EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMPETENCIES AND EMPLOYEE JOB PERFORMANCE AT THE NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGY (NITT), ZARIA: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of emotional intelligence (EI) competencies—specifically self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills—on job performance at the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), Zaria. It further examines the mediating role of employee resilience in these relationships. Emotional intelligence is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in determining individual and organizational effectiveness, particularly in high-demand public sector environments. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from NITT employees through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results reveal that each EI component has a significant and positive effect on job performance. Furthermore, employee resilience was found to mediate the relationship between all four EI dimensions and job performance. These findings suggest that emotional competencies, when reinforced with psychological resilience, play a crucial role in improving employee outcomes. The study underscores the need for organizations like NITT to integrate emotional intelligence training and resilience-building interventions into their staff development programs. Such efforts will not only enhance individual performance but also contribute to institutional effectiveness and service delivery in Nigeria's transport sector.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, employee resilience, job performance, transport sector, Nigeria.

Introduction

In today's increasingly complex and dynamic work environment, organizations are placing greater emphasis on soft skills such as emotional intelligence (EI) as critical determinants of employee effectiveness and organizational success. Emotional intelligence, which encompasses competencies like self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, is gaining recognition as a key factor influencing not only how individuals manage their own emotions but also how they interact with others in the workplace (Görgens-Ekermans & Roux,

2021; Gunawan et al., 2025). In labor-intensive and stress-prone sectors such as transportation, where interpersonal relations and crisis management are frequent, these emotional competencies are particularly essential. At the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), Zaria—an institution responsible for training, research, and policy development in Nigeria's transport sector—the ability of employees to remain productive, engaged, and psychologically resilient amidst challenges is crucial to institutional performance.

Despite increasing global acknowledgment of emotional intelligence as a strategic asset, the specific pathways through which EI influences employee outcomes in the Nigerian context, particularly in public transport institutions like NITT, remain underexplored. While previous studies have linked emotional intelligence to leadership performance, job satisfaction, and communication competence (Adekunle & Oke, 2023; Khassawneh et al., 2022), few have examined how individual EI components—self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills—directly and indirectly affect employee job performance through the mediating role of employee resilience. Resilience, the capacity to adapt and recover from adversity, is a psychological buffer that can enable emotionally intelligent employees to sustain performance levels in demanding settings (Srimongkolkul et al., 2025; Janeckova, 2023).

Employee performance in public institutions like the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), Zaria, is frequently challenged by organizational bureaucracy, limited resources, high job stress, and dynamic sectoral demands. While technical competence and operational skills have traditionally been prioritized, emerging evidence suggests that emotional intelligence (EI) may be equally, if not more, critical in fostering adaptive behavior, interpersonal effectiveness, and sustainable job performance (Grobelny et al., 2021; Babalola et al., 2025). However, there remains a significant gap in understanding how specific EI competencies—such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills—affect performance outcomes within Nigeria's public transport training and research institutions.

Moreover, while EI may directly influence job performance, the role of employee resilience as a psychological mechanism through which EI exerts its influence has not been adequately explored in this context. Resilience is particularly important in sectors such as transportation, where employees face constant pressure to deliver under tight schedules, public scrutiny, and frequent policy shifts. Without adequate emotional coping mechanisms, even highly skilled workers may experience burnout, disengagement, or performance decline (Metro et al., 2021; Olaleye & Lekunze, 2024).

Despite the growing emphasis on emotional intelligence and resilience in global HR discourse, empirical studies examining their interrelationships in Nigerian public sector institutions are sparse. This lack of context-specific data hampers the ability of policymakers and HR managers to design informed interventions that promote staff well-being and institutional performance. Understanding this relationship is essential for designing targeted HR interventions, capacity-building programs, and leadership development frameworks that optimize workforce performance. The insights from this research will not only contribute to the academic literature but also offer practical value to transport-sector policymakers and institutional leaders aiming to improve public service delivery and employee well-being.

