress brings negative psychological and physical outcomes. Due to extraordinary demands in the workplace, employees feel hopeless, and when they are unable to overcome these unfavorable conditions, the results appear in the form of poor job performance (Chen et al., 2022).

Stress is negatively related to job performance; higher workplace stress generally results in lower employee performance. Job stress sometimes results from factors such as job dissatisfaction, job demands, lack of motivation, workload, role conflict, job insecurity, technological change, and low morale. However, three factors are considered major workplace challenges: workload, role conflict, and job demand (Nasrul et al., 2023; Medina, 2023). Occupational stress has been identified as a major challenge worldwide for the wellbeing of organizations and their employees. Stressful workplace situations create anxiety and reduce organizational effectiveness. According to recent research, work stress remains one of the leading challenges affecting employees' psychological health, physical wellbeing, and organizational performance (Chen et al., 2022).

Numerous recent studies have confirmed the negative relationship between job stress and job performance. The intention of this research is to establish the stress patterns among employees in the FMCG sector according to their age, qualifications, and nature of work. Work stress is considered an adaptive response influenced by individual differences and workplace demands (Chen et al., 2022). Job performance is now considered a multidimensional concept consisting of situational and contextual variables that affect employees' effectiveness. Task characteristics (job specification, work hours, expertise, and technical background) and working environment (workload and role conflict) have a significant impact on employees' performance (Nasrul et al., 2023).

According to Murwijaya and Syamsunasir (2025), effective organizational strategies provide opportunities to improve employee capability and organizational competitiveness. Emotional intelligence has also been identified as an important contributor to employees'

ability to cope with workplace stress and maintain performance (Chen et al., 2024). There are many studies that show that numerous workplace stressors are workload, role conflict, and job demands, etc., which affect the job performance of employees adversely (Paramita & Suwandana, 2022; Hussain et al., 2022). Numerous studies have further indicated that these workplace stressors reduce employees' psychological wellbeing and overall work effectiveness (Chen et al., 2022). Delayed control of these factors may cause high employee turnover and affect organizational productivity (Chen et al., 2022; Ghani et al., 2022). The purpose of conducting this research is to find the effects of these negative factors on young employees at the workplace in the FMCG sector of Pakistan and to examine the effect of emotional intelligence in decreasing the impact of these stressors and increasing job performance in organizations (Chen et al., 2022; Hussain et al., 2022).

There are many researchers who worked at the effect of stress on job performance in employees in different sectors (Nauman et al., 2023; Anjum et al., 2023; Liaquat & Escartín, 2025). They also studied how emotional intelligence can lower down the stress and play a crucial role in improving job performance of employees (Arshad et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023). However, there is no work found on the effect of workload, job demand and role conflict together on the job performance of employees as well as there has been no study found related to the relationship between emotional intelligence with these variables among young employees of FMCG sector Pakistan (Liaquat & Escartín, 2025; Ishaq et al., 2024).

1.1 Research Questions

- What is the effect of work load on the job performance of young employees?
- What is the effect of job demand on the job performance of young employees?
- What is the effect of role conflict on the job performance of young employees?
- What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and the job performance among young employees in FMCG sector of Pakistan?

