

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN RECRUITMENT AGENCIES IN UYO METROPOLIS, AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' performance in recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the influence of self-awareness and self-control on employees' performance. The Ability-Based Theory of Emotional Intelligence and Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Competency Theory provided the theoretical foundation for the study. A survey research design was adopted, and a census approach was used to include all 142 employees from nine registered recruitment agencies in the study area. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire, while the instrument's reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.910 to 0.974. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that self-awareness had a very strong positive and significant relationship with employees' performance ($r = 0.918$, $p < 0.05$), while self-control also exhibited a very strong positive and significant relationship with employees' performance ($r = 0.904$, $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that emotional intelligence, particularly self-awareness and self-control, significantly enhances employees' performance in recruitment agencies. It recommended that management of recruitment agencies should implement regular emotional intelligence training programmes, encourage self-awareness development through coaching and feedback mechanisms, and strengthen employees' self-

control skills to improve service delivery, productivity, and overall organizational performance.

KEYWORDS: Emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-control, employees' performance, recruitment agencies, Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is an important concern for organizations because it determines how well organizational goals are achieved. Organizations rely on employees to carry out daily activities, deliver services, and maintain productivity. The importance of employee performance is more evident in service-oriented organizations such as recruitment agencies. These agencies depend on employees who interact directly with job seekers and employers. Employees are responsible for sourcing candidates, coordinating recruitment processes, and maintaining communication with clients. (Anyakoha & Nwolisa, 2025; Ogunmola *et al.*, 2024). Employee performance refers to how well employees carry out their assigned tasks and responsibilities in line with organizational goals. It reflects the level of effort, competence, and commitment employees show in their work (Otor & Jato, 2023). Employee performance can be measured using indicators such as productivity, efficiency, quality of work, and service delivery (Oyuru & Ambali, 2024).

Although factors such as skills, experience, and motivation influence employee performance, emotional and psychological abilities also play an important role. Employees often face pressure, customer demands, and workplace conflicts, which require them to manage their emotions effectively. This has led to increased attention to emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions and those of others. It includes skills such as self-awareness and self-control. Employees with these abilities are better able to handle stress, communicate effectively, and maintain good relationships (Joseph *et al.*, 2025; Lawal & Omole, 2020). Studies in Nigeria and other countries have shown that emotional intelligence improves employee performance (Asogwa & Oboreh, 2024). However, few studies have focused on recruitment agencies, especially in Uyo Metropolis. This creates a gap in knowledge. Therefore, this study examines emotional intelligence and employees' performance of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, with emphasis on self-awareness and self-control.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Employee performance remains a major concern in many organizations because employees are expected to perform their duties efficiently and contribute to organizational goals. However, many organizations continue to experience challenges related to low productivity, poor service delivery, and weak commitment among employees. In service-oriented organizations such as recruitment agencies, these issues may appear in the form of ineffective communication with job seekers and employers, poor handling of recruitment processes, and difficulty managing workplace pressures. Studies have shown that when employees lack emotional awareness and the ability to regulate their behaviour, their work performance may decline (Otor & Jato, 2023; Asogwa & Oboreh, 2024). In particular, low levels of self-awareness may prevent employees from understanding how their emotions influence their behaviour at work, while weak self-control may lead to impulsive reactions, conflict with colleagues, and poor decision making. These situations may contribute to declining employee performance and reduced service quality in organizations.

Several factors have been identified as possible causes of these performance challenges. Many organizations focus mainly on technical skills and job knowledge while paying less attention to emotional competencies that influence workplace behaviour. Employees may struggle to manage stress, relate with others, or respond calmly to situations. This can lead to poor cooperation, frustration, and reduced performance. Research suggests that improving self-awareness and self-control through training, counselling, and support can help improve employee performance (Usman & Sulieman, 2024; Onoja *et al.*, 2024). Although many studies exist, few focus on recruitment agencies, especially in Uyo Metropolis. This study addresses this gap by examining the relationship between self-awareness and self-control as dimensions of emotional intelligence and employees' performance in recruitment agencies.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' performance of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. Examine the relationship between self-awareness and employees' performance of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria.
2. Examine the relationship between self-control and employees' performance of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria.

1.4 Research questions

1. What is the relationship between self-awareness and employees' performance of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between self-control and employees' performance of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria?

1.5 Research hypotheses

1. H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and employees' performance of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria.
2. H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between self-control and employees' performance of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section of the study centered on the review of literature that was used in the course of this study.

2.1 Conceptual framework

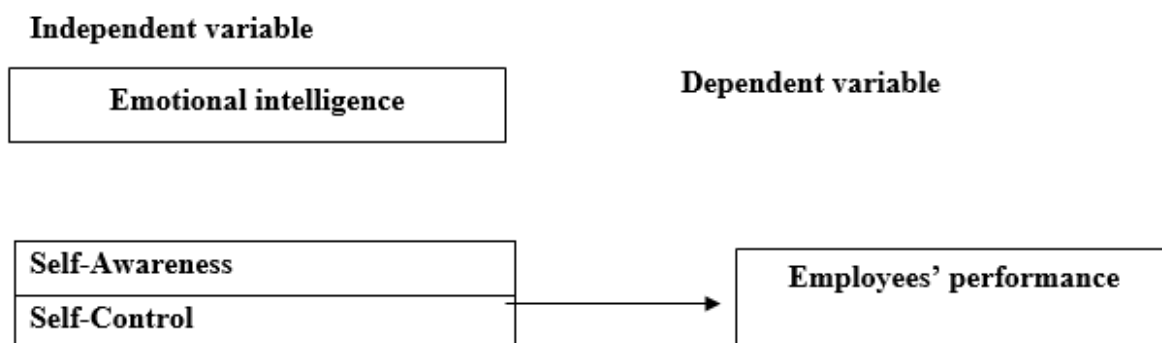


Figure 1: Model of emotional intelligence and employees' performance.

