

Evaluating the Role of Emotional Intelligence in Employees' Job Performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria

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Abstract

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has become a very important topic in management and education in recent years especially in regard to how it affects today's employees. In this study, effort was made to investigate the relationship between EI and employees' job performance (JP) in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria, and it became imperative due to paucity of literature on EI and employees' JP in the Nigeria's banking sector. Survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 79 employees in the five branches of First Bank in Akwa Ibom North-East. The relatively small size of the population does not allow the use of sampling technique. The instruments used for data collection were Emotional Competence Inventory and researcher-designed job performance questionnaire, validated by measurement and evaluation experts, and achieved a Cronbach's Alpha reliability co-efficient of 0.80. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used for data analysis. Five hypotheses were formulated and tested using t-test and multiple linear regression analysis. All null hypotheses were rejected and the alternate accepted. The findings of the study revealed that there exist positive significant and joint relationship between EI variables and employees' JP in First Bank. The study concluded that EI skills relate to employees' JP in First Bank. It was recommended that, First Bank should organise seminars and workshops to help employees acquired self-awareness, self-regulation and empathy skills. It was also recommended that get-together, parties, picnics and other social events should be organised regularly to enable employees acquire social skills.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Job Performance, Banking Sector, Akwa Ibom, Nigeria.

Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has become a critical, in demand skill for personal, professional and leadership success, often surpassing Intelligent Quotient (IQ) in importance (Ebieme et al, 2024). In recent times, employers have incorporated EI tests in their interviews, perhaps on the assumption that, those high in EI would make better employees, leaders and co-workers (Cherry, 2018a). It is also assumed that EI can help one navigate the social complexities of the workplace, lead and motivate others and excel in one's career. In fact, when it comes to gauging important job candidates, many companies now rate EI as important as technical abilities and employ emotional quotient (EQ) testing before hiring. According to Scuderi (2014) in any human endeavor which includes working in organisation, people or employees that are believed to be highly intelligent may not succeed or perform better than those who are believed to be less intelligent. The difference between the

effectiveness and efficiency in performances may be hinged on abilities, which according to Scuderi (2014) may be as a result of employee's emotions.

Goleman (2005) defined emotions as guiding forces that help humans in facing predicaments and tasks that one's intelligence alone cannot handle. The author went further to state that, for better or worse, intelligence can come to nothing when emotion holds sway, that is, when employee's emotional states such as anger, anxiety, depression, sorrow, excitement among others control or determine the employee's job performance (JP). In other words, employees need to act based on their EI. This will guide their actions, inactions and reactions to situations and people. Cherry (2020a) viewed EI as the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions. Goleman (1998) categorised EI as encompassing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill, but this study will not investigate motivation as a variable because in the target-driven Nigerian banking sector, employee drive is predominantly extrinsic and structurally embedded within operational performance metrics, making its inclusion as an independent emotional variable a risk for statistical redundancy and multi-collinearity.

Self-awareness involves the ability to know one's strengths, weaknesses, drives, values, goals and recognize its impact on others while using gut feelings to guide decisions. With skills of self-awareness, employees will become aware of their strengths and limitations in order to develop self-confidence in their duties. This will help them to develop self-regulation skill to subsequently handle delicate situations geared towards attainment of organisational goals and objectives (Goleman, 2005). Self-regulation is the ability to regulate distressing emotions like anxiety, anger, fear etc and to inhibit emotional impulsivity. Employees with self-regulation skills are said to be flexible, adaptable and highly empathetic. Moreover, employees equipped with empathy skill will be able to assist other employees for improved performance.