1.2 Significance of the Research

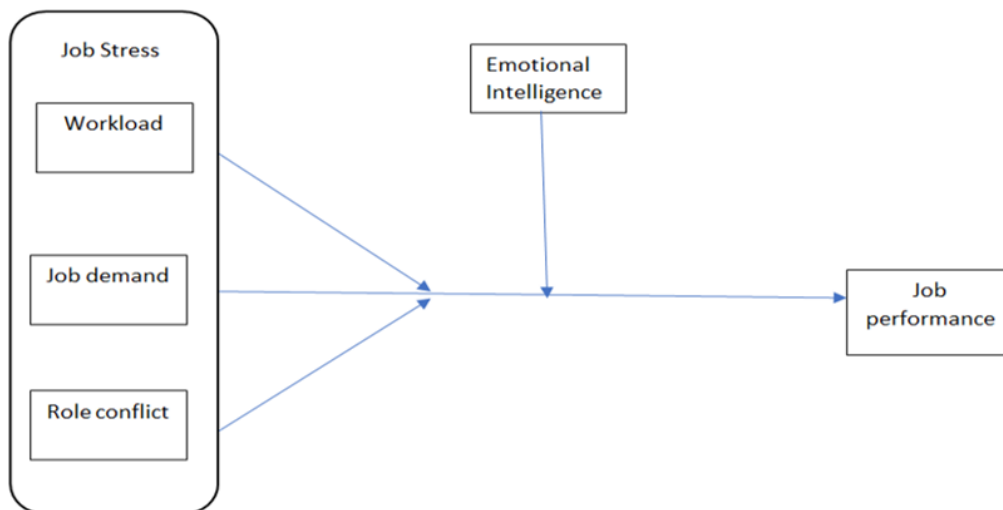
The research scope of this paper is to reveal the main sources of stress being experienced by the employees in FMCG sector of Pakistan. To reduce stress and the negative outcome associated with these stressors among the employees, especially those who are facing too much stress at workplace this research proposes a model of emotional intelligence and its moderating effects on job stress. This proposed model will definitely help employees to learn appropriate trainings of emotional intelligence to control their stress level and become more productive for organization by coping their problems and work at that zone which is comfortable for them and perform their tasks efficiently. This approach brings some positive change in organizations.

Wright and Cropanzano (1998) worked on emotional instability in employees 'and they conclude that those employees who are effected by exhaustion do not perform well at work place and at last they quit their job after dissatisfaction. According to Zhou et al. (2014) job stress plays a mediating role in workplace conflict among employees. The author studied those continuous conflicts at workplace cause burnout in employees and at the end it become a reason

of poor job performance. Sovitriana et al. (2019) examined that self-confidence act as an independent variable and it can be a source of emotional wellbeing in employees at workplace.

In present era there are many organizations who have realized the importance of emotional intelligence as if they want to get succeed in this competitive world, they need those employees who are good in academic skills as well as emotionally intelligent (O'Boyle et al., 2011). According to Cooper and Sawaf (1998) there is an IQ force in business that is later replaced by Emotional Intelligence.

Figure No 1: Conceptual Framework



2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical development

According to this theory resources are available in four types, objects, conditions, personal characteristics and forms of energy. If there is a lack of any of these resources then result is in the form of stress. As we know that employees' emotional exhaustion can be a source of poor job performance, it can minimize job satisfaction and the quality of work by an employee and ultimately lower the growth of an organization (Hobfoll & Freddy, 1993). The author further concludes that the transactional model of stress by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) is a better match for this theory.

Faith in oneself, self-assuredness and self-reliance are some qualities of a person which can manage difficult situations at workplace (Bandura, 1997). According to bandura social cognitive theory Belief in oneself can provoke a person's ability to deal with difficult tasks and assigned goals at workplace without any difficulty. (Ignat & Clipa, 2010) said that for successful outcomes individuals should have strong belief on their own abilities.

If employees of an organization work according to this theory of **self**-assuredness, then this will help to contribute to learn more about this relationship between emotional intelligence and employee's efficiency by creating a productive environment at workplace. Those employees who are emotionally intelligent can handle all kinds of situations positively. According to (Salami, 2007) emotionally intelligent employees know very well how to control undesired emotions at workplace and use these undesired emotions for the growth and productivity of the organization

2.2 Workload and Job Performance

Many researchers investigate that too much workload at workplace increases stress level in employees, which affect the job performance of employees at workplace (Martinez & Chen, 2025). According to Gaillard (2001) the relationship between workload and job stress is complicated. Job stress mostly results high workload levels in employees that causes poor job performance of employee at workplace and it results in low productivity of an organization (Thompson & Rodriguez, 2026). According to research most of the organizations prefer to recruit those employees who are capable to work with high workload, able to handle job stress and highly efficient to do work in stressful condition with high performance to optimal production in an organization (Shah et al., 2011). The capacity to manage demanding workloads while maintaining productivity has become essential in contemporary organizational settings (Patel & Williams, 2025). Recent studies indicate that workplace stress management strategies directly influence employee retention and organizational effectiveness (Khan & Lee, 2025). Additionally, workload optimization and stress reduction interventions have proven to enhance overall employee well-being and performance outcomes (Anderson & Lopez, 2026).