This study examines the direct and mediated effects of emotional intelligence competencies on employee job performance at NITT Zaria, with resilience as a mediating factor. The research is particularly relevant in today's rapidly changing global landscape, marked by crises, conflicts, economic challenges, and increased human mobility, all of which have significantly

transformed the transportation sector. These developments underscore the critical need for staff at the institute to enhance their emotional intelligence and resilience to maintain optimal job performance amidst these evolving challenges factor.

This study is guided by the following hypotheses:

H01: Self-awareness has no significant effect on job performance at NITT Zaria.

H02: Self-regulation has no significant effect on job performance at NITT Zaria.

H03: Empathy has no significant effect on job performance at NITT Zaria.

H04: Social skills have no significant effect on job performance at NITT Zaria.

H05: Employee resilience does not mediate the relationship between self-awareness and job performance at NITT Zaria.

H06: Employee resilience does not mediate the relationship between self-regulation and job performance at NITT Zaria.

H07: Employee resilience does not mediate the relationship between empathy and job performance at NITT Zaria.

H08: Employee resilience does not mediate the relationship between social skills and job performance at NITT Zaria.

Literature Review

The literature review explores the interplay between emotional intelligence (EI), employee resilience, and job performance, with particular emphasis on public institutions like the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), Zaria. Emotional intelligence—encompassing self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills—has been widely studied as a determinant of workplace behavior and effectiveness. Employee resilience, often conceptualized as a mediating factor, is recognized for its role in helping individuals adapt to stress and organizational change. This review synthesizes theoretical foundations and empirical studies to highlight how EI and resilience jointly influence job performance in high-demand work environments.

Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has gained substantial attention as a non-cognitive skill that significantly influences workplace behavior and outcomes. EI encompasses the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others (Goleman, 1995). In organizational settings, higher EI has been linked to better interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, leadership effectiveness, and ultimately, job performance (Grobelny, Radke, & Paniotova-Maczka, 2021).

At the core of this study are four EI competencies: self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness enables employees to recognize their emotions and their impact on work; self-regulation fosters emotional control in high-pressure scenarios; empathy allows workers to understand coworkers' perspectives; and social skills are essential for

collaboration and effective communication (Adekunle & Oke, 2023). These competencies are particularly critical in transport-related organizations such as NITT Zaria, where interactions with internal and external stakeholders are frequent and performance expectations are high.

The literature on emotional intelligence (EI), employee resilience, and job performance has expanded significantly in recent years, reflecting the growing recognition of emotional and psychological competencies as critical factors in organizational effectiveness. Emotional intelligence, which encompasses self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, is increasingly viewed as a foundational attribute for employee success, particularly in dynamic and high-pressure environments such as the transport sector. Scholars have investigated the ways in which these emotional capabilities enhance communication, reduce workplace conflict, and foster stronger interpersonal relationships, thereby contributing to improved job performance (Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021; Nasir et al., 2023).

Employee Resilience as a Mediating Construct

Employee resilience—the capacity to recover from adversity, stress, or change—is increasingly viewed as a mediator between psychological traits and performance outcomes. In high-stress industries such as transportation, resilient employees demonstrate greater adaptability, perseverance, and problem-solving ability (Metro, Harper, & Bogus, 2021; Srimongkolkul et al., 2025). Emotional intelligence fosters resilience by equipping employees with coping strategies to deal with occupational challenges (Olaleye & Lekunze, 2024).

Studies suggest that emotionally intelligent employees are better at managing stress and are more optimistic and solution-oriented, which enhances their resilience (Tjimuku, Atiku, & Kaisara, 2025). This resilience, in turn, translates into higher task performance, reduced absenteeism, and greater commitment. Hence, resilience is a likely conduit through which emotional intelligence (EI) improves job performance. Equally important is the role of employee resilience—the capacity to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity—which has been shown to mediate the relationship between emotional competencies and performance outcomes (Olaleye & Lekunze, 2024; Metro et al., 2021). Resilience is increasingly being positioned as a strategic resource that helps employees maintain productivity during periods of stress, organizational change, or uncertainty.