Empathy refers to putting oneself in others' situation so as to decipher how others are feeling about a particular situation. Employees with the above attribute have a strong and reliable social skill, which can be used for effective communication, conflict resolution and management, and building bonds among people both within and outside the organization. Social skill entails the skills displayed by employees towards developing a healthy relationship within and outside the organisation. Employees with this skill will employ dialogue in resolving conflicts in the organisation, while working hard to reconcile with aggrieved stakeholders of the organisation which will in variably tend to superior job performance.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the rigorous academic and technical recruitment processes at First Bank, many employees in the Akwa Ibom North-East continue to grapple with high workplace stress, low morale, and declining team cohesion. While these bankers often possess excellent intellectual qualifications, there is a noticeable disconnect in their EI, specifically in areas of

self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy and social skill. This deficiency often manifests as:

- **Poor Customer Service:** inconsiderate or indifferent behaviour toward clients, leading to reduced customer satisfactions (Abinabo et al, 2025).
- **Workplace Conflict:** strained interpersonal relationships and poor team dynamics among staff at key branches like those in Uyo and other cities like Abuja (Chukwunonso & Owulo, 2023).
- **Reduced Productivity:** high levels of administrative stress and anxiety that directly hinder optimal JP and organisational efficiency (Ugba et al, 2024).

Consequently, if the role of EI is not properly evaluated and integrated into employees' development, First Bank may continue to experience high turnover rates and a diminishing competitive edge in the regional banking sector. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the extent to which EI competencies relate to JP of First Bank employees in this specific region.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between EI and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria. The specific objectives include to:

1. Assess the relationship between self-awareness and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria.
2. Determine the relationship between self-regulation and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria.
3. Evaluate the relationship between empathy and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria.
4. Ascertain the relationship between social skill and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East.
5. Investigate the joint relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised for the study.

- i. What relationship exists between self-awareness and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria?
- ii. What relationship exists between self-regulation and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North East?
- iii. What relationship exists empathy and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria?

- iv. What is the relationship between social skill and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria?
- v. What joint relationship exists between self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

- There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria.
- There is no significant relationship between self-regulation and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria.
- There is no significant relationship between empathy and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria.
- There is no significant relationship between social skills and employees' job performance in First Bank Nigeria, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria.
- There is no joint significant relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

According to Goleman (2005) EI is the ability to perceive, appraise and express emotions accurately and adaptively and the ability to regulate emotions in oneself and in others. Goleman (1998) categorised EI as encompassing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation and Social skills. Salovey and Mayer (1990) described EI as the ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotions and to regulate emotions to promote personal growth. However, after pursuing further research, their definition of EI evolved into the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions to enhance thinking. It includes the ability to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thoughts, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Salovey & Mayer, 2007). The Scholars who are the proponents of the ability based theory viewed emotions as useful sources of information that help one to make sense of and navigate the social environment.

According to Cherry (2020a) EI refers to the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions. Some researchers suggest that EI can be learned and strengthened, while others claim it as an inborn characteristic. The ability to express and control emotions is essential, but so is the ability to understand, interpret and respond to the emotions of others. Faltas (2017) viewed EI as a set of cognitive and non-cognitive competencies, skills and abilities directly and essentially connected to the behaviours and actions of everyone in every field, including the actions of educationists, public administrators, policy-makers, managers and

leaders at any level of the organisation bureaucracy. Faltas stressed that EI enhances and endorses the type of human behaviour and promotes fairness, social justice, social balance, leadership, trust, respect, motivation, growth and excellence. It also improves and helps us to build strong relationships, influencing our senses, from the way we perceive to the way we think about the world around us (Faltas, 2017).

EI is that ability one has that allows, one to be smart about one's feelings and emotions (Riopel, 2019). Employees who are emotionally intelligent are also smart when it comes to sensing the feelings and emotions of others. EI is essential when it comes to building a well-balanced life. According to World Economic Forum Report cited in Riopel (2019) EI was ranked as one of the top ten (10) most important workplace skills, when it comes to what employees will need in order to be successful in 2020. EI is a crucial and key ingredient of great leadership as well.

EI is the ability to identify, understand, experience and express human emotions in a healthy and productive way (Kumar & Muniandy, 2012). The scholars opined that, the benefits of demonstrating high frequency of EI in the workplace is vast especially in service-based professions like banking. In the same vein, Goleman (1995) claimed that people who portray high frequencies of EI skills are more likely to have happier and effective lives. He added that people in the caring professions such as nursing, teaching, sales and management have proved to be successful when they show high levels of intrapersonal intelligence, that is, the ability to understand motivating factors, working style and co-operation among co-workers. Thus, the importance of EI skills to employees in the Nigeria's banking sector are undeniable, unarguable and undebatable.