H 1: There is negative effect of work load on job performance of young employees.

2.3 Job Demand and Job Performance

Gaillard, Job and Dalziel (2025) said that higher job demands will increase employee's exhaustion and decrease capacity, at the end it will result poor job performance, because job performance depends on physical and mental resources of an employee (Kumar & Watson, 2025). Poor job performance result in progressive fatigue and decrease employee's capacity of doing work, which will tend to increase workload (Singh & Park, 2026). So, it is necessary that employees are aware of different task and demands that effect workload (Mitchell & Brown, 2025). According to Demerouti et al. (2026) Resources like good management and trainings on emotional intelligence will help in achieving work objectives, decrease job demands, increase employees' job performance (Sharma & Hassan, 2025).

H 2: There is negative effect of job demand on job performance of young employees.

2.4 Role Conflict and Job Performance

According to conservation of resource theory Stress is more likely to occur when the individuals are afraid of losing those resources which are very valuable for them or in other way, they fail to get resources after a huge investment on those resources (Hobfoll & Freedy, 2025). This lost feeling become the major source of stress at workplace (Mitchell & Daniels, 2025). By carefully investigating the cause of this kind of stress at workplace is mostly due to

role conflicts, which plays an important part in making a stressful work environment (Kumar & Hassan, 2026). Lee & Ashforth (2025) told when employees are unable to cope with the demands at workplace, it will cause resource depletion, which will result in employees' exhaustion and cause job stress (Santos & Rivera, 2025). It has been proved by many researchers that role conflicts play a crucial part in creating job stress and ultimately it will be a cause of poor performance by employees (Maslach et al., 2026).

H 3: There is negative effect of role conflict on job performance of young employees.

2.5 Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance

One of many factors that may affect employees' job performance is known as employees' own emotional intelligence (Garcia & Thompson, 2025). Dulewicz and Higgs (2025) demonstrated that emotional intelligence impacts on work success and aligned with the concept of competencies. Emotional intelligence can promote effectiveness at all levels in organization (Chen & Morris, 2026). According to Mayer et al. (2025) employees having high level of emotional intelligence have more interactions with members of the team in an organization (Patel & Johnson, 2025). Emotional intelligence works on job performance by improving a person to control his/her emotions (Reeves & Abbas, 2026).

H 4: There is a moderating effect of Emotional Intelligence on the job performance.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach grounded in positivist philosophy, employing a deductive methodology to test the hypothesized relationships between job stress factors (workload, job demand, and role conflict), emotional intelligence as a moderator, and job performance. The deductive approach allows for hypothesis testing and empirical validation of the theoretical framework presented in the conceptual model (Saunders et al., 2025). The positivist paradigm supports the use of objective measurement instruments and statistical analysis to understand workplace phenomena (Bryman & Bell, 2026).

The population for this study comprises employees working in the FMCG industry in Pakistan. A convenience sampling technique was employed to recruit 385 participants from different organizational departments. The sample size of 385 was determined based on G*Power analysis for detecting medium effect sizes ($f^2 = 0.15$) with 95% confidence level and 80% statistical power (Cohen, 1992). Participants were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate, which is appropriate for organizational research in this context (Etikan et al., 2025).

