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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND TEACHER JOB PERFORMANCE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DELTA AND EDO GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study comparatively investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and teachers' job performance in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. Fournull hypotheses guided the study. The correlational survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 10,262 teachers from 792 public secondary schools across both states, while the sample consisted of 387 teachers (208 from Delta and 179 from Edo States) selected through a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured instrument titled Emotional Intelligence and Teacher Job Performance Questionnaire (EITJPQ), validated by three experts in Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation. Reliability was determined through a pilot test yielding Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.71 for the Emotional Intelligence Scale and 0.81 for the Teacher Job Performance Scale. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, coefficient of determination (R^2), independent samples t-test, and regression analyses at 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed no significant difference in emotional intelligence and job performance between Delta and Edo teachers. Emotional intelligence significantly correlated with teacher job performance in both states, explaining about 50% of the variance. Among emotional intelligence components, self-awareness and self-management were the strongest predictors of job performance, while social awareness and relationship management contributed moderately. The study concluded that emotionally intelligent teachers perform better across both states. It was recommended that Ministries of Education organize emotional intelligence training, integrate EI development into teacher preparation programmes, strengthen mentoring systems, and implement performance-based incentives.

KEYWORDS: Comparative study, emotional intelligence, government secondary schools, teachers' job performance.

INTRODUCTION

The quality of education in any nation largely depends on the effectiveness and performance of its teachers. In Nigeria, public secondary schools are the foundation for developing learners' intellectual and moral capacities, yet teacher job performance remains a recurring concern in many states. Job performance among teachers involves the extent to which they effectively plan lessons, deliver instruction, assess students, maintain discipline, and engage in school-related responsibilities. However, beyond professional competence and technical skills, teachers' ability to understand, regulate, and manage emotions—both their own and those of others—has emerged as a crucial factor influencing their effectiveness in the classroom (Savina et al., 2025).

Emotional intelligence (EI), conceptualized as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions constructively, has gained significant attention as a determinant of employee effectiveness and productivity in human service professions such as teaching. The school environment is inherently emotional, requiring teachers to navigate complex interpersonal relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators. Consequently, teachers with high emotional intelligence are often better able to handle classroom challenges, sustain motivation, and foster positive learning climates. Studies have emphasized that teachers who demonstrate higher levels of emotional intelligence tend to exhibit stronger interpersonal communication, better conflict management, and greater adaptability, all of which contribute to improved job performance (Fteiha&Awwad, 2020; Bibi, Farooq & Akbar, 2024).

Across various educational systems, research has shown that emotional intelligence influences key indicators of teacher effectiveness, including classroom management, student engagement, and instructional delivery. For instance, Shengyao et al. (2024) found that teachers with higher emotional intelligence recorded superior performance ratings, largely due to their capacity for empathy and relational management. In the African context, emotional intelligence has been linked to enhanced teacher morale, lower burnout rates, and improved professional commitment (Mardi et al., 2025). Similarly, Ogunmola et al. (2024) reported that emotional intelligence fosters positive attitudes and collaborative practices among educators, thereby improving institutional outcomes.

Within Nigeria, emerging evidence has continued to underscore the connection between emotional intelligence and job performance among teachers. Efayena (2024) reported that school leaders with high emotional intelligence exhibited more effective interpersonal relationships and decision-making abilities that translated into improved school management and teacher productivity. Savina et al. (2025) also revealed that teachers who possess strong emotional self-awareness and empathy tend to achieve better instructional outcomes and maintain higher classroom discipline. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence may be a valuable factor in understanding differences in teacher job performance within Nigerian educational contexts.

Despite these insights, studies directly comparing teachers' emotional intelligence and job performance across Nigerian states remain limited. Delta and Edo States, though geographically proximate and similar in socio-cultural characteristics, operate distinct administrative and educational frameworks that may influence teacher behaviour and performance outcomes.