Source: Researcher's conceptualization (2026)

2.1.1 Concept of emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a concept that explains how people understand and manage emotions in themselves and others. It has gained attention in recent years because many workplaces now require employees to work with people, handle pressure, and make sound decisions. Scholars have defined emotional intelligence in different ways. John *et al.* (2019) define it as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions in thinking and decision making; this definition shows that emotions support reasoning, not weaken it.

Goleman (2020) describes emotional intelligence as a set of skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills; this explains that emotional intelligence includes both personal and social abilities. Boyatzis (2021) views emotional intelligence as a group of competencies that support effective leadership and performance; this highlights its role in the workplace. Recent studies such as Joseph *et al.* (2025) and Ogunmola *et al.* (2024) also define emotional intelligence as the ability to understand and manage emotions to improve job performance, showing its practical value in organizations. In simple terms, all these definitions agree that emotional intelligence involves awareness of emotions and the ability to control them for better outcomes.

Emotional intelligence is important because it affects how employees behave, interact, and perform at work. Research shows that emotional intelligence supports teamwork, motivation, and leadership effectiveness, especially in service-oriented environments where human interaction is constant (Ćwiąkała *et al.*, 2025; Usman & Sulieman, 2024). It also helps employees remain calm under pressure and make balanced decisions, which improves service quality and productivity. In addition, emotional intelligence supports personal growth because individuals become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Organizations benefit as well, since emotionally intelligent employees contribute to better customer satisfaction and overall performance (Adebayo & Okeke, 2024; Oyoru & Ambali, 2024). Overall, emotional intelligence is not just a personal skill; it is a practical ability that helps employees function effectively and achieve organizational goals.

2.1.2 Dimensions of emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence involves awareness of emotions and the ability to control them for better outcomes. Self-awareness and self-control are key dimensions of emotional intelligence because they focus on how individuals understand and manage their own emotions (Mayer *et al.*, 2019, Goleman, 2020).

Self-awareness

Self-awareness refers to a person's ability to recognize and understand their emotions, strengths, and weaknesses, and how these affect their behaviour and decisions. It involves being conscious of one's feelings as they occur and knowing how those feelings influence actions in the workplace. Studies show that self-awareness helps individuals make better decisions, improve judgment, and respond more appropriately to situations (Mayer *et al.*, 2019; Salovey, 2020). It is often seen as the foundation of emotional intelligence because

other emotional skills depend on it. For example, a person cannot manage emotions effectively without first understanding them. Research also explains that self-aware individuals can evaluate themselves objectively, understand their values, and adjust their behaviour when necessary (Ogunmola et al., 2024; Anyakoha & Nwolisa, 2025). This makes self-awareness important for improving personal behaviour, communication, and performance at work.

Self-control

Self-control, also referred to as self-regulation, is the ability to manage emotions, control impulses, and respond calmly to different situations. It focuses on how individuals regulate their emotional reactions, especially under pressure or in difficult conditions. Self-control helps employees avoid impulsive actions, reduce conflict, and maintain professional behaviour in the workplace. It also supports careful thinking before acting and helps individuals adapt their responses to suit different situations (Goleman, 2020; Usman & Sulieman, 2024). Research shows that employees with strong self-control are better at handling stress, maintaining discipline, and sustaining positive relationships with colleagues and clients (Oyuru & Ambali, 2024; Joseph *et al.*, 2025).

2.1.3 Concept of employees' performance

Employee performance focuses on the outcomes of employees' efforts, such as the quality of work, efficiency, and ability to meet targets. Organizations depend on employee performance to remain productive and competitive. Different scholars have defined the concept in simple ways. Aguinis (2019) defines employee performance as behaviours and results that employees show, which are relevant to organizational goals; this means performance includes both what employees do and what they achieve. Armstrong (2020) explains employee performance as the degree to which employees accomplish tasks based on expected standards; this highlights the role of set targets and expectations. Campbell and Wiernik (2020) describe it as actions that contribute to organizational objectives; this shows that performance is linked directly to organizational success. In another view, Otor and Jato (2023) define employee performance as the effectiveness and efficiency of employees in carrying out assigned duties; this emphasizes both quality and speed. Similarly, Usman and Sulieman (2024) see employee performance as how well employees meet job requirements and contribute to service delivery; this points to practical outcomes in the workplace. These definitions show that employee performance involves behaviour, output, and alignment with

organizational goals. According to Bassey, et al., (2023) Strategic insight is an essential aspect of strategic capability that helps organizations to see emerging dimension, trends, and patterns of operation in the environment they operate.