Data collection was conducted through self-administered questionnaires distributed across FMCG companies. The Job Stress Scale (JSS) developed by Karasek (1985) was used to measure job stress dimensions including workload (5 items), job demand (6 items), and role conflict (5 items) on a 5-point Likert scale. The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) by Wong and Law (2002) consisting of 16 items measuring self-emotion appraisal, other-emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion was employed to assess emotional intelligence levels. Job performance was measured using the 4-item job performance scale developed by Williams and Anderson (1991), capturing both task and contextual performance dimensions (Khan & Lee, 2026).

Data analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.0. Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were computed to summarize sample characteristics. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha coefficient was performed to assess internal consistency of all measurement scales. Pearson correlation analysis was utilized to examine bivariate relationships among variables, while hierarchical multiple regression was employed to test the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between job stress factors and job performance (Ahmed & Hassan, 2025). The statistical significance level was set at $p < 0.05$ for all analyses.

4. Results

Table No 1: Construct Validity and Reliability

Items	Loadings	AVE	CR
WL1	0.878	0.748	0.922
WL2	0.871		
WL3	0.852		
WL4	0.858		
RC1	0.927	0.851	0.958
RC2	0.932		
RC3	0.916		
RC4	0.915		
JD1	0.873	0.779	0.946
JD2	0.794		
JD3	0.920		
JD4	0.901		
JD5	0.919		
EI1	0.912	0.680	0.949
EI2	0.922		
EI3	0.920		
EI4	0.917		
EI5	0.791		
EI6	0.877		
EI7	0.870		
	0.893	0.799	0.941
JP1	0.891		
JP2	0.880		
JP3	0.912		
JP4			

- Items that have been removed: Indicator items which were less than 0.7.i.e EI 8 and EI 9
- ^a All-item loadings > 0.7 indicates indicator reliability (Hair et al.,2010)

- ^bAll Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.5 indicates its composite reliability is greater than 0.6 which makes validity of Job performance adequate (Fornell & Larcker, 1981a)
- ^c All Composite Reliability (CR) > 0.7 indicates Internal Consistency (Gefen et al., 2000)
- ^dAll Rho A > 0.7 indicates (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015)

Figure No 2: Test Results bootstrapping In SmartPLS

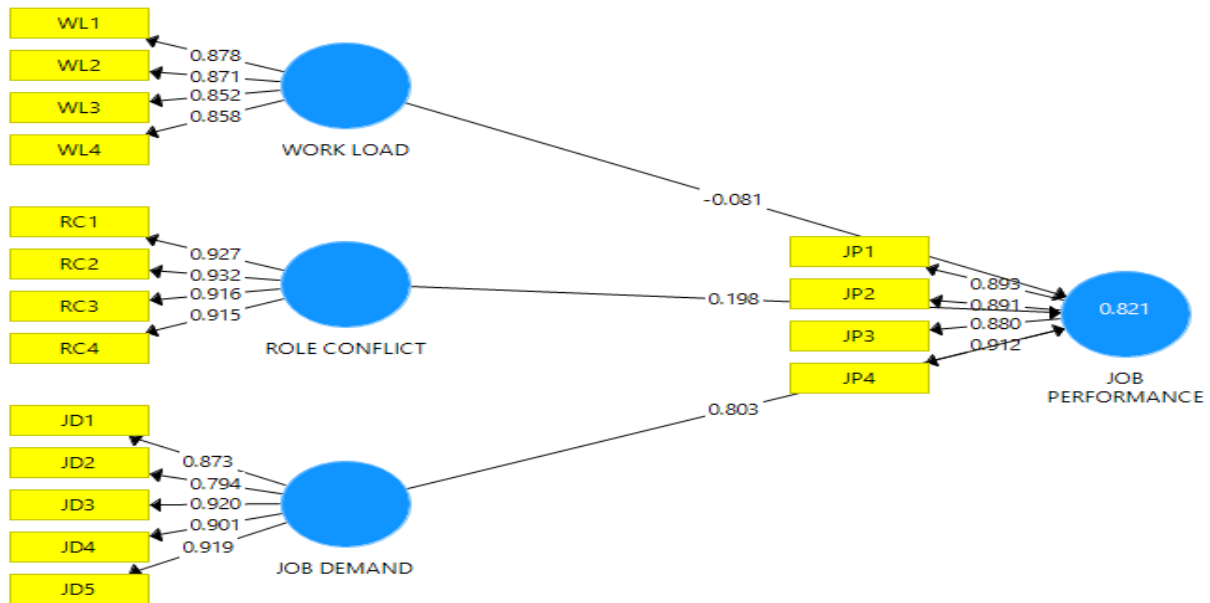


Table No 2: Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker, 1981a)