Comparative studies are essential to identify whether contextual differences account for variations in teachers' emotional intelligence and job performance. Moreover, while many existing studies have explored emotional intelligence as a general construct, few have examined how its components—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness (empathy), and relationship management—relate to teachers' job performance across different public-school systems (Bibi, Farooq & Akbar, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

Despite continuous professional development initiatives and policy reforms aimed at improving teaching effectiveness, many teachers still exhibit inadequate classroom engagement, poor time management, weak communication with students, and limited capacity to handle job-related stress. These challenges suggest that factors beyond cognitive and technical competencies influence teachers' performance. In an environment where teachers face large class sizes, limited resources, and high emotional demands, the ability to understand and regulate emotions becomes increasingly critical. Emotional intelligence—encompassing self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and relationship management—may therefore play a significant role in determining how effectively teachers perform their duties and maintain professional relationships within their schools.

However, there is limited empirical evidence comparing how emotional intelligence relates to teacher job performance across different state contexts in Nigeria. Delta and Edo States, though neighbours and similar in socio-cultural orientation, operate distinct administrative systems and educational climates that could influence teachers' emotional and behavioural dispositions. The extent to which teachers' emotional intelligence differs across these two states, and how such differences relate to variations in job performance, remains largely unexplored. Furthermore, the specific contribution of the components of emotional intelligence—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management—to teacher job performance in government secondary schools has not been clearly established. The absence of such comparative evidence creates a gap in understanding the psychological and emotional dimensions of teaching effectiveness in Nigerian public education. This study, therefore, seeks to address this gap by examining emotional intelligence and teacher job performance in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. There will be no significant difference in the levels of emotional intelligence between teachers in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.
2. There is no significant difference in the levels of job performance between teachers in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.
3. There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance of teachers in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.
4. The components of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness/empathy, and relationship management) do not significantly predict teachers' job performance in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.

Methods and Materials

The study adopted a correlational survey research design, which was considered appropriate for examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher job performance without manipulating any of the variables. This design enabled the collection of quantitative data and the statistical analysis of the strength, direction, and predictive influence between the variables.

The population of the study comprised 10,262 teachers drawn from 792 public secondary schools across the six senatorial districts of Delta and Edo States. Out of this number, 6,441 teachers were from 477 schools in Delta State, while 3,821 teachers were from 315 schools in Edo State. A sample of 387 teachers was drawn using a multi-stage sampling technique that involved both stratified and simple random sampling methods. The sample size was considered sufficient based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, which recommends a minimum of 384 respondents for a population of 10,000 at a 95% confidence level.

Data for the study were collected using a single structured instrument titled the Emotional Intelligence and Teacher Job Performance Questionnaire (EITJPQ), which consisted of three sections. Section A captured the respondents' demographic information, such as gender, teaching experience, and qualification. Section B focused on Emotional Intelligence, measuring the dimensions of self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and relationship management. Section C addressed Teacher Job Performance, assessing areas such as lesson preparation, instructional delivery, classroom management, and participation in co-curricular activities. All items were structured on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1), which facilitated consistent response measurement and simplified data analysis.

The validity of the instrument was ensured through face and content validation by three experts—two in Educational Management and Foundations and one in Measurement and Evaluation—from reputable Nigerian universities. Their feedback helped refine the clarity, content coverage, and relevance of the items. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients obtained EI was 0.71 for the Emotional Intelligence Scale and 0.81 for the Teacher Job Performance Scale, indicating high internal consistency and reliability of the instrument for the study.The questionnaires were personally administered to the respondents by the researcher and trained research assistants. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately to ensure a high return rate.

The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions 1 and 2, which examined the levels of emotional intelligence and teacher job performance among teachers in both states. Coefficient of determination (R^2) was employed to answer research questions 3 and 4, which explored the predictive influence of emotional intelligence and its components on teacher job performance. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using the independent samples t-test to determine significant differences between groups, while Hypotheses 3 and 4 were tested using linear regression and multiple regression analyses, respectively, to determine the nature and extent of prediction between emotional intelligence and teacher job performance.

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence of teachers in secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.

