Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Improving Labour Productivity In the Sri Lankan Construction Industry

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ABSTRACT

The construction industry plays a vital role in fostering economic growth globally, with labour productivity being a critical determinant of project success and industry competitiveness. Despite extensive research and strategic efforts, Sri Lankan construction companies continue to face significant challenges related to low labour productivity, often stemming from interpersonal, organizational, and technological issues. Recent studies highlight the potential of emotional intelligence (EI) as a pivotal non-technical factor that enhances individual and team performance in construction settings. This research investigates the impact of EI on labour productivity within the Sri Lankan construction sector. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through structured questionnaires from a diverse sample of 45 workers and open-ended interviews from interviewers, including project managers and HR professionals. Quantitative analysis using correlation techniques and qualitative thematic analysis revealed that the impact of EI positively influences communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, and motivation among workers. Furthermore,5 key strategies and practical actions were identified as effective measures to enhance labour performance. The study underscores the importance of integrating EI development initiatives into industry practices to mitigate common productivity barriers and promote a more cohesive, efficient, and motivated workforce. The findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of non-technical skills in construction productivity and propose practical frameworks for industry stakeholders to implement EI-enhanced management practices, ultimately leading to higher efficiency, safety, and project success in Sri Lanka's evolving construction landscape.

KEYWORDS: *Construction industry, Emotional Intelligence, Labour productivity*

INTRODUCTION

The construction industry, essential to modern economies, increasingly drives economic growth through innovation, with its impact amplifying as innovation advances (Kubjana et al., 2024). Boosting productivity in the construction industry can significantly elevate a nation's gross domestic product, making a powerful contribution to its economic growth (Mistri et al., 2019; Pathirana, 2021; Manoharan et al., 2023a). Low productivity is one of the most significant challenges faced by the construction industry (Hamza et al., 2022; Premakumara and Siriwardana, 2025). Premakumara and Siriwardana, (2025) stated that the challenging nature of the construction industry has drawn the attention of scholars and practitioners aiming to improve productivity, yet despite extensive research, a universally applicable and robust approach has not yet been developed.

The economy is becoming more productive, more innovative, and more competitive due to the existing human potential (Mistri et al., 2019). Productivity is defined as maximising output while optimising input. It measures the ratio between the value of output, such as products or services, and the input, which includes materials, labour, capital, and energy (Hamza et al., 2022). Premakumara and Siriwardana (2025) stated labour and capital productivity are key factors that require multi-factor analysis for accurate results, as labour efforts are essential to construction operations.

Labour is a vital and flexible resource in construction, with productivity closely linked to human effort, efficiency, and performance. Given the large number of workers hired for projects, manpower is the dominant productive resource in this field (Hamza et al., 2022). Manoharan et al., (2021) research

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studies stated that labour efforts are the lifeblood of construction operations. Consequently, the effectiveness of labour operations has a significant impact on the outcomes of construction processes in terms of efficiency, quality, productivity, physical progress and safety, specially in developing countries (Mistri et al., 2019; Manoharan et al., 2023, 2024). Also Manoharan et al., (2023) stated low performance of labourers has been seen to be a major factor that contributes to inefficient productivity in construction firms in developing countries

In a typical construction project, labour cost is significant and represents between 30% and 50% of the total project cost (Manoharan et al., 2021). Measuring labour productivity in the context of "Production by a worker" is the simplest method to do so in construction (Premakumara and Siriwardana, 2025). Occupational stress is a significant issue that results in over 15.4 million lost working days and incurs an estimated cost of $5.2 billion to industries, individuals, and governments (Tennakoon and Ariyaratne, 2021).

Research on labour productivity in the construction industry has identified several factors that affect productivity, such as project management practices, worker skill levels, safety regulations, and technology adoption (Ghoddousi et al., 2015). Some studies have also examined the impact of non-technical factors such as worker motivation, job satisfaction, and emotional intelligence on productivity (Grassetti et al., 2018).Additionally, more research is needed on the impact of non-technical factors such as emotional intelligence(EI) and worker motivation on productivity, as these factors may be just as important as technical factors in determining productivity levels (Doloi, 2008).

EI is linked to improved employee performance, innovation, and adaptability in dynamic work environments like Construction (Kubjana et al., 2024). Conversely, leaders with lower EI struggle with impulse control and are susceptible to emotional fluctuations, which impede effective decision-making (Kubjana et al., 2024).