Employee performance is important because it affects the success and survival of organizations. Research shows that organizations with strong employee performance tend to have better teamwork, lower conflict, and improved overall outcomes (Ogunmola *et al.*, 2024; Adebayo & Okeke, 2024). In addition, employee performance supports personal development, as employees gain experience, improve their skills, and become more confident in their roles (Anyakoha & Nwolisa, 2025). The word performance is derived from job performance or actual performance, which refers to an individual's actual accomplishment at work (Ekanem *et al.* 2026). Performance is a fundamental measure of an organization's ability to achieve its strategic objectives effectively and efficiently (Ekanem & Efi, 2025)

2.1.4 Dimensions of employee performance

Employee performance focuses on the outcomes of employees' efforts, such as the quality of work, efficiency, and ability to meet targets. Quality of work and service delivery are usually viewed as the major measures of employees' performance.

Quality of work

Quality of work is an important dimension of employee performance because it focuses on how accurate, reliable, and well-organized an employee's output is. It reflects the extent to which tasks are completed according to required standards and with minimal errors. High quality work means that employees pay attention to detail, follow procedures, and produce results that meet organizational expectations. Studies show that employees who maintain high quality work contribute to better efficiency because their work requires less correction and supervision (Aydemir & Kıpçak, 2024). In addition, quality of work helps organizations maintain a good reputation, especially in service-based settings where clients depend on accurate and reliable outcomes. When quality is low, it can lead to mistakes, delays, and dissatisfaction among clients. Therefore, maintaining high standards of work is necessary for improving performance and achieving organizational goals (Ogunmola *et al.*, 2024).

Service Delivery

Service delivery refers to how well employees provide services to clients in a timely, professional, and satisfactory manner. It is a key dimension of employee performance, especially in organizations that deal directly with customers, such as recruitment agencies.

Service delivery involves effective communication, responsiveness, and the ability to meet client expectations. Employees who perform well in this area are able to handle inquiries, provide clear information, and ensure that services are delivered without unnecessary delays. Research shows that good service delivery improves customer satisfaction and strengthens trust between the organization and its clients (Usman & Sulieman, 2024). It also helps organizations retain clients and maintain a competitive position. On the other hand, poor service delivery can result in complaints, loss of clients, and damage to the organization's image. For this reason, employees are expected to demonstrate patience, professionalism, and good interpersonal skills when dealing with clients (Adebayo & Okeke, 2024). Companies can succeed by going to an uncontested market space without competition. It refers to the undiscovered market area (Uttong, Ekanem & Uwa, 2024).

2.1.5 Emotional intelligence and employee performance

The relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance has received growing attention in recent studies because organizations now recognize that performance is not based only on technical skills. Emotional intelligence helps employees understand and manage their emotions, which in turn affects how they behave and perform at work. Research shows that emotional intelligence has a direct and positive relationship with employee performance across different sectors. Employees with high emotional intelligence are better able to handle stress, communicate effectively, and maintain good working relationships, which improves their overall output (Mokhtar & Krishnan, 2023; Moorthy *et al.*, 2023). In addition, emotional intelligence supports self-awareness and self-control, which help employees make better decisions and respond calmly to workplace challenges. A recent study also found that emotional intelligence improves performance through factors such as organizational commitment and knowledge sharing, showing that it influences both individual behaviour and group outcomes (Zhang, 2024). Other issues that businesses confront include the incapacity of some managers to possess technological skills and managerial qualities, as well as irregular power supplies (Uwa & Akpaetor, 2018).

Employees with strong emotional intelligence are more engaged in their work and are able to cooperate better with colleagues, which leads to higher productivity and better service delivery. Studies show that emotional intelligence helps employees manage pressure, stay focused, and remain committed to their roles, all of which support improved performance (Raza *et al.*, 2023; Zakaria *et al.*, 2025). It also reduces workplace conflict and improves

communication, making it easier for employees to work together and achieve organizational goals. Overall, the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance is strong and consistent. Emotional intelligence helps employees think clearly, manage behaviour, and interact effectively, which leads to better performance outcomes in organizations. Nigerian employees may prioritize other factors, such as organizational justice, job satisfaction, and career development opportunities, over identity-related concerns when considering their longevity within the organization (Akpan *et al.*, 2023).

2.1.6 Self-awareness and employee performance

Self-awareness refers to the ability of employees to recognize their emotions, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and know how these affect their behaviour at work. Recent studies show that self-awareness has a positive and significant effect on employee performance because it improves decision making, communication, and emotional balance (Sultan *et al.*, 2024; Zakaria *et al.*, 2025). In addition, research findings indicate that self-awareness is one of the strongest predictors of performance because it helps employees remain focused, manage their reactions, and improve their productivity (Guleria *et al.*, 2025). This means that employees who understand themselves better are more likely to perform their tasks effectively and maintain good relationships at work.

The relationship between self-awareness and employee performance is also seen in how employees handle workplace challenges and interact with others. Employees with high self-awareness are better able to manage stress, accept feedback, and learn from their experiences, which leads to continuous improvement in performance. They are also more likely to work well with others because they understand how their behaviour affects colleagues and clients. Studies show that self-awareness contributes to higher productivity, better teamwork, and improved service delivery, especially in roles that require regular interaction with people (Raza *et al.*, 2023; Asogwa & Oboreh, 2024).