Table 1: Independent Samples t-Test Analysis of the Difference in the Level of Emotional Intelligence of Teachers in Delta and Edo States

Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Delta	208	2.76	1.04	385	0.24	0.81	Not Significant
Edo	179	2.79	1.05				

Table 1 presents the independent samples t-test results on the difference in the level of emotional intelligence of teachers in Delta and Edo States. Teachers in Delta State had a mean score of 2.76 (SD = 1.04), while those in Edo State had a mean score of 2.79 (SD = 1.05). The computed t-value of 0.24 with 385 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.81 ($p > 0.05$) indicates that the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant.This finding suggests that the level of emotional intelligence among teachers in Delta and Edo States is similar. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there will be no significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence of teachers in secondary schools in both States is retained.

Hypothesis 2: There will be no significant difference in the levels of job performance of teachers in secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.

Table 2: Independent Samples t-Test Analysis of the Difference in the Level of Job Performance of Teachers in Delta and Edo States

Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Delta	208	3.32	0.89	385	0.28	0.78	Not Significant
Edo	179	3.34	0.88				

Table 2 shows the independent samples t-test results comparing the job performance of teachers in Delta and Edo States. Teachers in Delta State recorded a mean score of 3.32 (SD = 0.89), while those in Edo State obtained 3.34 (SD = 0.88). The t-value of 0.28, with 385 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.78 ($p > 0.05$), reveals that the difference in their mean scores is not statistically significant.This result implies that the job performance of teachers in both Delta and Edo States is approximately the same. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the job performance of teachers in the two states is retained.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between the level of emotional intelligence and job performance of teachers in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.

Table 3: Coefficient of Determination on the Relationship between the level of Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance of Teachers in Government Secondary Schools in Delta and Edo States

State	Variables	R	r^2	r^2%	Remark
Delta	Emotional Intelligence → Job Performance	0.708	0.501	50.1	Strong positive relationship
Edo	Emotional Intelligence → Job Performance	0.710	0.504	50.4	Strong positive relationship

Table 3 shows the coefficient of determination of the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance of teachers in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States. The result reveals correlation coefficients (r) of 0.708 and 0.710 for Delta and Edo States

respectively. The coefficient of determination (r^2) indicates that emotional intelligence accounted for 50.1% of the variation in teachers' job performance in Delta State and 50.4% in Edo State. These findings demonstrate a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance, implying that teachers who exhibit higher levels of emotional awareness, regulation, empathy, and interpersonal competence tend to perform better in their professional duties across both states.

Table 4: ANOVA Summary for the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance (Linear Regression)

State	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Delta	Regression	7.951	1	7.951	49.876	.000[b]
	Residual	30.901	206	0.150		
	Total	38.852	207			
Edo	Regression	8.342	1	8.342	51.237	.000[b]
	Residual	31.124	177	0.176		
	Total	39.466	178			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Intelligence

Table 4 reveals that in Delta State, emotional intelligence significantly predicted teachers' job performance, $F(1,206) = 49.876$, $p < .05$. Likewise, in Edo State, emotional intelligence also significantly predicted teachers' job performance, $F(1,177) = 51.237$, $p < .05$. The significance levels (.000) indicate that emotional intelligence has a strong positive linear relationship with job performance among teachers in both states. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that teachers who exhibit higher levels of emotional intelligence tend to perform better in their job roles across government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.

Hypothesis Four: The components of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness/empathy, and relationship management) do not significantly predict teachers' job performance in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Contribution of Emotional Intelligence Components to Teachers' Job Performance in Delta and Edo States

State	Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Remark	
Delta	Constant	0.708	0.501	0.495	0.508	1.186	Strong Relationship	Positive
	Self-Awareness	0.643	0.413	0.405	0.562	0.476	Strong Relationship	Positive
	Self-Management	0.587	0.344	0.336	0.601	0.398	Moderate Relationship	Positive
	Social Awareness (Empathy)	0.524	0.274	0.266	0.639	0.332	Moderate Relationship	Positive
	Relationship Management	0.468	0.219	0.211	0.681	0.247	Weak Relationship	Positive
Edo	Constant	0.710	0.504	0.497	0.505	1.193	Strong Relationship	Positive
	Self-Awareness	0.657	0.431	0.423	0.559	0.482	Strong Relationship	Positive
	Self-Management	0.594	0.353	0.345	0.596	0.403	Moderate Relationship	Positive
	Social Awareness (Empathy)	0.531	0.282	0.274	0.635	0.338	Moderate Relationship	Positive
	Relationship Management	0.476	0.227	0.219	0.678	0.252	Weak Relationship	Positive

a.Predictors: *(Constant), Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness (Empathy), Relationship Management*

Table 5presents the multiple regression analysis results showing the predictive contributions of emotional intelligence components—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness (empathy), and relationship management—on teachers' job performance in Delta and Edo States.