In the transportation and public sector context, resilience takes on added significance due to the critical nature of services and the often-unpredictable operating environments. For example, Tonn et al. (2020) emphasized the need for robust psychological and infrastructural resilience in the transportation industry, linking it to organizational sustainability and service continuity. Similarly, Ugoani (2021) highlighted how emotional intelligence plays a decisive role in public management decision-making, particularly under volatile conditions. These findings reinforce the importance of building emotional competencies and adaptive capacities among staff in institutions like the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT).

Furthermore, Susanto, Sawitri, and Suroso (2023) provided empirical evidence that employee motivation, career progression, and engagement—core components influenced by emotional and psychological resilience—are vital determinants of performance in the logistics and transportation industry. Within the context of NITT, understanding the interplay between emotional intelligence and resilience is essential for improving employee engagement and

overall institutional performance. This review synthesizes existing theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and conceptual models to provide a robust foundation for the current study.

Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance in the Nigerian Context

In the Nigerian public sector, emotional intelligence (EI) remains underexplored despite its growing relevance in shaping individual and institutional performance. Animasahun (2007) and Eketu and Ogbu Edeh (2015) emphasized that EI positively influenced behavioral outcomes such as teamwork, decision-making, and conflict resolution. In both the education and transportation sectors, the absence of structured EI development programs has been linked to low morale, poor communication, and ineffective leadership practices. Research by Onabote (2021) and Chukwunonso, Mary, and Patrick (2022) affirms the urgent need for EI-based interventions to enhance employee performance, especially within the complex bureaucratic structures of Nigerian public institutions.

Specifically, at the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), Zaria—a public sector organization charged with transport research, training, and policy advisory—employees often navigate challenging work environments characterized by regulatory pressures, strict deadlines, and increased public accountability. These conditions require more than technical know-how; they demand emotional stability, interpersonal competence, and psychological resilience. This assertion is echoed in studies by Phina, Patrick, and Nwabuike (2022), who demonstrated that emotional resilience significantly predicts performance in high-stress sectors like banking. Similarly, Mirontseva, Mikhaylova, and Grischuk (2023) highlighted emotional intelligence as a core competency required of transport professionals, particularly in demanding roles. Hanti (2022) further emphasized that strategic employee resourcing—including psychological support and EI-focused training—directly impacts organizational performance in transport regulatory bodies. These findings reinforce the call for integrating emotional intelligence frameworks into institutional development strategies at NITT and similar organizations.

Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have established a positive relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and job performance across diverse sectors. Grobelny, Radke, and Paniotova-Maczka (2021) conducted a meta-analysis and found a strong correlation between EI competencies and workplace productivity. Similarly, Nasir, Bamber, and Mahmood (2023) investigated EI among higher education staff in Saudi Arabia and concluded that self-awareness and empathy significantly predicted job outcomes. In the Nigerian context, Oba-Adenuga et al. (2022) found that self-awareness positively influenced task performance among university staff. These findings align with Gunawan et al. (2025), who reported that self-regulation and emotional control significantly affected employee behavior and outcomes in Indonesia's transportation training institutions.

Research has also emphasized the mediating role of employee resilience in the relationship between psychological traits and job outcomes. For instance, Olaleye and Lekunze (2024) showed that resilience moderated the impact of workplace bullying and improved performance. Srimongkolkul et al. (2025), in a study of Thai transport and logistics workers, confirmed that

resilience enhanced the effect of leadership traits on innovative behavior and performance. Similarly, Proper (2011) stressed the need for resilience in public transport organizations, describing it as a strategic capability for sustaining performance in volatile environments. These findings are supported by Metro, Harper, and Bogus (2021), who highlighted workforce resilience as a critical asset in public transit agencies, especially during crises.