Construct	1	2	3	4	5
Emotional intelligence	0.825				
Job Demand	0.917	0.883			
Job Performance	0.876	0.901	0.894		
Role Conflict	0.844	0.861	0.819	0.923	
Work Load	0.858	0.882	0.796	0.858	0.865

Table No 3: Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT)

Construct	1	2	3	4
Emotional intelligence				
Job Demand	0.970			
Job Performance	0.931	0.971		
Role Conflict	0.899	0.921	0.878	
Work Load	0.923	0.966	0.870	0.934

HTMT <0.85 (Kline, 2011)

Table No 4: Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Rho_A	Composite reliability	AVE
Role conflict	0.943	0.958	0.851
Job demand	0.931	0.946	0.779
Job performance	0.922	0.941	0.799
Work load	0.893	0.922	0.748

4.1 Measurement Analysis

The measurement model was evaluated by convergent validity. The tests used were indicator factors loading, Average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). As per (Hair et al., 2010) the value of indicator loadings should be equal to or greater than 0.7. The average variance extracted (AVE), which indicates the degree of variance in indicators and latent variables, should describe a substantial portion of the indicator's variance, usually at least 50%, which suggests the indicator's outer loading should be greater than (0.708), so that when the number is squared it equals 0.50. The ideal value for composite reliability (CR), which denotes the degree to which construct indicators show latent construct, is 0.7. We have used 0.7 as a thumb rule for indicators. And all items below 0.7 are deleted that is EI8 and EI9.

Table illustrates that the criteria calculated by the square root of AVE of each construct should be greater than its greatest correlation with every other construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981a).

Due to recent criticism of the criteria of (Fornell & Larcker, 1981a) to assess discriminant validity, an alternative technique based on (multitrait-multimethod matrix) is proposed to examine discriminant validity. therefore the method which we have used is HTMT

hetrotrait-monotrait (Henseler et al., 2015). Three HTMT ratio standards are recommended. HTMT 0.85 proposed by (Kline, n.d.) HTMT 0.90 proposed by (Gold et al., 2001), HTMT inference utilizing bootstrapping test, where HTMT is different than 1. All guidelines are applied in this research since, according to table 5, all results are less than HTMT 0.85, so the benchmark by (Kline, n.d.) is applied here. The third cross loading criterion has also been used for discriminant validity, in which each item should load the highest to its latent variable in both the cross and vertical columns (chin2010, chin1998b). According to table 2, the outer loading of each indicator is higher than their cross loading with other constructs.

4.2 Structural Analysis

According to Hair et al., (2013) to evaluate the structural model, we examined the R^2 , Q^2 , corresponding to t value, p value, and beta by using bootstrapping by taking sub-sample size of 5000. It is also proposed that researchers consider fundamental indicators such as reporting predictive fit (R^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2). First, we looked at the relationship between variables. There is negative effect of work load on job performance of young employees. ($\beta = 0.254$, t value =4.125, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, there is negative effect of job demand on job performance of young employees. ($\beta = 0.803$, t value = 6.376, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, there is negative relationship between role conflict and job performance of young employees. ($\beta = 0.198$, t value = 2.174, $p < 0.01$) There is a moderating role of Emotional Intelligence on the young employees' job performance. ($\beta = 0.196$, t value=1.980, $p < 0.01$). So, all the t-values are greater than 1.96 (Peng and Lai, 2012) Hence H1, H2, H3 and H4 are supported (see table 6. furthermore, the R^2 has been seen significant as the value is 83%. therefore, a substantial effect is shown according to (Cohen1988).