Job Performance (JP)

Job performance is a widely used tool and metric in management, however, organisations rarely address what it really is, which dimension it includes, and in which area of work it becomes important (Ebieme et al, 2024). Kankaew & Treruttanaset (2021) described job performance as the performance which is composed of quantity and quality of work, timeliness, economics and the result of the work. It relates to how individuals perform in their duties in terms of expected quantity and quality of jobs (Ebieme & Udida, 2026). It has also been defined as the over expected value from employee's behaviour carried out over the course of a set period of time. (Turanligil & Farooq 2019). According to Kasemap (2017) job performance is the accomplishment of a given task measured against the standards of accuracy, completeness, cost and speed. It refers to the ability of workers to perform their jobs well (Ahmad, 2011). It is also described as work-related activities expected of an employee and how well those activities are executed (Bassey & Ebieme, 2026).

Job performance relates to how individuals perform in their assigned duties. In addition to training and natural ability (like dexterity or an inherent skill with numbers). Job performance is impacted by workplace environment factors including physically demanding tasks, employee's morale, stress levels and working extended hours. Poor

conditions and high stress can lead to compromising health habits like smoking and or poor diet, which then have increasing detrimental effect on job performance. On the other end of the spectrum, well design work environment, low stress and a supportive employer can greatly increase job performance. Job performance is an important part of workplace productivity and safety.

According to Martocchio (2015) job performance is the total expected value to the organization of the discrete behavioural episodes that an individual comes out over a standard or specified period of time. He emphasized two key issues in this definition. First, performance is an aggregated property of multiple, discrete behavior that occur overtime. Second, the property of behaviour to which performance refers to its expected value to the organisation. Jacobs et al (2013) opined that job performance relates to the act of doing a job. It is a means to reach a goal or set of goals within a job role or organisation, but not the actual consequences of the acts performed with a job (Jacob et al., 2013). The scholars affirmed that JP is not a single action but rather a "complex activity". Performance in a job is strictly a behaviour and a separate entity from the outcomes of a particular job which relate to success and productivity.

Job performance assesses whether a person performs a job well. An entrepreneur might assume that JP is only about how well employees perform their duties. However, job performance involves various factors. A case in point, an employer might expect a particular employee to add substantial value to the company because the employee is capable of performing assigned task at a high level, but JP involves both task performance and contextual performance. For example, an employee's task performance in First Bank is evaluated on the ability to accomplish assigned task before deadline, convince potential customers to open an account, meet up with targets set for me by management, funds transfer without delay and credit depositors account within the shortest possible time. Employee's contextual performance rate how well one gets along with co-workers and customers, how effectively the problems that affect the team or institutions are solved and how well one keeps busy during slow periods.

Theoretical Framework

Theories abound for use in the investigation of the role of EI in employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North East, Nigeria and other organisations, but this study made use of two major theories of EI developed from research, analysis and scientific studies. These are trait and mixed theory.

Trait theory of EI Reuvon Bar-On (2000)

According to Bar-On (2000) EI is an arrangement of interconnected behaviour driven by emotional and social competencies that influence performance and behaviours. Bar-On theory of emotional-social intelligence can be divided into two basics parts as it were. The first part is the conceptualisation or theory of the construct and the second part is the psychometric aspect of the theory, which is essentially the measure of emotional-social

intelligence, which was based on the theory and designed to assess it. These two parts of the theory have also been referred to as: (a) the Bar-On conceptual theory of emotional-social intelligence and (b) the Bar-On psychometric theory of emotional-social intelligence respectively. The Bar-On theory of emotional-social intelligence refers to both the conceptual and the psychometric components of this theory combined together into one inseparable entity.

Bar-On's EI theory focuses on five (5) EI scales; self-perception, self-expression, interpersonal, decision making and stress management and fifteen (15) sub-scales, self-regard, self-actualisation, emotional self-awareness, emotional expression, assertiveness, independence, interpersonal relationship, empathy, social responsibility, problem solving, reality testing, impulse control, flexibility, stress relevance, optimism, driving human behaviour and relationship. The relevance of the study to the present study is that, the theory considers the entire EI variables covered in the study although with minor variations in word usage and inclusion of personality traits. Moreover, empathy which is indispensable in banking profession was treated as a separate sub-scale of EI.