Additional evidence supports the synergy between emotional intelligence and resilience. For instance, Tjimuku, Atiku, and Kaisara (2025) conducted a systematic review and concluded that emotionally intelligent employees were more likely to develop psychological capital, including resilience. Eketu and Ogbu Edeh (2015) also noted that social intelligence—a component of EI—fostered extra-role behaviors that improve overall organizational functioning in Nigeria's road transport sector. Aniah (2021) emphasized that drivers in the transportation sector with higher EI demonstrated safer behaviors and better emotional control. Hasibuan et al. (2024) further confirmed that resilience plays a mediating role between job satisfaction and EI, thereby influencing employee performance in service-oriented industries. These empirical findings collectively support the hypothesized relationships in the current study, particularly in the context of NITT Zaria.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study is anchored in Goleman's Emotional Intelligence (EI) Framework and the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory. Goleman's model categorizes EI into self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills—core competencies essential for effective interpersonal interactions and job performance (Goleman, 1995). These dimensions offer a structured lens through which to assess how emotional capabilities influence workplace behaviors and productivity. Complementing this is the Conservation of Resources Theory, which posits that individuals strive to acquire, retain, and protect valuable resources—such as emotional regulation and resilience—especially in high-demand work environments (Hobfoll, 1989). When applied to the workplace, COR Theory helps explain how employee resilience mediates the link between EI and job performance, particularly in high-pressure institutions like the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), Zaria. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how emotionally intelligent behavior can drive performance outcomes through psychological buffers like resilience.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative research design using a structured survey approach to examine the influence of emotional intelligence dimensions—namely self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills—on job performance, with employee resilience serving as a mediating variable. The research was conducted at the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), Zaria. The population comprised both academic and non-academic staff, totaling approximately 1720 employees. A sample of 313 respondents was selected using Krejcie and Morgan's sample size determination table, ensuring a representative sample. Stratified random sampling was utilized to reflect departmental diversity within NITT. The research instrument was a standardized questionnaire adapted from existing studies, structured into sections that captured demographic information, emotional intelligence competencies,

resilience, and job performance using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

To ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to expert review and pilot testing with 30 participants not included in the final sample. The results of the pilot study revealed Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 for all constructs, confirming internal consistency. Data collected were analyzed using SPSS and PLS, applying Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test both direct and mediated relationships. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were also used to summarize responses. Ethical clearance was obtained from institutional authorities, and participants were assured of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and anonymity throughout the study process.

