



## Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance of Teachers in Delta State, Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** This study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Delta State, Nigeria. A correlational research design was adopted to assess the nature and strength of the association between these variables. The study population consisted of 11,011 teachers across 488 public secondary schools in the 25 local government areas of Delta State. Using Krejcie and Morgan's sample size determination table, 370 teachers were randomly selected. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire, which was subjected to both validity checks and reliability testing, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82. A total of 355 completed questionnaires were retrieved with the assistance of school principals. Data analysis was conducted using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed a statistically significant and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher job performance. Based on these findings, the study recommends the integration of emotional intelligence assessment into teacher performance appraisal systems, as well as the incorporation of emotional intelligence training into pre-service and in-service teacher education programs to enhance professional effectiveness.

**KEYWORDS:** Emotional Intelligence (EI), Job Performance, Teachers

### INTRODUCTION

The school system serves as a fundamental institution of socialization, equipping learners with the requisite skills, attitudes, and competencies to function effectively in society. At the heart of this transformative process are teachers—indispensable agents not only in shaping academic outcomes but also in advancing national development. While infrastructure and resources are pivotal, the effectiveness of any educational system is anchored primarily in the dedication, expertise, and performance of its teachers, who constitute the backbone of institutional functionality (Limon, 2022; Limon & Sezgin-Nartgün, 2020, Iririteraye-Adjekpovu & Nwabuaku, 2024).

Teacher job performance, conceptualized as the behaviors demonstrated by educators in the workplace and the resultant outcomes of those behaviors (Jianmin, 2024), is essential for sustaining institutional effectiveness and realizing educational objectives (Liu, Cai, & Zhang, 2024). Empirical evidence underscores a robust link between teacher performance and student achievement (Limon & Sezgin-Nartgün, 2020). According to Lavy (2016), teacher performance encompasses the range of instructional and relational actions teachers take that contribute to students' academic development. It reflects their tangible contribution toward attaining school goals (Özdemir & Gören, 2017; Özdemir & Yirmibeş, 2016).

Job performance in the educational context is inherently multidimensional, encompassing instructional delivery, time management, classroom discipline, student learning outcomes, and the cultivation of professional relationships with both parents and colleagues. Adeyemi, as cited by Esie (2023), describes teacher performance as the integration of relevant inputs toward enhancing teaching and learning. Similarly, Obilade (as cited in Esie, 2023) defines teacher performance as the cumulative responsibilities teachers undertake—such as instruction, assessment, record keeping, and disciplinary engagement—to advance institutional objectives.

Effective teacher performance reflects not only the quality of instruction but also the ability to meet students' diverse needs, including differentiated instruction and support for learners with special needs (Mawoyo & Dhliwayo, 2020, Oyovwi & Iririteraye-Adjekpovu, 2021). Teachers' professional efficacy is also evidenced in their capacity to foster emotionally safe and engaging learning environments and cultivate meaningful relationships with students.

In Nigeria's public secondary school system, particularly in Delta State, the importance of teacher job performance cannot be overstated. Delta State, a key educational hub, grapples with a spectrum of challenges in ensuring optimal teacher productivity. Evaluating teacher performance in this context necessitates a multidimensional approach that considers behavioral, cognitive, and affective indicators. However, recurring challenges—such as low teacher morale, poor discipline management, limited administrative support, emotional exhaustion, and systemic inefficiencies—continue to impede optimal teacher output. Given these complexities, there is a pressing need to explore factors beyond material and structural limitations—specifically, internal psychological traits that may mediate teacher performance. One such construct gaining scholarly and empirical attention is Emotional Intelligence (EI).

Popularized by Daniel Goleman, Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and in social interactions. Goleman's EI framework comprises five core dimensions: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These components significantly influence how educators navigate classroom dynamics, collegial relationships, and the broader school climate. Ubulom & Ikpa (2020), posits that EI involves non-cognitive competencies critical for coping with environmental demands and pressures, thereby enhancing one's daily functioning.

Teaching, by its very nature, is an emotionally laden profession. Educators routinely manage large, diverse classrooms; navigate challenging student behaviors; cope with administrative demands; and function in resource-constrained environments. Teachers with high emotional intelligence are better positioned to regulate their emotions, resolve conflicts, build productive relationships, and sustain resilience amidst occupational stressors (Iroriteraye-Adjekpovu, 2012).

Hence, EI is not merely a theoretical abstraction but a practical, internal resource that may significantly predict teacher effectiveness. This study proposes that emotional intelligence can enhance job performance by enabling teachers to manage emotional labor, remain intrinsically motivated, and foster a conducive learning environment.