Mixed Theory of EI – Daniel Goleman (1998)

Goleman (1998) mixed theory focused on EI as a wide array of competencies and skills that drive leadership performance. EI competencies are not innate talents but rather learned capabilities that must be worked on and can be developed to achieve outstanding performance. Goleman posited that individual are born with general EI that determines their potential for learning emotion competencies. The theory is described as mixed because the theorist conceptualised EI as a combination of trait and ability theory. Goleman (1998) developed the new theory because of the limitations and criticisms of the (1995) theory for not considering empathy as a separate domain. Empathy which is an independent and indispensable skill in the discourse of EI was incorporated in the domain of social-awareness in the (1995) theory. This made the construct of empathy not fully explored in subsequent researches using Goleman's (1995) theory. However, Goleman's researches over the years has allowed him to modify and re-categorise the domain of EI. The theorist currently asserts that, there are five main EI constructs:

- **Self-awareness:** the ability to know one's emotions, strength, weaknesses drives, values and goals and recognise their impact on others while using gut feelings to guide decisions.
- **Self-regulation:** involves controlling or redirecting one's disruptive emotions and impulse and adapting to changing circumstances.
- **Motivation;** being aware of what motivates them.
- **Empathy;** considering other people's feelings especially when making decisions.
- **Social skill;** managing relationships to get along with others.

The relevance of the mixed theory to the study is that, the theory considered the entire

El variables outlined in the objectives of the study without variations in word usage. It also met the scientific criteria of a standard intelligence and was therefore adopted for the study.

Empirical Framework

Shdaifat & Zyoud (2021) investigated the impact of EI on JP in the gulf region. The aim of the research was to discover the impact of EI on JP among the gulf region in United Arab Emirate (UAE) & Bahrain. The population of the study consisted of 300 participants and the sample size was 120 using Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. Questionnaire were used in data collection and regression analysis was used for data analysis. The findings of the study revealed a significant relationship between EI and JP among doctors. This indicates that the increase of EI skills would increase JP. Shdaifat and Zyoud's (2021) work relates the present on the basis of EI variables covered and its impact on JP.

Ebieme et al (2024) investigated self-awareness and business educators' JP in federal universities, south-south Nigeria. Survey research designed was adopted for the study. Population of the study was made up 92 business educators in federal universities, south-south, Nigeria. The entire population was use as the sample size owing to its small nature. Both primary and secondary source of data was used for the study. Purposive sampling technique was adopted while the research instrument was a structured questionnaire. The finding of study revealed that self-awareness had a positive significant influence on business educators' JP in federal universities south-south, Nigeria. The study relates to the present study on the basis of one of the EI variables covered and its impact on job performance.

Makkar & Basu (2019) carried out a study on the impact of emotional intelligence on workplace behaviour of bank employees in the Indian banking sector. The study adopted survey research design. Goleman EI framework (1995) and Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI) was used for data collection. Six banks were selected for the study: three from public sector and three from private sector as sample covering Mumbai. The findings of the study revealed that there is a strong relationship between EI and workplace behaviour of employees in the banking sector and there is also a difference of the impact of EI on workplace behaviour of the employees in private and public sector banks. The link between this work and the present study is on the basis of EI variables, job performance, banking sector, research design and research instrument (ECI).

Sharma & Dhani (2017) investigated the effect of EI on JP of IT employees in Delhi, India. The purpose of the study was to investigate the nature and extent of the relationship between EI & JP with respect to the gender of the respondents. Descriptive survey design was used. Population consisted of 500 IT employees in Delhi. Sample consisted of 157 middle level IT managers from Delhi-NCR. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Independent test and linear regression were used in data analysis. The results of the study

showed significant gender difference in EI & JP. The finding of the study also revealed that females are better performers than males. The study relates to the present study on the basis of EI variables.