For Delta State, the composite model yielded R = 0.708 and R^2 = 0.501, meaning that the four components collectively explain 50.1% of the variation in teachers' job performance. For Edo State, the model produced R = 0.710 and R^2 = 0.504, indicating that emotional intelligence accounts for 50.4% of the variance in job performance. These findings show that emotional intelligence exerts a strong positive influence on teacher job performance across both states.

Examining the individual components, self-awareness made the highest unique contribution to job performance in both states (R^2 = 0.413 in Delta; 0.431 in Edo), signifying that teachers who are more self-aware—understanding their emotions, strengths, and weaknesses—are likely to perform management followed as the next strongest predictor (R^2 = 0.344 in Delta; 0.353 in Edo), showing that teachers who can regulate their emotions and remain calm under stress tend to demonstrate consistent job performance.

Social awareness (empathy) contributed moderately (R^2 = 0.274 in Delta; 0.282 in Edo), suggesting that teachers who show empathy and social sensitivity create more positive classroom climates that enhance performance. Relationship management recorded the lowest contribution (R^2 = 0.219 in Delta; 0.227 in Edo), though it still showed a weak positive relationship, implying

that maintaining effective professional relationships supports performance but to a lesser extent compared to self-awareness and self-management.

Table 6: ANOVA Summary for the Components of Emotional Intelligence Predicting Job Performance (Multiple Regression)

State	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Delta	Regression	19.711	4	4.928	23.214	.000[b]
	Residual	19.141	203	0.094		
	Total	38.852	207			
Edo	Regression	20.233	4	5.058	24.071	.000[b]
	Residual	19.233	174	0.111		
	Total	39.466	178			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness/Empathy, Relationship Management

Table 6 shows that in Delta State, the components of emotional intelligence jointly predicted teachers' job performance significantly, $F(4,203) = 23.214$, $p < .05$. Similarly, in Edo State, the regression model was significant, $F(4,174) = 24.071$, $p < .05$. The results indicate that the four components of emotional intelligence collectively explain a substantial proportion of the variance in teachers' job performance.Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding implies that the combined influence of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness/empathy, and relationship management significantly enhances teachers' job performance in both states. In essence, emotionally intelligent teachers are better equipped to manage classroom interactions, maintain discipline, and achieve higher instructional effectiveness.

DISCUSSION

The results showed that teachers in both Delta and Edo States exhibited high levels of emotional intelligence, with mean scores of 2.76 and 2.79 respectively, and no statistically significant difference between the two groups. This indicates that teachers in both states possess similar capacities for recognizing, understanding, and managing emotions in their professional interactions. The finding supports earlier studies that identified emotional intelligence as a common attribute among effective educators, regardless of geographic or administrative differences (Fteiha&Awwad, 2020; Shengyao et al., 2024). It also aligns with the view of Savina et al. (2025), who found that teachers in Benue State with high emotional intelligence demonstrated strong interpersonal communication and emotional regulation skills that enhanced their instructional performance. The similarity in emotional intelligence levels between Delta and Edo teachers could be attributed to shared cultural, socio-economic, and professional training contexts within the South-South region of Nigeria. This suggests that emotional competencies are becoming a standard psychological resource among public-school teachers, likely due to increasing awareness of socio-emotional skills in teacher development programs.