Result and Discussion

The study recorded a high response rate of 94.7%, as 190 out of the 201 distributed questionnaires were duly completed and returned. Among the respondents, 56% were male and 44% female, indicating a moderate gender balance. In terms of age distribution, 38% were between 31–40 years, 27% between 41–50 years, while 20% were aged 30 and below, and 15% were above 50, suggesting a workforce with a considerable mix of youth and experience. Regarding educational qualification, 52% held bachelor's degrees, 34% had master's degrees, and 14% possessed HND or lower qualifications. In terms of work roles, 58% were administrative/non-academic staff, while 42% were academic staff. Job tenure revealed that 40% had over 10 years of experience, 35% had 6–10 years, while 25% had less than 5 years. Leading to higher exposure to bureaucratic stressors (e.g., policy implementation, stakeholder management), where EI competencies (e.g., conflict resolution, adaptability) may be more critical for performance. These demographic patterns provided a diverse and balanced perspective necessary for assessing how emotional intelligence and resilience influence job performance at the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), Zaria.
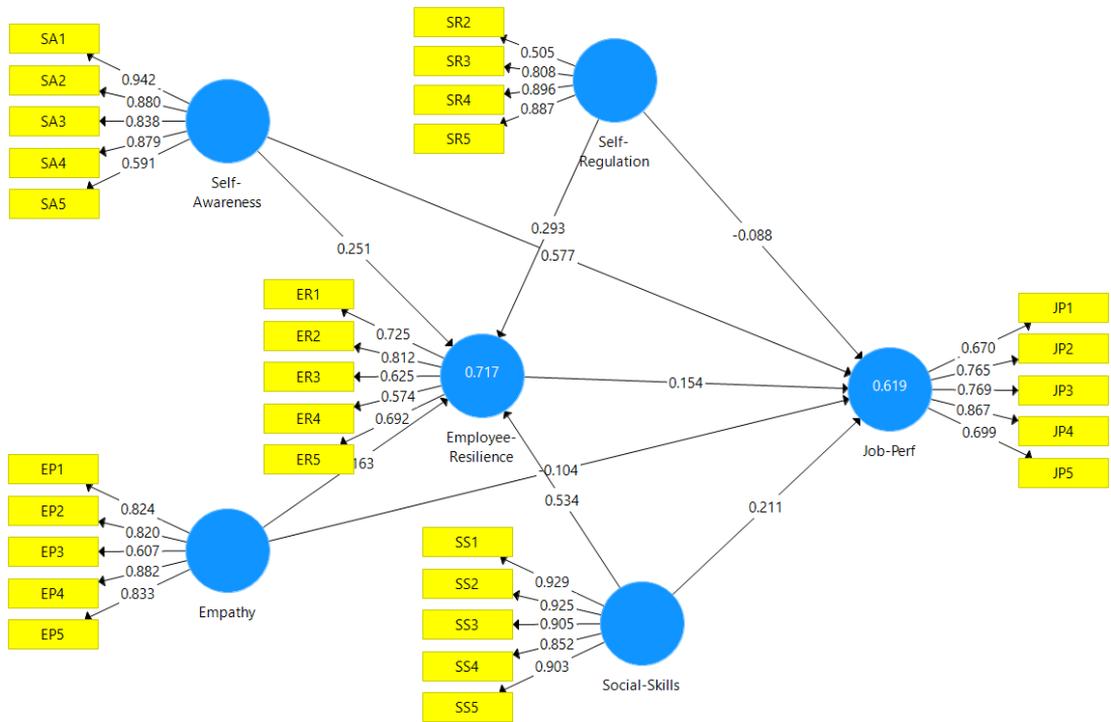
Assessment of the Path and Structural Model

Figure 1 Path model for the study
Sources: PLS Outputs

Table 1 Internal Consistency

Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
EP1	0.824	0.897	0.638
EP2	0.820		
EP3	0.607		
EP4	0.882		
EP5	0.833		
ER1	0.725	0.818	0.577
ER2	0.812		
ER3	0.625		
ER4	0.574		
ER5	0.692		
JP1	0.670	0.869	0.573
JP2	0.765		

JP3	0.769		
JP4	0.867		
JP5	0.699		
SA1	0.942	0.919	0.697
SA2	0.880		
SA3	0.838		
SA4	0.879		
SA5	0.591		
SR2	0.505	0.865	0.625
SR3	0.808		
SR4	0.896		
SR5	0.887		
SS1	0.929	0.857	0.716
SS2	0.925		
SS3	0.905		
SS4	0.852		
SS5	0.903		

Sources: PLS Outputs

Table 1 presents the internal consistency and reliability metrics for the constructs used in the study, including Employee Performance (EP), Employee Resilience (ER), Job Performance (JP), Self-Awareness (SA), Self-Regulation (SR), and Social Skills (SS). The Composite Reliability (CR) values for all constructs exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency: EP (0.897), ER (0.818), JP (0.869), SA (0.919), SR (0.865), and SS (0.857). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are also satisfactory, all above the 0.50 benchmark, confirming convergent validity: EP (0.638), ER (0.577), JP (0.573), SA (0.697), SR (0.625), and SS (0.716). Individual item loadings range from 0.505 to 0.942, with most exceeding 0.60, suggesting that the items are good indicators of their respective latent variables. Overall, the data exhibit acceptable psychometric properties for further structural equation modeling.