Behbanani (2011) carried out a comparative study of the relationship between EI and employees' performances in Shahrey-e-Rey, Iran. The study examined the relationship between EI and management capabilities of 160 managers and employees at the department of physical education in Shahrey-e-Rey, Iran. To collect data, the EI questionnaire by Steinmetz-Todd capabilities questionnaire with nine questions were used. The results showed that there was a significant relationship between EI with its components, (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills) and the employees capabilities. The relationship between this work and the present study is that all the EI variables treated in the past work are also covered in the present work.

The review of empirical works on EI revealed that studies were carried out on various angles or dimensions of EI, but not on EI and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East. Therefore, this present study sought to fill the gap identified in the literature by investigating EI and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted survey research design. This design was used since it aided the researcher to collect data directly from the respondents. population of the study consisted of 79 employees in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria. (Staff Nominal Roll, 2026). Going by this relatively small number, the entire population was used as the sample. This is in line with Osuala (2005), cited in Ebieme & Udida (2026) who posited that the entire population should be studied when the population is relatively small. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. The research instruments were emotional competence inventory (ECI), developed by Hay Group, McClelland Center for Research and Innovation (2005) and job performance questionnaire. The instruments were duly validated by measurement and evaluation experts. In order to establish the reliability of the instruments, it was administered to 10 employees who were not part of the main study. After pre-testing the instruments the data were submitted to the estimation of reliability co-efficient using Cronbach's alpha. The overall co-efficient of 0.80 was obtained and this was deemed adequate for the main study. This were given support by Nunnally and Bernstein's (2010) assertion that a reliability co-efficient of .05 and above should be accepted particularly at the early stage of the research. The instruments were administered to the respondents in their respective offices during official working hours, having obtained permission from the branch managers. Following Garland (1991), and Nadler et al 2015) the study adopted a 4-point forced-choice Likert scale instead of 5-point to eliminate the central-tendency midpoint, thereby minimizing fence-sitting and social desirability biases among bank employees. Also, grounded in Andrich (1978), the study assigned a value of

zero (0) to 'Undecided to establish a structural psychometric null origin that cleanly isolates the absolute absence of an EI traits from the active, directional continuum of the scale. In the copies of ECI and JP questionnaire, the respondents responded by indicating their degree of agreement or disagreement to each statement by ticking along the column provided. Scoring of the ECI and JP questionnaire were graded as follows: Strongly Agree (SA)-4, Agree (A)-3, Undecided (UN)-0, Disagree (D)-2, Strongly Disagree (SD)-1. 70 copies out of the 79 copies, representing 88.70% were returned in useable form.

The descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the study. Inferential statistics were used to investigate the role of the independent variables. Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. The t-test for significance of correlation and the co-efficient of determination was computed.

Furthermore, multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the joint relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria.

Results and Discussion of Findings

The five null hypotheses that were formulated to guide the study were tested in this section.

Table 1: PPMC analysis of the relationship between self-awareness and employees' JP (N=70)

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-value
Self-awareness	1608	39182		
			49695	0.73
Employees performance	2075	64919		

Significant at .05 level, critical $r = .232$, $df = 68$

$r = 0.73$, $t_{cal} = 8.81$, $t_{crit} = 1.994$

The result in Table 1 shows that the calculated r- value of 0.73 is greater than the critical r- value of .232 at .05 level of significance with 68 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between self-awareness and employees' job performance was rejected. This implies that there is a positive significant relationship between self-awareness and employees' job performance. The result also shows that the calculated t-value of 8.81 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.994 at .05 level of significance with 68 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This further implies that there is significant relationship between self-awareness and employees' job performance.

Table 2: PPMC analysis of the relationship between self-regulation and employees' JP (N=70)

Variables	ΣX	ΣX^2	ΣXY	r-value
	ΣY	ΣY^2		
Self-regulation	1512	34310		
			46431	0.68
Employees performance	2075	64919		

Significant at .05 level, critical $r = .232$, $df = 68$. $r = 0.68$, $t_{cal.} = 7.65$, $t_{crit} = 1.994$

The result in Table 2 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.68 is greater than the critical r-value of .232 at .05 level of significance with 68 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between self-regulation and employees' job performance was rejected. This implies that there is a positive significant relationship between self-regulation and employees' job performance. The result also shows that the critical t-value of 7.65 is greater than critical t-value of 1.994 at .05 level of significance with 68 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This further implies that there is a positive significant relationship between self-regulation and job performance.