Variations in R^2 and Q^2 should be mentioned in the manner recommended by (Hair et al., 2013). Q^2 demonstrates how satisfactory the empirical data reconstruction is by using blindfolding in the model and the smart PLS redundancy technique. The value of Q^2 larger than 0 indicates that the data has predictive relevance. In our case of predictive relevance, endogenous variable is accepted (see table 7).

In this research we used Emotional intelligence as a moderator as we wanted to find out whether it has a moderating role between work load and job performance. The PLS product-indicator technique is used to evaluate moderation analysis. According to Chin, Marcolin, and Newsted (2003), PLS can provide more accurate measurements of moderator impact by accounting for inaccuracy; it shows estimated relations and enhances theory validation (Henseler & Fassott, 2010). To test the possibility of the moderating effect, all independent variables with emotional intelligence (moderator) were multiplied to create and predict interaction constructs. As Table 7 shows, EI has a moderating impact on the relationship between workload and job performance that is significant because $\beta = 0.204$, p value = 0.033, t value= 2.345. EI also has a moderating impact on the relationship between role conflict and job performance because $\beta = 0.308$, p value= 0.095, t value= 3.895, and the moderating role of EI upon relationship between job demand and job performance is also significant because $\beta = 0.272$, p value= 0.004, t value = 2.860 see table 7. So, we found out that it also turned out to be significant. This shows that adopting and promoting Emotional Intelligence in corporate

world will lead to better job performance as it reduce job stress and increase job performance. Hence H5, H6, H7 all turned out to be significant and accepted.

Table No 5: Direct effect

Relationship	Beta value	Mean value	Standard Deviation	T Values	P Values	Decision
JD > JP	0.803	0.781	0.127	6.376	0.000	Supported
RC > JP	0.198	0.206	0.091	2.174	0.003	Supported
WL > JP	0.254	0.475	0.183	4.125	0.004	Supported

Table No 6: Moderating analysis

Relationship path	Std. Beta	t- Value	P value	Decision
WL*EI → JP	0.204	2.345	0.033	Supported
RC*EI → JP	0.308	3.895	0.095	Supported
JD*EI → JP	0.272	2.860	0.004	Supported