EI, evolving from the concept of social intelligence, is essential for managing challenges, enhancing communication, and fostering a positive organisational culture. It comprises four key dimensions: self-awareness, understanding others' emotions, emotional regulation, and using emotions to improve performance (Kubjana et al., 2024). EI leads to fear and anxiety, while high EI promotes trust, open communication, and employee confidence. In light of disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic and technological shifts, enhancing EI is crucial for workforce adaptability and organisational success in modern construction settings.(Kubjana et al., 2024)

The cognitive, manual, and emotional abilities of employees have a direct impact on the components of the employment role, process, and duties (Manoharan et al., 2024). In light of the aforementioned facts, recent investigations, as well as consultations with skill development authorities and industry experts, have revealed that numerous construction firms in numerous developing countries like Sri Lanka lack suitable methods and procedures to evaluate the skills of site supervisory workers in labour management, performance assessments, and productivity measurements in construction tasks (Manoharan et al., 2024).

The Sri Lankan construction sector was undertaken. However, the focus of this evaluation was limited to labour-related aspects when assessing construction productivity (Premakumara and Siriwardana, 2025). Manoharan et al., (2023) strongly recommends that future studies should have more focus on various improving practices on labour performance in the Sri Lankan construction sector. Despite its importance, EI remains under-researched in construction (Kukah et al., 2023). Kubjana et al., (2024) stated research. findings indicated that emotional intelligence emerged as a crucial transformation factor. Despite the proven importance of EI in workplace performance, its role in improving labour productivity remains underexplored in the Sri Lankan construction industry. Existing studies mainly focus on technical and managerial aspects, overlooking how EI can enhance worker performance, motivation, and team dynamics. There is a clear need for research that examines how EI can be assessed, developed, and integrated into construction practices to boost productivity

This research aims to identify the impacts of emotional intelligence on enhancing labour productivity in the Sri Lankan construction industry and identify a solution to improve labour productivity. To achieve this aim, the study will first identify the challenges faced by the construction industry and examine existing strategies. It will then explore how Emotional Intelligence impacts employee productivity in Sri Lanka's construction sector. Finally, the research will propose strategies to enhance EI among workers to improve productivity and engagement in construction environments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Labour Productivity

Premakumara and Siriwardana, (2025) identified 13% of labour-related factors contribute to 87% of productivity, while 30% of underlying reasons may solve 70% of industry problems. Understanding the critical factors that affect construction labour productivity is therefore essential for developing targeted strategies to reduce inefficiencies and manage construction workforces more effectively (Hamza et al., 2022; Premakumara and Siriwardana, 2025). Such improvements not only enhance project performance for construction companies but also strengthen their competitiveness, ultimately increasing their chances of survival in this highly competitive sector (Hamza et al., 2022; Manoharan et al., 2023).
Key findings from the literature review highlight significant challenges to labour productivity, labour-related issues affecting productivity, and current strategies implemented to enhance labour productivity, as represented in Figure 1.

Factor	References										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Challenges / Labour-Related Issues											
Skills shortage	✓			✓						✓	
Personal conflicts among labourers	✓				✓					✓	
Lack of working experience	✓			✓		✓				✓	✓
Lack of knowledge in construction work					✓					✓	✓
Negative attitude of labourers	✓						✓			✓	
Lack of labour management				✓							✓
Low wages and incentives				✓							✓
Poor site safety/working environment	✓										✓
Excessive workload											✓
Lack of job security/high labour mobility											✓
Low motivation and morale	✓			✓			✓				
Strategies											
Workforce management	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Job planning	✓	✓			✓	✓					
Workers' motivation	✓				✓		✓				
Material availability	✓	✓									
Education and training					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Health facilities					✓						✓
Increase labour benefits		✓									
Social skills development programmes									✓		

Figure 11. Challenges and Existing strategies for labor productivity

1. (Manoharan et al., 2023)
2. (Hamza et al., 2022)
3. (Kubjana et al., 2024)
4. (Premakumara and Siriwardana, 2025)
5. (Manoharan et al., 2021)
6. (Rajapaksha and Sakura, 2024)
7. (Lakshan et al., 2023)
8. (Pathirana, 2021)
9. (Alsulami et al., 2023)
10. (Manoharan et al., 2022)

The findings of the current research lay a new theoretical approach that helps the management of the construction industry to establish a safe climate for their workers. Although much progress has been made, there are still too many workplace problems that demand keen consideration (Alsulami et al., 2023). One significant challenge is low labour productivity, which can be linked to various factors, including a lack of emotional intelligence among workers (Lam and Kirby, 2002). The absence of emotional intelligence among team leaders exposes them to various challenges, including team dynamics, operational inefficiencies, and reduced job satisfaction (Kubjana et al., 2024).