Table 3: PPMC analysis of the relationship between empathy and employees' JP (N=70)

Variables	ΣX	ΣX^2	ΣXY	r-value
	ΣY	ΣY^2		
Empathy	1553	36673		
			47919	0.69
Employees' performance	2075	64919		

Significant at .05 level, critical $r = .232$, $df = 68$

$r = 0.69$

$t_{cal.} = 7.82$

$t_{crit.} = 1.994$

The result in Table 3 shows that the calculated r-value of .069 is greater than the critical r-value of .232 at .05 level of significance with 68 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between empathy and employees' job performance was rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between empathy and employees' job performance. The result also shows that the calculated t-value of 7.82 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.994 at .05 level of significance with 68 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This further implies that there is a positive significant relationship between empathy and employees' job performance.

Table 4: PPMC analysis of the relationship between social skill and employees' JP (N – 70)

Variables	ΣX	ΣX^2	ΣXY	r-value
	ΣY	ΣY^2		

Social skill	1641	42671		
			51505	0.76
Employees' performance	2075	64919		

Significant at .05 level, critical $r = .232$, $df = 68$

$r = 0.76$

$t_{cal.} = 7.82$

$t_{crit.} = 1.994$

The result in Table 4 shows that the calculated r -value of 0.76 is greater than the critical r -value of .232 at .05 level of significance with 68 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between social skill and employees' job performance was rejected. This implies that there is a positive significant relationship between social skill and employees' job performance. The result also shows that the calculated t -value of 7.82 is greater than the critical value of 1.994 at .05 level of significance with 68 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This further implies that there is a positive significant relationship between social skill and employees' job performance.

Table 5: Results of Multiple linear regression analysis of the relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skill and employees' job performance

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.8617
R Square	0.7426
Adjusted R Square	0.7268
Standard Error	1.6742
Observations	70

	df	SS	MS	F	F-Crit
Regression	4	2532.54	633.14	46.90	1.74
Residual	65	877.5313.50			
Total	69	3410.07			

Co-efficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Co-efficients		Standardized Co-efficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.2624	.2.201		1.193	.237
Self-awareness	.183	.129	.1481	.412	.003
Self-regulation	.409	.129	.2793	.165	.000
Empathy	.255	.112	.2052	.283	.004
Social skill	.350	.078	.389	.4.476	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

The result as shown in Table 5 reveals that the calculated F-value of 46.90 is greater than the critical F-value of 1.74 at .05 alpha level with 4 and 65 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant joint relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills and employees' job performance was rejected. This implies that there is significant joint relationship between the four EI variables and employees' job performance. The multiple R-value of 0.862 indicates a positive and significant relationship between the variables. The R-square value of .743 indicates that 74.3% variation in employees' job performance in the banking sector is explained or predicated by their self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy and social skills. In other words, self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy and social skills jointly contribute 74.3% to employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria. The Table also revealed the co-efficient of .183, .409, .255 as well as .350 for each of the four EI variables, is an indication of the size of the effect each has on the dependent variable. The table further revealed the t-value as well as the alpha level (sig.) for each of the co-efficient as follows; self-awareness with a t-value of 1.412 and alpha level of .001, self-regulation with a t-value of 3.165 and alpha level of .002, empathy with a t-value of 2.283 and alpha level of .002 and social skill with a t-value of 4.476 and alpha level of .000. This result implies that self-regulation has the greatest effect on employees' job performance, followed by social skill, then empathy while self-awareness has the least effect on job performance.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the study was to assess the relationship between self-awareness and employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria. The result of testing hypothesis one revealed a positive significant relationship between self-awareness and employees' JP in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria. The finding of the study supports a study by Ebieme et al (2024) who found that there exists a positive significant relationship between self-awareness and job performance. The finding also corroborates a study by Behbanani (2011) who found that self-awareness relates positively significantly to job performance. The finding implies that employees with high self-awareness skills will perform better than those without the skill in workplaces, especially in the banking sector. The second objective of the study was to determine the relationship between self-regulation and employees' JP in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria. The result of testing hypothesis two revealed a positive significant relationship between self-regulation and employees' JP in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria. The finding of the study supports a study by Shdaifat and Zyoud (2021) who found that there exists a positive significant relationship between self-regulation and job performance. The finding also supports a study by Behbanani (2011) who found that self-regulation relates positively significantly to job performance. The finding implies that employees with high self-regulation skill would be able to control negative impulses and remain focused on achieving organizational goals and objectives.