2.1.7 Self-control and employee performance

Self-control refers to the ability of employees to manage their emotions, control impulses, and remain calm in different work situations. In many organizations, employees face pressure, deadlines, and interactions that may trigger emotional reactions. Studies in Nigeria show that self-control has a positive relationship with employee performance because it helps employees maintain discipline, follow rules, and avoid actions that may disrupt work (Usman & Sulieman, 2024; Imagha & Ebieme, 2024). In addition, research in the Nigerian banking

sector found that self-control is significantly related to employee performance, meaning that employees who regulate their emotions tend to perform better in their roles (Oyuru & Ambali, 2024). Innovation is big in the business world and is sustainable to create value and be strong in the competitive environment (Ukpong et al. 2022). This suggests that self-control supports stable behaviour and helps employees stay focused on their tasks.

Employees with high self-control are better able to manage work pressure, reduce conflict, and maintain positive relationships with colleagues and clients. This improves teamwork and service delivery. Research shows that self-control supports time management and reduces stress, which helps employee's complete tasks more efficiently and improve productivity (Aigbodion & Uye, 2022; Onoja *et al.*, 2024). Overall, the relationship between self-control and employee performance is positive and consistent. Self-control helps employees regulate their behaviour, remain focused, and respond appropriately to workplace challenges, which improves their overall performance.

2.2 Theoretical framework

For the purpose of this study the ability-based theory of emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1990) and the emotional intelligence competency theory (Goleman, 1995) was analyzed.

2.2.1 The Ability-Based Theory of Emotional Intelligence

The Ability-Based Theory of Emotional Intelligence was propounded by John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey in 1990. The theory explains emotional intelligence as a form of mental ability, similar to general intelligence, which involves how people process emotional information. According to this theory, individuals differ in their ability to perceive, understand, use, and manage emotions. It is built around four main abilities: recognizing emotions in oneself and others, using emotions to support thinking, understanding emotional meanings, and regulating emotions for better outcomes. This shows that emotions are not just feelings but useful sources of information that guide behaviour and decision making. Recent studies support this view by showing that ability-based emotional intelligence helps individuals make better decisions and improves performance in real-life tasks (Joseph *et al.*, 2025).

The theory is relevant to this study because it explains how specific emotional abilities such as self-awareness and self-control influence employee performance. Self-awareness aligns with the ability to perceive and understand emotions, while self-control relates to the ability to regulate emotions. In recruitment agencies, employees interact with clients, handle

pressure, and make decisions that require emotional balance. The Ability-Based Theory shows that employees who can manage their emotions are more likely to communicate effectively, reduce conflict, and maintain service quality. Therefore, the theory provides a clear explanation of how emotional intelligence leads to better employee performance. This study is anchored on the Ability-Based Theory because it focuses on emotional intelligence as a set of skills that can be developed and measured. It supports the view that improving self-awareness and self-control will enhance employee performance in recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis. The theory also provides a strong foundation for examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace outcomes in both Nigerian and global settings.

2.2.2 The Emotional Intelligence Competency Theory

The Emotional Intelligence Competency Theory was propounded by Daniel Goleman in 1995. The theory explains emotional intelligence as a set of learned competencies that influence how individuals perform at work. Goleman identified key competencies such as self-awareness, self-regulation (self-control), motivation, empathy, and social skills, which are grouped into self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The main idea of the theory is that emotional intelligence is not only about understanding emotions but about applying emotional skills in ways that improve job performance. It also emphasizes that these competencies can be developed through training and experience, rather than being fixed traits. Recent studies support this view by showing that emotional intelligence competencies improve leadership effectiveness, teamwork, and employee performance across different sectors (Ogunmola *et al.*, 2024; Joseph *et al.*, 2025).

The theory is relevant to this study because it provides a clear explanation of how emotional intelligence influences employee performance through workplace behaviour. In recruitment agencies, employees interact regularly with clients and job seekers, which requires emotional balance and good interpersonal skills. Goleman's theory highlights the importance of self-awareness and self-control as key competencies that help employees manage their emotions and respond appropriately in different situations. These competencies help reduce conflict, improve communication, and support effective service delivery (Usman & Sulieman, 2024; Oyoru & Ambali, 2024). This study provides a practical framework for understanding how emotional intelligence can enhance employee performance in recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis and similar service-based organizations.

2.3 Empirical Review

Joseph, *et al.* (2025) investigated emotional intelligence competencies and employee job performance at the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), Zaria, with employee resilience as a mediator. The population consisted of 300 employees, and a sample size of 169 was determined using the Taro Yamane technique. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using regression and mediation analysis. The findings showed that emotional intelligence competencies significantly improved job performance. It recommended that organizations should develop emotional intelligence competencies among employees.

Anyakoha and Nwolisa (2025) examined emotional intelligence and team performance in high-stress corporate environments in Lagos State, Nigeria. The population comprised 420 employees, with a sample size of 201 determined using stratified sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using regression analysis. The findings revealed that emotional intelligence significantly influenced team performance. It recommended that organizations should strengthen emotional intelligence skills to improve performance outcomes. The essence is to maximize profit by capturing consumer surplus, but the difficulty is in comprehending customer preferences and willingness to pay (Bassey, Ekanem & Edem, 2025).