Emotional Intelligence

The term emotional intelligence (EI) is "the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions in such a way as to support thinking, to understand emotions and their meaning and to effectively regulate emotionality, to determine the improvement of emotional and intellectual development" (Naeem, Saif and Khalil, 2011).
Salovey and Mayer, (1990) defined emotional intelligence (EI) as a type of social intelligence that comprises the capacity to oversee your own emotions and those of others, to differentiate among them, and to use the information to manage your thinking and behavior. EI is categorized into three models: ability, trait, and emotional systems, with Nelson and Low's model highlighted for its focus on personal growth and balanced thinking (Kukah et al., 2023).

Emotional Intelligence to Tackle Challenges in Labour Productivity

EI increases personal and project performance, inspires leadership, builds capacity against stress, improves communication skills and ensures greater confidence within project managers and construction workers (Kukah et al., 2022). Self-control and self-direction, awareness of one's own strengths and shortcomings, self-worth, the capacity to understand one's own potential, stress tolerance, and impulse control are all aspects of emotional intelligence. It also entails audacity. These points can be changed in a way that increases worker productivity. (Shehata and El-Gohary, 2011).
The following Table 1 shows how EI addresses challenges based on the findings from the literature.

Table 5. Impact from EI

Factor	Impact from EI
Risk Management	• Construction managers and employees will better appreciate the role of EI in enhancing project success and minimizing risks in the construction industry (Kukah *et al.*, 2022; Kukah *et al*., 2023).
Workplace Culture	• EI can potentially help in conflict resolution, build a collaborative culture, motivate other workers, and help create psychological safety within working teams (Lawani *et al.*, 2024). • Introducing EI-based training programs can significantly enhance soft skills, stress management, and workplace ethics. These improvements help labourers manage emotional demands, reduce conflicts, and stay focused on their tasks, ultimately increasing output and job quality (Tennakoon & Ariyaratne, 2021). • Conflicts in the construction industry can impact productivity. EI aids in resolving these conflicts by promoting empathy and understanding, enabling individuals to manage emotions and maintain positive relationships (Hughes and Thorpe, 2014).
Job Satisfaction and Motivation	• Existing study indicates that construction project workers with higher emotional intelligence tend to display higher satisfaction, greater commitment towards their job, and lower turnover intentions in relation to their roles (Tennakoon and Ariyaratne, 2021; Lawani *et al.*, 2024) • Leaders who possess high EI are better able to communicate with their teams, understand their needs and concerns, and motivate them to achieve goals (Hooper, 2016). • Workers who possess high EI are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and have lower turnover rates. This can result in significant cost savings for construction companies, as they do not have to spend time and resources recruiting and training new employees. (Yoon and Suh, 2003).
Experienced workers	• Demographic factors such as age and experience contribute to higher EI levels. More experienced and emotionally mature workers

	tend to manage pressure more effectively, sustain better working relationships, and maintain steady performance, positively influencing overall team productivity (Lawani *et al.*, 2024)
Construction Site Safety	• In environments with high safety risks in construction sites. Emotionally intelligent workers are more likely to comply with safety regulations and manage stress effectively. This reduces accidents, downtime, and emotional burnout, contributing to a safer and more productive workforce (Alsulami *et al.*, 2023) • In the construction business, emotional intelligence (EI) has become a tool for enhancing efficiency and safety. (El-Gohary and Aziz, 2014). • Safety is crucial in construction, and workers with high EI are more likely to adhere to safety protocols. Promoting EI can enhance safety and reduce accidents and fatalities on job sites (Lam and Kirby, 2002).
Enhances Output	• Assertiveness and emotional control traits of high EI help workers stay calm under pressure and make clear decisions. This leads to fewer mistakes, better coordination, and higher-quality work, all of which boost productivity at both the individual and organizational levels (Alsulami *et al.*, 2023).
Project success	• As emphasized by Goleman, EI accounts for 80% of individual success, compared to only 20% by IQ. Construction managers and workers who prioritize EI create environments where productivity thrives through trust, cooperation, and clear emotional understanding (Perera, 2021) • Supporting strategies like two-way communication, team targets, safety assurance, and skill development further increase cost-efficiency and labour productivity (Lakshan *et al.*, 2023). • According to the correlation between EI and life skills, a higher level is associated with stronger problem-solving abilities, greater adaptability, and less anxiety. (Amiri et al., 2015). • Leaders who understand their team members' emotions and motivations foster a cohesive group that works better together to achieve goals (Kaming *et al.*, 1997).