The third objective of the study was to evaluate the relationship between empathy and employees' JP. The result of testing hypothesis three revealed a positive significant relationship between empathy and employees' JP in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria. The finding of the study supports a study by Sharma & Dhani (2017) who found that there exists a positive significant relationship between empathy and employees' job performance. The finding of the study also corroborates a study by Behbanani (2011) who found that empathy relates positively significantly to job performance. The finding implies that employees with empathy skills are indispensable in modern workplace, and that they are better performers compared to those who are insensitive to the plights of customers and co-workers.

The fourth objective of the study was to ascertain the relationship between social skill and employees' job performance. The result of testing hypothesis four revealed a positive significant relationship between social skill and employees' JP. The finding of the study supports the work of Behbanani (2011) who found that there exists a positive significant relationship between social skill and employees' job performance. The finding points to the fact that employees with social skill are great assets to teams and organisations, and that possession of the skill in modern workplace is a catalyst to superior job performance.

The fifth objective of the study was to investigate the joint relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skill and employees' JP in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria. The result of testing hypothesis five revealed that there exists a joint positive significant relationship between the four EI variables and employees' job performance. The finding of this study supports the work of Behbanani (2011) who found that a positive significant relationship between EI variables and employees' capabilities (job performance). The finding shows that employees high in all EI variables would be better performers than those competent in only one or two skills.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was therefore concluded that self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy and social skill significantly relates to employees' JP in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria. The following recommendations are made:

- First Bank should organise seminars, conferences and workshops with the aim of helping employees to acquire self-awareness skill.
- First Bank should engage the services of psychologists to train employees on how to manage or regulate negative emotions.
- First Bank should engage the services of psychologists to train employees on how to acquire empathy skills.
- First Bank should organize get-together, parties, picnics and other social events to enable employees acquire social skills. Moreover, employees who are introverts should be given special attention during training and retaining on EI.
- For synergistic effects, First Bank should organise periodic training and retraining for all employees on all EI variables in this study.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study contributes to knowledge by providing localized evidence on how EI skills relate to employees' JP in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria. It fills the gap in research by focusing on a Nigerian banking context, highlighting the cultural relevance of EI in improving workplace outcomes. Additionally, the findings offer practical insights for human resource practices, emphasizing the need for EI development programmes to enhance employee effectiveness and customer service. This supports better organisational performance and employee well-being in the Nigerian financial sector.

Implications of the Study

The findings of the study have important implications for management and human resource practitioners in First Bank and similar organisations. By demonstrating the positive impact of EI on employees' JP, the study suggests that banks should prioritize the development of EI skills through targeted training and development programmes. Enhancing employees' abilities in areas such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy and social skills can lead to improved teamwork, better customer interactions, and higher overall productivity, which are critical for maintaining competitive in the banking sector. Moreover, the study highlights the need for integrating EI assessments into recruitment and performance appraisal processes. Organisations can benefit from identifying and nurturing emotionally intelligent employees who are better equipped to handle workplace challenges and adapt to changing environments. This approach not only fosters a more supportive and resilient workforce but also contributes to employee satisfaction and retention, ultimately driving sustainable organizational success in the Nigerian banking industry.

Suggestion for Further Research

There is need to carry out similar studies in other senatorial districts and states of the federation where First Bank branches are located for comparison. Moreover, a similar study should be carried out on other banks such as Eco Bank, Access Bank and Fidelity Bank.

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