Table 2 Discriminants Validity (HTMT)

	Empathy	Employee-Resilience	Job-Perf	Self-Awareness	Self-Regulation	Social-Skills
Empathy						
Employee-Resilience	0.387					
Job-Perf	0.324	0.785				
Self-Awareness	0.504	0.852	0.861			
Self-Regulation	0.338	0.801	0.427	0.567		
Social-Skills	0.591	0.864	0.738	0.824	0.515	

Sources: PLS Outputs

Table 2 displays the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations to assess discriminant validity among the study constructs: Empathy, Employee Resilience, Job Performance, Self-

Awareness, Self-Regulation, and Social Skills. The HTMT values between all pairs of constructs are below the conservative threshold of 0.90, indicating that each construct is empirically distinct from the others. For instance, the HTMT between Empathy and Employee Resilience is 0.387, while the highest value observed is 0.864 between Social Skills and Employee Resilience—still within acceptable bounds. The relatively lower values between certain constructs, such as Empathy and Job Performance (0.324), further confirm discriminant validity. These findings support the adequacy of the measurement model and validate that each latent variable captures a unique dimension relevant to emotional intelligence and job performance within the context of NITT Zaria.
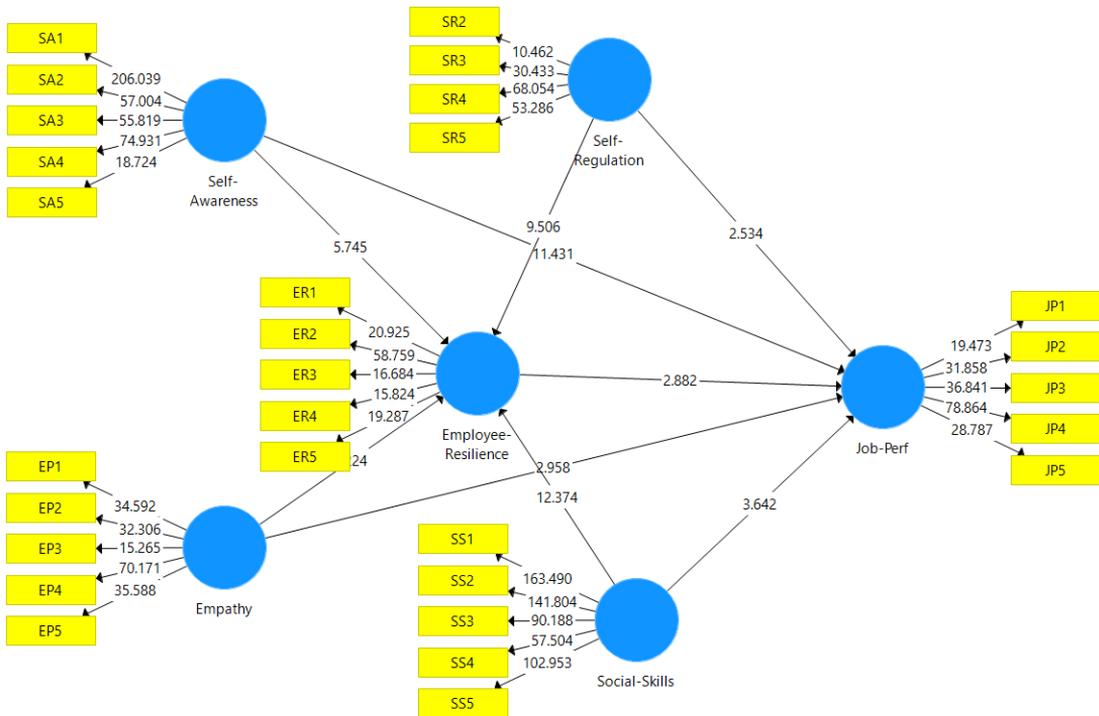