This research is anchored in Goleman's (1995, 1998) Emotional Intelligence Theory, which identifies five interrelated domains:

- Self-awareness – recognizing and understanding one's emotions.
- Self-regulation – managing emotional impulses and adjusting to change.
- Motivation – sustaining drive for achievement beyond external rewards.
- Empathy – accurately interpreting the emotions of others.
- Social skills – fostering and maintaining positive social interactions.

In educational contexts, these competencies contribute distinctly to effective teaching. For instance, empathy enhances teacher-student rapport, while self-regulation helps teachers remain composed in high-stress scenarios. This theoretical framework provides a compelling basis to investigate the relationship between EI and job performance, especially in socially and emotionally demanding settings such as public secondary schools in Delta State.

A growing body of empirical literature affirms the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher performance. Ekedama et al. (2023) found that EI accounted for 29.5% of the variance in teacher performance in public schools. Similarly, Zakaria et al. (2024) and Modi & Chansoriya (2019) reported significant positive associations between EI and teacher effectiveness in classroom management, student engagement, and collegial collaboration.

Naqvi et al. (2016) noted that teachers with low EI often exhibit subpar performance due to poor emotional regulation and deficient social competence. Conversely, educators with high EI are better attuned to their emotional needs and adept at leveraging emotional insights to achieve pedagogical goals. Ishak et al. (2010) asserted that emotionally intelligent teachers are more attuned to students' emotional states and display greater commitment and instructional proficiency. Mohamad and Jais (2016) likewise concluded that high EI correlates with improved teaching effectiveness.

Further studies reinforce these findings. Galang et al. (2024), examining 655 elementary teachers in the Philippines, observed that high EI was strongly associated with improved teaching efficacy, albeit with moderate stress management capabilities. Li et al. (2021) found that teacher work engagement mediated the relationship between EI and student academic success, highlighting EI's indirect influence on learning outcomes. Asrar-ul-Haq et al. (2024) confirmed the predictive validity of EI on teacher performance across educational contexts.

Zakaria et al. (2024) utilized Smart-PLS to analyze data from 196 teachers in Terengganu, Malaysia, establishing EI as a significant predictor of job performance. Modi & Chansoriya (2019), studying 166 university teachers in Madhya Pradesh, India, also found that EI significantly impacted performance. A similar pattern emerged in Benue State, Nigeria, where teacher EI—measured through self-awareness, self-regulation, and relationship management—was significantly correlated with job effectiveness, prompting recommendations for its inclusion in recruitment and training protocols.

In Ghana, Mardi (2025) employed a quantitative survey of 102 senior secondary school teachers and found that emotional intelligence significantly enhanced both job satisfaction and performance. Olowookere and Fakunle (2021) observed that emotionally intelligent teachers exhibited superior classroom discipline and student engagement. Adegoke and Idowu (2023) further noted that such teachers experienced less burnout and greater job satisfaction.

Yoke and Panatik (2015), using a sample of 384 teachers, demonstrated that all four dimensions of EI (self-emotional appraisal, others' emotional appraisal, use of emotion, and emotional regulation) were significantly and positively related to job performance.

Ajake et al. (2025), in a study of 739 primary school teachers in Calabar South, Nigeria, concluded that higher EI was associated with stronger teaching outcomes.

Despite various reforms initiated by the Delta State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education to enhance educational quality, persistent challenges remain. School reports and inspection records point to low classroom engagement, substandard lesson delivery, increasing teacher burnout, and declining student performance on standardized assessments. While structural and systemic barriers are well-documented, the psychological underpinnings of teacher performance—especially emotional competence—remain underexplored.

Given the daily emotional demands placed on teachers, emotional intelligence may be a crucial yet overlooked factor in improving job performance. Particularly in Delta State, where teachers often contend with economic hardship and resource constraints, it is essential to empirically examine the extent to which EI influences performance. Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following research question: To what extent does emotional intelligence influence the job performance of public secondary school teachers in Delta State?

### Research Question

1. To what extent does emotional intelligence influence the job performance of public secondary school teachers in Delta State?

### Hypothesis

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and the job performance of public secondary school teachers in Delta State.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted correlational research design to examine the relationship that exists between emotional intelligence and job performance of teachers in public secondary schools in Delta state. The population of the study comprised all public secondary school teachers in Delta state. There are 488 public secondary schools and a total of 11,011 teachers in the 25 local government areas of Delta state comprising the three senatorial districts obtained from Delta State Post Primary Education Board January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025. A sample size of 370 teachers were randomly selected from the 25 local government areas of Delta state based on the sample size of Krejcie and Morgan in Ekedama et al (2023) that when a population is between 10,000 and 15,000 the sample size should be 370. The instrument used for the study the structured questionnaire subjected to validity and reliability test at 0.82 value of Cronbach's Alpha. The questionnaire was thereafter administered to the sampled respondents of 370, however, at the point of retrieval of the questionnaires, only 355 teachers responded. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher through the assistance of the various school principals. The data obtained were analysed using inferential statistics. The research question was answered with the aid of Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient determination and linear regression was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance; the summary of results is displayed in tables.