According to the correlation between EI and life skills, higher levels of EI are associated with stronger problem-solving abilities, greater adaptability, and reduced anxiety (Amiri et al., 2015). Furthermore, by enhancing workplace safety and job satisfaction, emotionally intelligent practices help employees remain more focused and engaged in their tasks, ultimately leading to increased productivity in the construction sector (Yi & Chan, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

Research Process

The data collection for this study was carried out using a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative techniques to assess how Emotional Intelligence (EI) influences labour productivity in Sri Lanka's construction sector.

A comprehensive literature review was conducted to identify existing strategies for increasing labour productivity and to categorize the prevalent problems in the Sri Lankan construction industry. This review helped to conceptualize how Emotional Intelligence could be effectively integrated into existing strategies to enhance productivity.

Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire survey. A sample of 45 construction workers across Sri Lanka participated in this survey. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and scaled questions designed to generate numerical data that could be statistically analyzed. This allowed for the measurement of EI levels and their potential impact on labour productivity. The standardized format of the questionnaire enabled structured data collection, facilitating both comparison and generalization.
Qualitative data were gathered through open-ended questionnaires administered to a smaller sample of 8 individuals, including project managers and HR managers. These surveys aimed to collect in-depth insights into how EI is perceived and practiced at the management level. The open-ended format encouraged detailed responses, which were later analyzed thematically to identify recurring themes and deeper meanings.
The insights obtained from eight project manager responses provided rich explanations of how EI contributes to productivity.

Data Analysis Process

Correlation Analysis

Correlation Analysis using SPSS was the primary statistical technique employed to examine the strength and direction of relationships between variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient, which ranges from -1 to +1, was used to quantify the linear relationship between continuous variables. A coefficient closer to +1 or -1 indicates a strong correlation, while a value near 0 suggests little to no linear relationship.
In this study, correlation analysis was used to assess the associations among Emotional Intelligence, labour productivity, personal life issues, conflict management IQ, flexibility of work environment, mental interaction with superiors, and site conditions. If a correlation coefficient greater than 0.9 was observed between any variable and labour productivity, it was considered a strong relationship.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis was used to interpret the qualitative data. This involved coding and categorizing the open-ended responses to identify recurring themes and key insights. Thematic analysis enabled the researcher to derive deeper meanings from the qualitative responses, providing context and depth to the quantitative findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative data

Questionnaire survey demographic data analysis is as for the following figure 2 and 3.

What is your job here? (Profession/Specialty)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Barbender	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Carpenter	1	2.2	2.2	4.4
	Carpentor	7	15.6	15.6	20.0
	Helper	2	4.4	4.4	24.4
	Machine Operator	3	6.7	6.7	31.1
	Mason	21	46.7	46.7	77.8
	Painter	10	22.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Figure 12 - Demographic data Analysis

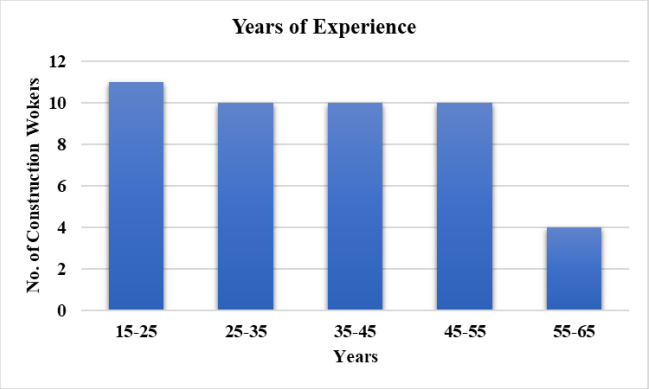

Figure 13-Years of Workers' (Demographic data)

Considered factors for assessing the impact of EI are represented in Table 2 and Figure 4 represents the correlation for Labour Productivity for the Construction Industry. To facilitate analysis, the Factors are divided into different parts, each representing various condition factors. These factors are related to determining the EI for labor productivity and overall labor productivity within the construction industry.