Usman and Sulieman (2024) studied emotional intelligence and employee performance in listed deposit money banks in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. The population comprised 380 employees, while a sample size of 195 was determined using the Taro Yamane method. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using correlation and regression techniques. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance. It recommended that management should encourage emotional intelligence practices in the workplace.

Asogwa and Oboreh (2024) examined emotional intelligence and academic staff job performance in federal universities in South-East Nigeria. The population consisted of 520 academic staff, with a sample size of 226 determined using stratified random sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Pearson correlation and regression analysis. The findings showed that emotional intelligence had a strong positive effect on job performance. It recommended that universities should include emotional intelligence training in staff development programmes.

Ogunmola *et al.* (2024) investigated emotional intelligence and employee performance in tertiary institutions, with a focus on the mediating role of work motivation. The population comprised 600 employees, and a sample size of 240 was selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using regression and mediation analysis. The findings revealed that emotional intelligence significantly improved employee performance and that motivation played a mediating role. It recommended that organizations should strengthen emotional intelligence and motivation strategies.

Oyuru and Ambali (2024) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance in listed food and beverage companies in Nigeria, with employee commitment as a mediator. The population consisted of 410 employees, and a sample size of 202 was determined using the Taro Yamane technique. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using structural equation modelling. The findings showed that emotional intelligence significantly influenced employee performance and commitment. It recommended that organizations should focus on building emotional competencies among employees.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

The survey research design was employed in this study. This was done as the study described emotional intelligence and employees' performance of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria.

3.2 Population of the study

The population of this study comprised personnel drawn from nine (9) identified recruitment agencies operating within Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. These firms were identified and verified through the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) (2026), which confirms their legal registration and operational status in Nigeria. The total staff population for the study is 142 employees, consisting of managers, recruitment officers, administrative staff, and client service personnel. This information was obtained from the human resource departments of the respective firms.

Table 3.2.1: Population distribution of respondents.

Firms	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Whitebridge Consulting, 31 Ernest Bassey St, Uyo	27	19.0
U3U Security Services Limited, Ewet Housing Estate, Uyo	22	15.5
Workspan Services Limited, 7 Uyo-Ikot Ekpene Rd, Uyo	19	13.4
Access Link and Consult Services, 5 Wellington Bassey Way, Uyo	17	12.0
Cutting-Edge Security Company Ltd., 16, Akwa Savings Metropolitan Estate, Uyo	14	9.9
Maxxia Consulting Limited, 70 Ikot Ekpene - Uyo Rd, Uyo	12	8.5
Kadeg Integrated Services, 114 Nkemba St, Uyo	12	8.5
Otiz Keepers Limited, 36 Edem Urua Street, Uyo	10	7.0
HQ'Excel Consulting, 9 Fulga Street, Uyo	9	6.3
Total	142	100%

Source: Human Resource Department of each firm (2026)

3.3 Sample size determination and sampling procedure

Given the relatively small and accessible population size (142), this study adopted a census approach. The entire population of 142 employees across the selected recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, was used for the study.

3.4 Sampling technique

No sampling technique was applied, as all members of the identified population categories were included in the data collection process.

3.5 Sources and method of data collection

The study depended entirely on primary data which was obtained through a questionnaire that was administered to managers, recruitment officers, administrative staff, and client service personnel of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis. Data were collected from structured questionnaire that were administered to the sampled respondents.

3.6 Test of reliability

To establish the reliability of the instrument, 30 copies of the research instrument were administered to thirty (30) employees of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis in the study area. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha method of reliability testing.

Table 3.3.1: Reliability test.

Variables	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Test-retest	Internal consistency
Self-Awareness	4	0.910	0.918	Excellent
Self-Control	4	0.963	0.952	Excellent
Employees Performance	4	0.974	0.972	Excellent

Source: Researcher's computation (2026)

From Table 3.3.1, it was observed that the Cronbach's Alpha Statistics indicated that the data collected for each of the variables of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, and self-control) as well as the dependent variable, employees' performance, were all greater than 0.70 which showed that they were all reliable to this study. The number of items showed that the numbers of questions in each of the variables were four (4). Thus, other analyses can be conducted on the sourced data.

3.7 Test of validity

This study ensured both face and content validity of the research instrument. Face validity was achieved by presenting the questionnaire to colleagues and experts to confirm that the items were clear and relevant to the variables being measured. Content validity was established through expert review in management science, where the adequacy and coverage of the items were examined in relation to the study objectives. Based on their suggestions, necessary corrections were made to improve clarity and ensure the instrument properly captured the variables of interest.

3.8 Model specification

The model for this study is designed to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' performance in recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. Emotional intelligence is the independent variable, while employees' performance is the dependent variable. For the purpose of this study, emotional intelligence is measured using two dimensions: self-awareness and self-control, while employees' performance is measured using indicators such as quality of work and service delivery.