## RESULT

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance of teachers in public secondary school in Delta state?

**Table 1: Correlation and coefficient of determination of the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance of teachers in public secondary school in Delta state**

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup> %	Decision
Emotional Intelligence	355	0.543	0.295	29.5	Positive Relationship
Job Performance					

Table 1 shows the result of a correlation and coefficient of determination, which was used to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance of teachers in public secondary school in Delta state. The result revealed an *r*-value of 0.543 and an *r*<sup>2</sup>-value of 0.295, which suggests a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance of teachers. The result further showed that emotional intelligence of teachers contributed 29.5% to the variability in job performance of teachers in public secondary school in Delta state.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance of secondary school teachers in Delta state?

**Table 2: Regression analysis of the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance of secondary school teachers in Delta state**

Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	22822.310	1	22822.310		.0001
Residual	54662.201	353	148.539	153.646	
Total	77484.511	354			
Variables in Equation					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardised Coefficient	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	23.706	5.055		4.690	.000
Emotional Intelligence	1.130	.091	.543	12.395	.000

$\alpha = 0.05$ ,  $R = 0.543$ ,  $R\text{-Square} = 0.295$

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

b. Predictors (Constant): Emotional Intelligence

Table 2 shows a regression statistics, which was used to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance of secondary school teachers in Delta state. The result revealed that  $F(1, 369) = 153.646$ ,  $p < 0.05 = 0.0001$  level of significance. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance of secondary school teachers in Delta state.

The  $R^2$  value of 0.295 showed that 29.5% of the variance in job performance was accounted for by emotional intelligence. The unstandardized coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for predicting job performance from emotional intelligence was 1.130; the standardized coefficient ( $\beta$ ) was 0.543,  $t = 12.395$ . Emotional intelligence is significant at an alpha level of 0.05.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance of Teachers

The findings of this study revealed a statistically significant and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and the job performance of secondary school teachers in Delta State. This relationship, as illustrated in Table 1 and confirmed through hypothesis testing in Table 2, indicates that teachers with higher levels of emotional intelligence—those demonstrating self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and interpersonal sensitivity—tend to perform more effectively in their professional roles. Teachers with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to recognize and respond to students' emotional signals, foster emotionally secure learning environments, and maintain collegial relationships with fellow educators and stakeholders. These emotionally adaptive behaviors contribute significantly to their instructional efficiency, classroom management, and overall job performance.

The present finding is congruent with the outcomes reported by Zakaria et al. (2024) and Ajake et al. (2025), both of which affirmed the predictive power of emotional intelligence in explaining variance in teacher performance. The consistency of findings across these studies underscores the cross-contextual relevance of emotional intelligence within the teaching profession. Despite differences in cultural and institutional contexts, the capacity to understand and manage emotional dynamics remains a universally valuable trait that strengthens relational, affective, and cognitive domains of job execution. Mardi's (2025) research lends additional support, asserting that emotional intelligence constitutes a key psychological asset that empowers individuals and institutions to attain performance benchmarks. For teachers, this implies enhanced motivation, adaptive resilience, and sustained focus, all of which are essential for navigating pedagogical complexities and optimizing instructional outcomes.

Similarly, Olowookere and Fakunle (2021) emphasized that emotionally intelligent educators exhibit greater proficiency in maintaining classroom discipline, motivating learners, and managing interpersonal stressors. These capacities are especially crucial in contexts like Delta State, where secondary school teachers often contend with socio-economic challenges, limited resources, and emotionally demanding school environments. Emotional intelligence, therefore, functions as a stabilizing psychological mechanism, enabling teachers to remain professionally engaged and effective under pressure. The convergence of these findings suggests that emotional intelligence influences both the interpersonal and task-related aspects of teaching. It enhances communication, conflict resolution, adaptability, and collegial collaboration, all of which contribute to a teacher's capacity to meet instructional objectives.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the empirical evidence obtained, this study concludes that emotional intelligence significantly enhances the job performance of public secondary school teachers in Delta State. Teachers with heightened emotional competencies are more capable

of managing their emotional responses, responding empathetically to students, and fostering a supportive and engaging learning environment. These attributes collectively influence their capacity to deliver high-quality instruction, maintain professional relationships, and effectively manage classroom dynamics.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the study's findings, the following actionable recommendations are proposed:

1. The integration of emotional intelligence assessment into teacher performance appraisal systems
2. The incorporation of emotional intelligence training into pre-service and in-service teacher education programs to enhance professional effectiveness.

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