Table 6 - Factors for finding the impact of EI

Factor Group		EI for Labour Productivity		Labour Productivity for the Construction Industry	
A	**Site Condition Factor**	**A2**	Response to a conflict with a co-worker	**A1**	Site work conditions
		A3	How the complaint was managed	**A4**	Solution given for the conflict
B	**Overall Labour Condition Factor**	**B1**	Response to the supervisor in conflict	**B2**	Working relationship after conflict
		B3	B3 – Reaction to co-worker criticism	**B4**	Settlement after co-worker criticism
		B5	Reaction to supervisor criticism	**B6**	Settlement after the supervisor criticism
C	**Labour Interacting Condition Factor**	**C2**	Communication in problem-solving	**C1**	Cooperation with co-workers during teamwork
		C4	Managing personal/family life with a job	**C3**	Example of problem-solving skill
		C6	Informing the supervisor about the deadline extension	**C5**	Handling pressure during deadlines
D	**Personal Condition Factor**	**D2**	Ability to understand emotions	**D1**	Use of smartphone, YouTube, Facebook
		D3	Reasons for job satisfaction/dissatisfaction		

Correlations

		A2	A3	B1	B3	B5	C2	C4	C6	D2	D3
A2	Pearson Correlation	1	.953**	.285	.031	-.085	.209	-.449**	.199	-.516**	-.610**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.058	.837	.577	.168	.002	.190	.000	.000
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
A3	Pearson Correlation	.953**	1	.214	-.009	-.185	.116	-.435**	.245	-.421**	-.588**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.158	.955	.225	.449	.003	.105	.004	.000
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
B1	Pearson Correlation	.285	.214	1	-.075	.261	.429**	-.330*	.031	-.520**	-.195
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.058	.158		.625	.083	.003	.027	.839	.000	.199
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
B3	Pearson Correlation	.031	-.009	-.075	1	.113	-.200	.405**	-.307*	.057	.041
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.837	.955	.625		.459	.188	.006	.040	.709	.788
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
B5	Pearson Correlation	-.085	-.185	.261	.113	1	.014	.136	-.053	-.219	.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.577	.225	.083	.459		.928	.374	.728	.149	.806
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
C2	Pearson Correlation	.209	.116	.429**	-.200	.014	1	-.027	-.175	-.205	.204
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.168	.449	.003	.188	.928		.862	.251	.176	.180
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
C4	Pearson Correlation	-.449**	-.435**	-.330*	.405**	.136	-.027	1	-.423**	.554**	.491**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.003	.027	.006	.374	.862		.004	.000	.001
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
C6	Pearson Correlation	.199	.245	.031	-.307*	-.053	-.175	-.423**	1	-.087	-.183
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.190	.105	.839	.040	.728	.251	.004		.568	.228
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
D2	Pearson Correlation	-.516**	-.421**	-.520**	.057	-.219	-.205	.554**	-.087	1	.477**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.004	.000	.709	.149	.176	.000	.568		.001
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
D3	Pearson Correlation	-.610**	-.588**	-.195	.041	.038	.204	.491**	-.183	.477**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.199	.788	.806	.180	.001	.228	.001	
	N	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Figure 14 - Correlation for Labour Productivity for the Construction Industry

The Pearson correlation analysis reveals several significant relationships between EI factors and labour productivity within the Sri Lankan construction industry. According to the correlation values, there is a clear indication of a positive impact of EI on labour productivity, which in turn contributes to the overall productivity of the construction industry. Specifically, the variables A2 and A3, which relate to site condition factors, show strong negative correlations with personal condition indicators D2 and D3. For instance, A2 demonstrates a significant negative correlation with both D2 ($r = -0.516$, $p = 0.000$) and D3 ($r = -0.610$, $p = 0.000$), while A3 is significantly negatively correlated with D3 ($r = -0.588$, $p = 0.000$). These findings suggest that poor site conditions can significantly reduce labour productivity.