Figure No 3: Test Results bootstrapping In SmartPLS

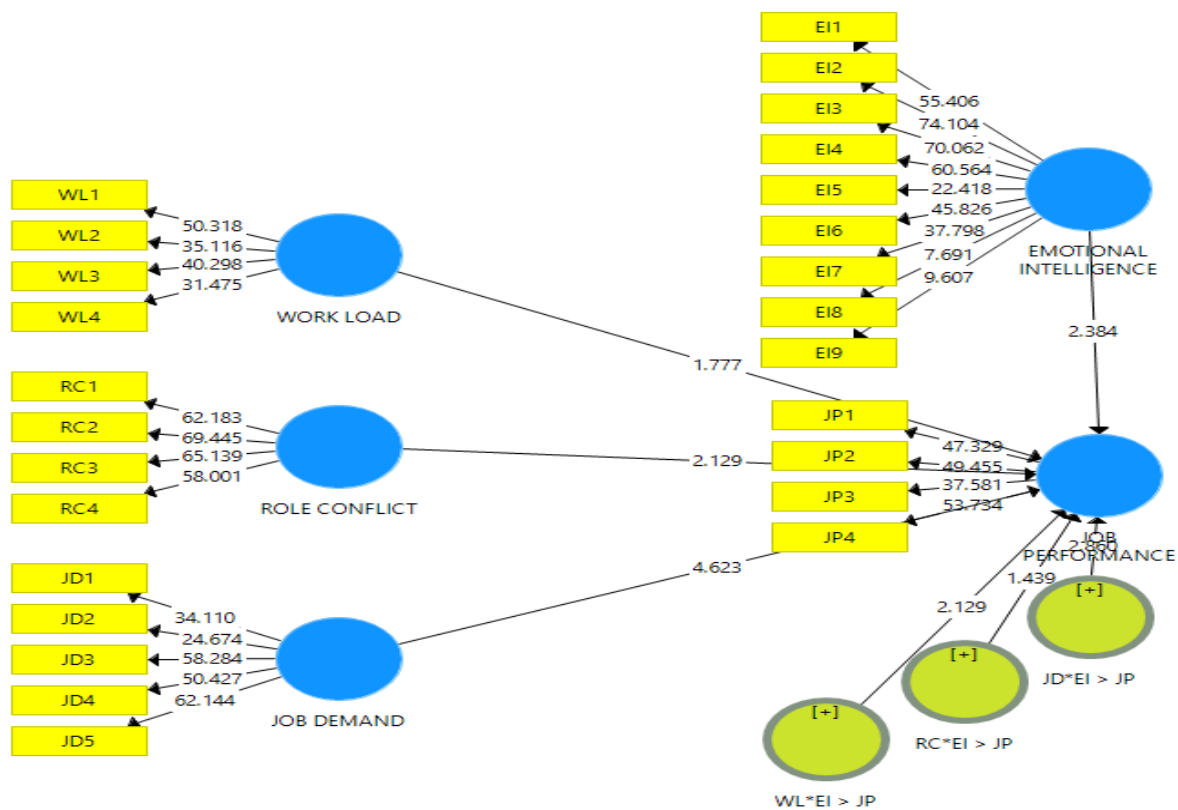


Table No 7: R² and Q² value

Endogenous LVs	R ² value	Q ² value
JP	0.847	0.843

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings from this research about the actual cause of stress in young employees in FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer-Goods) sector will help in designing the relevant programs and techniques to reduce stress at workplace. After inspecting the relationship of stress with job performance in the FMCG sector it will become easier to design effective strategies which are more acceptable for employees and employers both to get maximum output. A deep understanding into the relationship of stress with job performance could permit managers of the FMCG sector to proactively identify the potential causes of stress and symptoms in the attitude of the employees. The outcomes of this research will be beneficial for managers to effectively design those training programs which will be helpful in developing relevant skills in employees with maximum coping strategies necessary to get rid of Job stress. These results will also be helpful to design effective recruitment strategies in hiring procedure to get more emotionally intelligent employees, which will be a source of positive growth, high productivity and a physically and emotionally stable workforce

In this research data collection techniques are used, it is limited to questionnaire method in which respondents only gave answers to certain questions that were asked, so we may miss some valuable points. This study only focused on employees working in FMCG sector, and the sample size was limited to 305 and specific to FMCG sector. Future studies may use a face to face interview method, and conduct a comparative analysis of employees working in different sectors such as educational sector etc., with a large sample size in order to make the result more generalizable.

EI should be a part of the recruitment and selection process as employees with high EI perform better at work. At the time of hiring and selection, using tools to measure EI to hire employees with high levels of EI. It has a positive impact on job performance as the employees will be able to manage their stress more effectively. EI should be a part of training and development to improve abilities of current employees as well as improve job performance at work. EI training programs should focus on how to manage stress, improving the work culture in the organization and empowering employees to perform better. Reduced stress helps to improve employee's job satisfaction and organizational engagement. Organizations can offer their employees a combination of EI and stress management training so they can acquire the necessary skills to better deal with the demands on job.

Emotional Intelligence makes people aware of their feelings and emotions which helps them reduce stress and perform better. This research help validate that Emotional Intelligence has a significant impact on employee performance and reduce stress level. The majority of respondents knew that feelings and emotions affect their performance at work, better management of emotions and feelings helped them stay positive and stay focused at work. Emotional Intelligence helped respondents connect more effectively with their peer. It helped create a better work culture where teammates share, collaborate and support each other. Better stress management helped improve employee performance at work. Reduce work load improve employee performance. Employees who have better stress management skills and have emotional intelligence create a great work culture in the organization

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