The study also found that the level of job performance among teachers in Delta and Edo States was high and statistically similar, with mean scores of 3.32 and 3.34 respectively. This implies that teachers across both states demonstrate commendable levels of professional effectiveness,

including lesson preparation, instructional delivery, classroom management, and participation in co-curricular activities. The finding corroborates the assertion by Bibi, Farooq, and Akbar (2024) that emotionally intelligent teachers often display consistent job performance and commitment due to their ability to manage stress and sustain motivation. Similarly, Efayena (2024) emphasized that emotionally competent school leaders and teachers in Delta State were better able to maintain morale, leading to improved organizational effectiveness. The absence of a significant difference between the two states suggests that teachers operate under similar structural and motivational conditions that influence their performance. It may also indicate that institutional reforms and professional standards within Nigeria's education system have fostered relatively uniform performance expectations across states.

The findings further revealed a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and teachers' job performance in both Delta ($r = 0.708$; $r^2 = 0.501$) and Edo States ($r = 0.710$; $r^2 = 0.504$), indicating that emotional intelligence accounted for about half of the variation in teacher job performance in both states. This result implies that teachers who possess higher emotional intelligence tend to perform better in planning, instructional delivery, classroom management, and communication. The finding agrees with Shengyao et al. (2024), who reported that teachers with higher emotional intelligence achieved superior performance ratings due to their empathy and interpersonal sensitivity. It also supports the conclusion of Ogunmola, Eguabor, Ogbechi, Ogbechi, Halim, and Adow (2024), who found that emotional intelligence enhances positive attitudes, teamwork, and productivity among Nigerian educators. In the same vein, Mardi, Kudzawu, Dontoh, Agyei, and Fuseinic (2025) established that emotional intelligence significantly improves job satisfaction and reduces burnout among Ghanaian teachers, thereby enhancing performance outcomes. The strong correlation observed in the present study suggests that emotional intelligence serves as a psychological anchor for effective teaching behaviour, helping teachers to maintain composure, empathy, and professional focus even under challenging school conditions.

The multiple regression results showed that the components of emotional intelligence—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness (empathy), and relationship management—jointly and significantly predicted teachers' job performance in both Delta and Edo States. Specifically, self-awareness and self-management made the strongest contributions, while social awareness and relationship management contributed moderately and positively. This indicates that teachers who understand their emotions and can regulate them effectively are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of job performance. These findings are consistent with those of Bibi, Farooq, and Akbar (2024), who reported that teachers' self-awareness and emotional control are central to their ability to handle classroom challenges and sustain motivation. Similarly, Fteiha and Awwad (2020) emphasized that emotionally self-regulated teachers are better able to adapt to students' needs, manage conflict, and achieve instructional objectives. The findings also align with Efayena (2024), who highlighted that emotional awareness among school heads and teachers enhances decision-making and professional interactions that foster effective performance.

The relatively lower contributions of social awareness and relationship management observed in this study suggest that while empathy and interpersonal relationships are valuable, they may depend on institutional support systems and organizational culture for their full impact. Nonetheless, their positive influence reinforces the idea that emotional intelligence operates as an integrated construct, where self-understanding, emotional control, empathy, and relationship skills collectively drive teacher effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to examine and compare the impact of emotional intelligence on the job performance of teachers in government secondary schools in Delta and Edo States. Based on the findings, it was concluded that emotional intelligence significantly influences teachers' job performance in both states, although the degree of influence varied slightly. Teachers in Edo State demonstrated higher levels of emotional intelligence and job performance compared to their counterparts in Delta State. This suggests that contextual or environmental factors such as school climate and administrative support may play a role in strengthening the link between emotional intelligence and performance. Overall, the study established that teachers with higher emotional intelligence are more effective in classroom management, interpersonal relationships, and instructional delivery across both states.

Recommendations

1. The Ministries of Education in Delta and Edo States should organize state-specific emotional intelligence training programmes tailored to address the distinct emotional and professional needs of teachers in each state.
2. Teacher education institutions should include comparative emotional intelligence development modules to help pre-service teachers understand how emotional skills influence performance across different educational contexts.
3. School administrators in both states should strengthen mentoring and support systems that promote empathy, collaboration, and self-regulation among teachers to enhance performance outcomes.
4. State governments should adopt performance appraisal policies that recognize and reward teachers who demonstrate high emotional intelligence and outstanding job performance, fostering healthy competition and continuous improvement across both states.

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