The functional relationship between the variables is expressed as:

$$EP = f(EI)$$

Where:

EP = Employees' Performance

EI = Emotional Intelligence

Since emotional intelligence is decomposed into self-awareness and self-control, the model is further specified as:

$$EP = f(SA, SC)$$

Where:

SA = Self-Awareness

SC = Self-Control

The econometric form of the model is stated as:

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SA + \beta_2 SC + \mu$$

Where:

β_0 = Constant term

$\beta_1 - \beta_2$ = Coefficients of the independent variables

μ = Error term

This model shows that employees' performance is a function of self-awareness and self-control. The study uses this model to test the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC).

3.9 Measurements/operationalization of variables

This study centered on emotional intelligence and employees' performance of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. Emotional intelligence, as the independent variable, was measured using two dimensions: self-awareness and self-control. The dependent variable was employees' performance. These variables were operationalized as follows:

Self-awareness: This variable was measured using items adapted from the emotional intelligence scale developed by Mayer, *et al.* (2019). The original instrument comprised several items on self-awareness; however, 4 items relevant to this study were adapted. The items included: 'I understand my emotions when I am at work,' 'I am aware of how my feelings affect my job performance,' 'I can easily recognize when I am under pressure,' and 'I understand my strengths and weaknesses in my job role.'

Self-control: This variable was measured using items adapted from Goleman's (1995) emotional intelligence framework. The original scale contained multiple items, but 4 items were selected for this study. The items were: 'I am able to control my emotions when dealing with difficult clients,' 'I remain calm even when faced with work pressure,' 'I avoid reacting impulsively in stressful situations,' and 'I maintain professionalism even when I feel upset.'

Employees' performance: This variable was measured using items adapted from Aguinis (2019) and Armstrong (2020) performance measurement scales. The original instruments included several indicators of employee performance; however, 4 items were adapted to suit the study. The items included: 'I maintain high standards in my work,' 'I pay attention to

details when carrying out my duties,’ ‘I communicate effectively with clients,’ and ‘I ensure client satisfaction in service delivery.’

3.10 Method of data analysis

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive tools such as tables, frequencies, and percentages were used to summarize respondents' demographic information and responses on emotional intelligence and employees' performance. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to test the hypotheses and examine the strength and direction of the relationship between emotional intelligence (self-awareness and self-control) and employees' performance. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 23 at a 0.05 level of significance.

3.11 Decision rule

The decision rule for testing the hypotheses using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) were as follows:

1. Reject null hypothesis if the probability value (p-value) is less than or equals to the correlation coefficient at 5% level of significance ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$).
2. Accept null hypothesis if the probability value (p-value) is greater than the correlation coefficient at 5% level of significance ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$).

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 4.2.2: Analysis of responses on self-awareness

Self- awareness	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Total
I understand my emotions when I am at work.	72 (53.3%)	56 (41.5%)	5 (3.7%)	1 (0.7%)	1 (0.7%)	135 (100%)
I am aware of how my feelings affect my job performance	78 (57.8%)	45 (33.3%)	7 (5.2%)	2 (1.5%)	3 (2.2%)	135 (100%)
I can easily recognize when I am under pressure.	70 (51.9%)	60 (44.4%)	3 (2.2%)	1 (0.7%)	1 (0.7%)	135 (100%)
I understand my strengths and weaknesses in my job role.	102 (75.6%)	30 (22.2%)	2 (1.5%)	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)	135 (100%)
Aggregate	322 (59.6%)	191 (35.4%)	17 (3.1%)	5 (0.9%)	5 (0.9%)	540 (100%)
Proportional Ratio	81	48	4	1	1	135

Source: Field Survey (2026)

Table 4.2.1 shows the responses on self-awareness. The responses indicate that 72 respondents representing 53.3% strongly agreed that they understand their emotions when at work, 56 respondents representing 41.5% agreed, 5 respondents representing 3.7% were undecided, while 1 respondent each representing 0.7% disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, 78 respondents representing 57.8% strongly agreed that they are aware of how their feelings affect their job performance, 45 respondents representing 33.3% agreed, 7 respondents representing 5.2% were undecided, 2 respondents representing 1.5% disagreed, while 3 respondents representing 2.2% strongly disagreed. Furthermore, 70 respondents representing 51.9% strongly agreed that they can easily recognize when they are under pressure, 60 respondents representing 44.4% agreed, 3 respondents representing 2.2% were undecided, while 1 respondent each representing 0.7% disagreed and strongly disagreed. In addition, 102 respondents representing 75.6% strongly agreed that they understand their strengths and weaknesses in their job role, 30 respondents representing 22.2% agreed, 2 respondents representing 1.5% were undecided, while 1 respondent representing 0.7% disagreed. The aggregate responses show that 322 respondents representing 59.6% strongly agreed, 191 respondents representing 35.4% agreed, 17 respondents representing 3.1% were undecided, 5 respondents representing 0.9% disagreed, while 5 respondents representing 0.9% strongly disagreed. This implies that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that self-awareness significantly influences employees' performance in recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4.2.2: Analysis of responses on self-control.