In contrast, the variable C4, associated with labour interacting conditions, shows a strong positive correlation with both D2 ($r = 0.554$, $p = 0.000$) and D3 ($r = 0.491$, $p = 0.001$). This indicates that effective emotional interactions, teamwork, and communication among labour teams can positively influence productivity outcomes. These statistically significant relationships highlight the importance of managing both the physical environment (e.g., site conditions) and the emotional climate (e.g., interpersonal relationships) in construction settings.

Furthermore, personal life problems, conflict management skills, emotional intelligence, workplace flexibility, mental engagement with superiors, and site conditions are identified as critical factors affecting labour productivity in the construction industry. Therefore, fostering emotional intelligence, especially in terms of interpersonal communication and conflict resolution, is essential for enhancing productivity and ensuring better project performance.

Qualitative data

It was found through qualitative data analysis that EI has a significant impact on labour productivity in the construction industry. Based on the findings of the analysis, several key strategies are proposed to enhance critical components that contribute to improving labour productivity. These strategies aim to leverage emotional intelligence to foster better communication, teamwork, empowerment, and work environments within construction projects.
The proposed strategies are outlined in the following table 3 under the theme: "Improving Labour Productivity in the Sri Lankan Construction Industry by Using Emotional Intelligence."

Table 7 . Proposed Strategies, Actions & Applications

Key Strategy	Actions	Applications
Improve collaboration and communication	Encourage open, sincere communication- Regular team meetings	Use real-time project management tools
	Train staff on proper communication	Weekly team updates and planning
	Create a respectful work environment	Encourage a question-asking culture
Promote a supportive work environment	Show appreciation to the staff	Celebrate achievements (big or small)
	Provide learning opportunities- Encourage feedback and growth	Offer training & development programs
	Foster teamwork	Create a safe space for sharing concerns
	Promote work-life balance	
Empower workers	Involve workers in decisions	Give autonomy in task decisions
	Provide tools and guidance	Acknowledge achievements and lessons learned
	Encourage pride in work	
	Build trust and respect	
Develop EI skills among staff	Provide EI training	Conduct workshops on empathy, self-awareness
	Enable real-world EI practice	Promote an emotionally intelligent culture
	Encourage EI values in the workplace	
Additional Supporting Strategies	Invest in new technology and machinery	Reduce rework and increase efficiency
	Ensure safe and secure workspaces	Provide PPE and safety training
	Offer attractive benefits and compensation	Attract and retain top talent
	Implement strong training & development programs	

Interviewers explained how EI helped them build stronger relationships with workers, resolve conflicts effectively, and maintain team motivation. To address challenges in the industry, it suggests collaboration between the government and construction companies, emphasizing the need for investment in training and new technologies. Improved work practices and incentive schemes are also

recommended to boost productivity. Additionally, raising awareness of EI's benefits and implementing training programs can help strengthen workers' emotional intelligence. By focusing on these areas, the Sri Lankan construction sector can enhance productivity, competitiveness, and create a more positive work environment.

CONCLUSION

The Sri Lankan construction industry is currently grappling with persistent issues of low labour productivity, driven by factors such as ineffective communication, poor site conditions, lack of motivation, interpersonal conflicts, and limited emotional support for workers. Literature findings highlight that despite the industry's significant contribution to national development, existing productivity enhancement strategies have often overlooked the importance of non-technical skills like EI. Findings from this research indicate that emotional intelligence has a positive influence on several key aspects of labour performance, including teamwork, communication, conflict resolution, motivation, and job satisfaction. The correlation analysis revealed strong associations between emotional and interpersonal factors and overall labour productivity. Qualitative insights further supported the argument that emotionally intelligent leadership and workforce practices contribute to a more cohesive and efficient working environment.

To overcome the current productivity challenges, the research proposes targeted strategies such as enhancing emotional intelligence through training, fostering a supportive work culture, involving workers in decision-making, and creating safe and empowering work environments. Additional support through investment in safety, new technologies, and recognition systems can further improve employee engagement and performance. Addressing labour productivity through the development of emotional intelligence offers a practical and sustainable path to improving project outcomes, worker well-being, and the overall competitiveness of the Sri Lankan construction industry.

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