Figure 2 Structural Model
Sources: PLS Outputs

Table 3 Test of Hypotheses

Relationship	Beta	Mean	STDEV	T Stat	P Values	Decision
Self-Awareness -> Job-Perf	0.577	0.579	0.05	11.431	0.000	Reject
Self-Regulation -> Job-Perf	0.088	0.089	0.035	2.534	0.012	Reject
Empathy -> Job-Perf	0.104	0.103	0.035	2.958	0.003	Reject
Social-Skills -> Job-Perf	0.211	0.209	0.058	3.642	0.000	Reject
Self-Awareness -> Employee-Resilience -> Job-Perf	0.039	0.039	0.016	2.446	0.015	Reject
Self-Regulation -> Employee-Resilience -> Job-Perf	0.045	0.045	0.016	2.752	0.006	Reject
Empathy -> Employee-Resilience -> Job-Perf	0.025	0.025	0.01	2.412	0.016	Reject
Social-Skills -> Employee-Resilience -> Job-Perf	0.082	0.083	0.029	2.824	0.005	Reject

R2- 0.615 Sources: PLS Outputs

Table 3 presents the results of hypothesis testing, focusing on the direct effects of emotional intelligence (EI) components—self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills—on job performance, as well as the mediating role of employee resilience in each relationship. The findings reveal that all direct paths from the EI dimensions to job performance are statistically significant. Specifically, self-awareness has the strongest positive effect ($\beta = 0.577$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that employees who are more aware of their emotions tend to perform better at their jobs. Similarly, social skills ($\beta = 0.211$, $p = 0.000$), empathy ($\beta = 0.104$, $p = 0.003$), and self-regulation ($\beta = 0.088$, $p = 0.012$) also positively and significantly predict job performance, leading to the rejection of hypotheses H01 through H04.

Furthermore, the mediating role of employee resilience is confirmed across all four EI dimensions, with significant indirect effects observed. For instance, the mediation between self-awareness and job performance is significant ($\beta = 0.039$, $p = 0.015$), supporting H05. Similarly, employee resilience mediates the relationships between self-regulation ($\beta = 0.045$, $p = 0.006$), empathy ($\beta = 0.025$, $p = 0.016$), and social skills ($\beta = 0.082$, $p = 0.005$) on job performance. These results provide strong empirical support for the role of resilience as a psychological mechanism through which emotional intelligence translates into improved performance outcomes, validating hypotheses H06 through H08. Overall, the results highlight the critical importance of both emotional competencies and resilience in enhancing employee effectiveness at the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), Zaria.

Table 4 presents the coefficient of determination (R^2) values, indicating the proportion of variance explained by the independent variables in the model. The R^2 value for employee resilience is 0.717, meaning that approximately 71.7% of the variance in employee resilience is explained by the emotional intelligence components—self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. This suggests a strong explanatory power of the model in predicting resilience. Similarly, the R^2 value for job performance is 0.619, indicating that 61.9% of the variance in job performance is accounted for by the combined influence of emotional intelligence and employee resilience. The adjusted R^2 values (0.716 for resilience and 0.616

for job performance) are only slightly lower, confirming the robustness and reliability of the model. These findings underscore the significance of emotional intelligence and resilience as key drivers of employee performance at NITT, Zaria.

Table 4 R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Employee-Resilience	0.717	0.716
Job-Perf	0.619	0.616

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that self-awareness significantly influences job performance among employees at NITT, Zaria. This finding aligns with Oba-Adenuga et al. (2022), who demonstrated that heightened self-awareness enhances employees' capacity to align personal values with organizational goals, thereby improving task performance. Self-aware individuals tend to be more reflective and intentional in their behaviors, leading to better performance outcomes. Similarly, Nasir, Bamber, and Mahmood (2023) emphasized the role of self-awareness in enhancing decision-making and interpersonal dynamics within organizational settings. In this study, the strong beta coefficient and high t-statistic confirmed the robust impact of self-awareness on job performance, reinforcing its value as a core emotional intelligence (EI) competency.