Self-control	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Total
I am able to control my emotions when dealing with difficult clients.	75 (55.6%)	54 (40.0%)	6 (4.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	135 (100%)
I remain calm even when faced with work pressure	81 (60.0%)	43 (31.9%)	8 (5.9%)	0 (0%)	3 (2.2%)	135 (100%)
I avoid reacting impulsively in stressful situations.	68 (50.4%)	62 (45.9%)	3 (2.2%)	0 (0%)	2 (1.5%)	135 (100%)
I maintain professionalism even when I feel upset.	108 (80.0%)	27 (20.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	135 (100%)
Aggregate	332 (61.5%)	186 (34.4%)	17 (3.1%)	0 (0%)	5 (0.9%)	540 (100%)
Proportional Ratio	83	47	4	0	1	135

Source: Field Survey (2026)

Table 4.2.2 shows the responses on self-control. The responses indicate that 75 respondents representing 55.6% strongly agreed that they are able to control their emotions when dealing with difficult clients, 54 respondents representing 40.0% agreed, while 6 respondents representing 4.4% were undecided, and no respondent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Also, 81 respondents representing 60.0% strongly agreed that they remain calm even when faced with work pressure, 43 respondents representing 31.9% agreed, 8 respondents representing 5.9% were undecided, while 3 respondents representing 2.2% strongly disagreed. Furthermore, 68 respondents representing 50.4% strongly agreed that they avoid reacting impulsively in stressful situations, 62 respondents representing 45.9% agreed, 3 respondents representing 2.2% were undecided, while 2 respondents representing 1.5% strongly disagreed. In addition, 108 respondents representing 80.0% strongly agreed that they maintain professionalism even when they feel upset, while 27 respondents representing 20.0% agreed, and no respondent selected other options. The aggregate responses show that 332 respondents representing 61.5% strongly agreed, 186 respondents representing 34.4% agreed, 17 respondents representing 3.1% were undecided, none disagreed, while 5 respondents representing 0.9% strongly disagreed. This implies that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that self-control significantly influences employees' performance in recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4.2.3: Analysis of responses on employees' performance.

Employees' performance	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Total
I maintain high standards in my work	70 (51.9%)	58 (43.0%)	5 (3.7%)	1 (0.7%)	1 (0.7%)	135 (100%)
I pay attention to details when carrying out my duties	76 (56.3%)	48 (35.6%)	7 (5.2%)	1 (0.7%)	3 (2.2%)	135 (100%)
I communicate effectively with clients	65 (48.1%)	64 (47.4%)	3 (2.2%)	1 (0.7%)	2 (1.5%)	135 (100%)
I ensure client satisfaction in service delivery	100 (74.1%)	32 (23.7%)	2 (1.5%)	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)	135 (100%)
Aggregate	311 (57.6%)	202 (37.4%)	17 (3.1%)	4 (0.7%)	6 (1.1%)	540 (100%)
Proportional Ratio	78	51	4	1	1	135

Source: Field Survey (2026)

Table 4.2.3 shows the responses on employees' performance. The responses indicate that 70 respondents representing 51.9% strongly agreed that they maintain high standards in their work, 58 respondents representing 43.0% agreed, 5 respondents representing 3.7% were undecided, while 1 respondent each representing 0.7% disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, 76 respondents representing 56.3% strongly agreed that they pay attention to details when carrying out their duties, 48 respondents representing 35.6% agreed, 7 respondents representing 5.2% were undecided, 1 respondent representing 0.7% disagreed, while 3 respondents representing 2.2% strongly disagreed. Furthermore, 65 respondents representing 48.1% strongly agreed that they communicate effectively with clients, 64 respondents representing 47.4% agreed, 3 respondents representing 2.2% were undecided, 1 respondent representing 0.7% disagreed, while 2 respondents representing 1.5% strongly disagreed. In addition, 100 respondents representing 74.1% strongly agreed that they ensure client satisfaction in service delivery, 32 respondents representing 23.7% agreed, 2 respondents representing 1.5% were undecided, while 1 respondent representing 0.7% disagreed. The aggregate responses show that 311 respondents representing 57.6% strongly agreed, 202 respondents representing 37.4% agreed, 17 respondents representing 3.1% were undecided, 4 respondents representing 0.7% disagreed, while 6 respondents representing 1.1% strongly disagreed. This implies that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that employees' performance is high among staff of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

4.3 Test of Hypotheses

4.3.1 Hypothesis one

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and employees' performance of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria

Table 4.3.1: Correlation analysis on self-awareness and employees' performance.

Variables	Method	SA	EP
SA	Pearson Correlation	1	0.918
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	135	135
EP	Pearson Correlation	0.918	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	135	135

Source: Researcher's computation (2026)

From Table 4.3.1, it was observed that the relationship between self-awareness and employees' performance of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State is 0.918 (91.8%), indicating a very strong positive relationship between the two variables. The p-value computed (0.000) shows that the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Based on this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between self-awareness and employees' performance is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between self-awareness and employees' performance is accepted, since the p-value is less than 0.05. This implies that self-awareness significantly influences employees' performance in recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

4.3.2 Hypothesis two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between self-control and employees' performance of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4.3.2: Correlation analysis on self-control and employees' performance.