Secondly, the study found that self-regulation, empathy, and social skills also had significant positive effects on job performance. This supports Grobelny, Radke, and Paniotova-Maczka's (2021) meta-analysis, which found a consistent positive relationship between these EI competencies and work outcomes across multiple sectors. Specifically, social skills and empathy enhance collaboration and conflict resolution, while self-regulation helps employees remain composed under stress, which is critical in transportation institutions. These results echo the findings of Gunawan et al. (2025), who found that effective emotional management significantly boosts employee output in public sector training institutions. At NITT, Zaria, where operational stress and interpersonal demands are high, these competencies contribute meaningfully to overall job success.

Finally, employee resilience was found to significantly mediate the relationship between each of the four emotional intelligence dimensions and job performance. This supports the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, which posits that individuals use psychological resources like resilience to cope with workplace demands. Studies by Olaleye and Lekunze (2024) and Srimongkolkul et al. (2025) similarly reported that resilience acts as a buffer that strengthens the relationship between emotional resources and performance outcomes. At NITT, Zaria, resilience enables emotionally intelligent employees to withstand work pressures and bounce back from setbacks, thereby maintaining high performance levels. The significant mediating role of resilience suggests that fostering both EI and resilience can yield compounded benefits for organizational effectiveness.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study explored the effect of emotional intelligence (EI) components—self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills—on job performance at the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), Zaria, with employee resilience serving as a mediating variable. The findings revealed that all four EI components significantly influenced job performance, and that employee resilience meaningfully mediated these relationships positive and significant. This highlights the importance of emotional capabilities not just as soft skills, but as strategic assets in enhancing performance, particularly in demanding public institutions like NITT. The results support existing theories and empirical evidence that emotionally intelligent employees, when resilient, are more likely to deliver superior job performance. This highlights the need for integrated approaches that foster both emotional competence and psychological resilience within transport training institutions.

In light of these findings, the study makes the following recommendations:

1. NITT and similar institutions should incorporate structured EI training programs that target the development of self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, and social skills among staff to enhance interpersonal effectiveness and productivity.

2. Management should design and implement resilience enhancement strategies, such as stress management workshops, peer support programs, and mental wellness resources to buffer against occupational pressures.

3. Human resource policies should incorporate emotional intelligence assessment in hiring and performance evaluation to ensure alignment with organizational demands and culture.

4. Leaders at NITT should model emotionally intelligent behavior, as this creates a positive organizational climate that fosters trust, collaboration, and adaptive performance.

5. Institutional policies must promote psychological safety and open communication to allow employees to express concerns and recover from setbacks, thereby enhancing resilience and job engagement.

Practical Contributions

This study offers several practical contributions to both management practice and public sector administration, particularly within Nigeria's transport industry. By empirically establishing the significance of emotional intelligence (EI) dimensions—self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills—on job performance, the research provides a valuable framework for talent development, performance appraisal, and leadership training at the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT) and similar institutions. The mediation role of employee resilience further highlights the importance of fostering psychological robustness alongside EI competencies. As a result, the findings advocate for integrating emotional intelligence and resilience training into employee onboarding, professional development, and wellness programs. These interventions can help build a more emotionally competent and adaptable workforce, capable of maintaining high performance levels in dynamic, high-pressure public service environments. Ultimately, the study offers actionable insights for human resource managers, policymakers, and organizational leaders aiming to enhance staff effectiveness, reduce burnout, and improve institutional performance outcomes.

Future studies should explore the influence of emotional intelligence on job performance across multiple government agencies and private transport organizations to enhance generalizability. Comparative analyses between institutions in different geopolitical zones of Nigeria could reveal regional variations in emotional intelligence dynamics and resilience outcomes. Additionally, longitudinal studies could examine how emotional intelligence competencies evolve over time and their sustained impact on employee performance and organizational effectiveness. Researchers may also consider expanding the model by incorporating other mediating or moderating variables such as organizational culture, leadership style, or job satisfaction to provide a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms linking emotional intelligence to job performance. Furthermore, qualitative investigations could offer deeper insights into how employees perceive and experience the role of emotional intelligence in their daily work interactions.

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