Variables	Method	SC	EP
SC	Pearson Correlation	1	0.904
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	135	135
EP	Pearson Correlation	0.904	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	135	135

Source: Researcher's computation (2026)

From Table 4.3.2, it was observed that the relationship between self-control and employees' performance of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State is 0.904 (90.4%), indicating a very strong positive relationship between the two variables. The p-value computed (0.000) shows that the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Based on this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between self-control and employees' performance is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between self-control and employees' performance is accepted, since the p-value is less than 0.05. This implies that self-control significantly influences employees' performance in recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

After the test of hypotheses, some major findings were made. The findings were discussed in this section of the study as shown below:

4.4.1 Self-awareness and employees' performance

The result from Table 4.3.1 revealed a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient of 0.918 between self-awareness and employees' performance, indicating a very strong positive relationship. This suggests that as employees' level of self-awareness increases, their performance improves significantly. In the context of recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, employees who understand their emotions, recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and are aware of how their feelings influence their work are more likely to perform effectively, maintain professionalism, and deliver quality services to clients.

This finding is strongly supported by the Ability-Based Theory of Emotional Intelligence proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1990), which posits that individuals who can perceive, understand, and manage emotions are better equipped to function effectively in social and work environments. Empirically, this finding aligns with several studies. Joseph *et al.* (2025) found that self-awareness is a fundamental component of emotional intelligence that significantly improves individual job performance and workplace effectiveness. Similarly, Asogwa and Oboreh (2024) asserted that individuals who possess a high level of self-awareness are more capable of understanding their emotional triggers and are better positioned to respond appropriately in work situations, leading to improved productivity and interpersonal relationships. These studies reinforce the importance of self-awareness in fostering effective employee behavior and enhancing overall organizational performance.

However, contrary findings exist. For instance, Harms and Credé (2020) suggest that the strength of the relationship may vary depending on organizational context and job roles. In environments where emotional expression is limited or highly structured, the impact of self-awareness on performance may not be as pronounced. Nonetheless, the overwhelming evidence from this study and prior research confirms that self-awareness is a critical determinant of employees' performance.

4.4.2 Self-Control and Employees' Performance

The result from Table 4.3.2 showed a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient of 0.904 between self-control and employees' performance, indicating a strong

positive relationship. This implies that employees who are able to regulate their emotions, remain calm under pressure, and avoid impulsive reactions tend to perform better in their roles. In recruitment agencies, where interactions with clients and candidates can be demanding, self-control enables employees to maintain professionalism, handle stress effectively, and deliver consistent service quality.

This finding is also consistent with the Goleman's (1995) Emotional Intelligence Competency Theory which identifies self-control (or self-regulation) as a vital competency that enhances workplace behavior, stress management, and decision-making. Empirical evidence further supports this result. Adebayo and Okeke (2024) revealed that employees with high emotional regulation skills tend to exhibit better job performance, improved client relations, and higher levels of productivity. Furthermore, O'Boyle *et al.* (2022) demonstrated that self-control improves teamwork and collaboration, which are essential for performance in organizational settings.

However, contrasting findings were reported by Boyatzis (2021), who found an insignificant relationship between self-control and employee performance in some small-scale enterprises. The study attributed this to poor organizational culture, lack of training, and minimal emphasis on emotional intelligence development. This suggests that without supportive organizational structures and training, the benefits of self-control may not be fully realized in enhancing employee performance. Overall, the findings of this study confirm that self-control is a significant predictor of employees' performance. Employees who can regulate their emotions effectively are more likely to maintain high standards of work, interact positively with clients, and contribute to organizational success.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' performance in recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, with particular emphasis on self-awareness and self-control. The findings revealed that both dimensions of emotional intelligence have strong positive and statistically significant relationships with employees' performance. Specifically, employees who possess high levels of self-awareness are better able to understand their emotions, recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and make appropriate decisions that enhance their job performance. Similarly, employees with strong self-control effectively regulate their emotions, remain calm under pressure, and maintain professionalism in their interactions with clients and colleagues, thereby improving service delivery and overall organizational effectiveness.

The study concludes that emotional intelligence is a critical determinant of employee performance in recruitment agencies. As service-oriented organizations rely heavily on effective interpersonal relationships and quality service delivery, developing employees' emotional competencies is essential for achieving organizational goals. The findings support the propositions of the Ability-Based Theory of Emotional Intelligence and Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Competency Theory, which emphasize that emotional abilities can be developed and significantly influence workplace behaviour and performance. Therefore, recruitment agencies should prioritize emotional intelligence development by integrating self-awareness and self-control training into employee development programmes. Such initiatives will enhance employees' ability to manage workplace challenges, improve service quality, increase productivity, and strengthen organizational competitiveness. Ultimately, fostering emotional intelligence among employees will contribute to sustained organizational success and improved client satisfaction in the recruitment industry.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and in line with the stated objectives, the following recommendations were made:

1. Recruitment agencies in Uyo Metropolis should implement training and development programmes aimed at improving employees' self-awareness. This can be achieved through emotional intelligence workshops, feedback systems, and self-assessment tools that help employees better understand their emotions, strengths, and weaknesses, thereby improving their overall performance.
2. Management of recruitment agencies should encourage the development of self-control among employees by organizing stress management training, coaching, and emotional regulation programmes. This will help employees remain calm under pressure, avoid impulsive reactions, and maintain professionalism, which in turn will enhance their job performance and service delivery.

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