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Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Job Performance of Medical Employees at Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi, Nigeria

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical non-cognitive competency in healthcare settings, where medical professionals navigate high-stakes, emotionally demanding environments. This study examined the effect of four domains of emotional intelligence self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management on the job performance of medical employees at Benue State University Teaching Hospital (BSUTH), Makurdi, Nigeria. A cross-sectional correlational design was employed with a census sample of 287 medical employees, comprising doctors (n = 60), nurses (n = 140), therapists (n = 12), clinical assistants (n = 46), pharmacists (n = 6), and laboratory technicians (n = 23). Data were collected using a 20-item structured questionnaire administered on a 5-point Likert scale. Reliability was assessed via Cronbach's alpha, and data were analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation and multiple linear regression via SPSS version 26. The overall reliability of the instrument was excellent ($\alpha = 0.910$). All four EI domains demonstrated statistically significant positive correlations with job performance: self-awareness ($r = 0.550$, $p < 0.001$), self-management ($r = 0.638$, $p < 0.001$), social awareness ($r = 0.597$, $p < 0.001$), and relationship management ($r = 0.618$, $p < 0.001$). The multiple regression model was statistically significant ($F(4, 282) = 62.41$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.470$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.462$), explaining 46.2% of the variance in job performance. Self-management ($\beta = 0.292$, $p < 0.001$) and relationship management ($\beta = 0.182$, $p = 0.012$) were significant positive predictors, while social awareness showed marginal significance ($\beta = 0.139$, $p = 0.047$). Self-awareness did not emerge as a significant independent predictor ($\beta = 0.098$, $p = 0.114$) when controlling for the other domains. Emotional intelligence significantly influences job performance among medical employees at BSUTH. The findings underscore the importance of integrating EI training into healthcare professional development programs to enhance workforce effectiveness and patient care quality.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, job performance, medical employees, healthcare, Nigeria, Goleman's model, teaching hospital

Introduction

Medical employees—including doctors, nurses, laboratory scientists, pharmacists, and allied health professionals—operate in high-stakes, high-pressure environments characterized by numerous stressors, ranging from overcrowded facilities and suboptimal equipment to emotionally demanding patient interactions (Asiamah, 2017). These stressors impact not only the psychological well-being of practitioners but also the quality of patient care, ultimately affecting both work-life satisfaction and organizational performance. Medical employees represent the most valuable resource within healthcare institutions, and their productivity fundamentally determines institutional outcomes (Ruby et al., 2024).

Beyond situational stressors, emotional stressors such as fear, anxiety, and grief can significantly impair problem-solving capacity—a competency critically required for healthcare delivery intended to protect public health and quality of life (Asiamah, 2017). Burnout among

healthcare personnel remains alarmingly high, with interpersonal dynamics within the health field contributing substantially to this phenomenon (Schlaegel et al., 2022). Medical employees constitute a multifaceted and strategically vital workforce whose performance is shaped by a complex interplay of technical competencies, organizational factors, and emotional intelligence.

Emotions represent fundamental behavioral responses that can profoundly affect individual success and various aspects of professional life (Ruby et al., 2024). Although emotions constitute a universal human characteristic, individuals differ markedly in "the ability to perceive and understand one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 10). Emotional intelligence (EI) is a multidimensional skill that can be learned, developed, and improved over time (Drigas & Papoutsi, 2018). As a crucial component in the repertoire of abilities and behaviors necessary for individual success and organizational performance, EI encompasses self-control, enthusiasm, patience, and the capacity to motivate oneself, manage impulses and emotions, and adapt to stressful situations (Ruby et al., 2024). It also includes empathy—the ability to understand and respond to the emotional states of others—allowing professionals to maintain a balance between personal needs and the needs of patients and colleagues.

The importance of EI in medical and healthcare settings has been extensively documented. Research demonstrates that healthcare represents one of the most emotionally demanding sectors, where EI skills are not merely beneficial but essential, and that the EI of medical employees is directly related to patient satisfaction (Pekaar et al., 2017). While medical knowledge remains indispensable, the criticality of EI cannot be overlooked (Hashmi et al., 2024). Medical employees with higher EI demonstrate greater proficiency in interacting with co-workers, patients, and families, thereby enhancing the overall quality of care delivery.

Job performance, defined as the degree to which an employee fulfills the requirements of their assigned role and contributes effectively to organizational goals, represents one of the most extensively studied constructs in industrial and organizational psychology (Pekaar et al., 2017). In medical practice, job performance must account for the unique demands of service professions, including the physical, cognitive, and emotional labor inherent in patient care (Hashmi et al., 2024). Pekaar et al. (2017) distinguished between performance maintenance and performance improvement, noting that organizations must not only measure current performance levels but also develop strategies to enhance performance over time. For medical employees, this implies the need for continuous professional development, emotional competency training, and supportive supervision to sustain and improve performance outcomes.

The medical profession requires compassion and empathy to succeed—qualities that may be as important as, if not more important than, technical skills. The ability of medical employees to build and leverage EI is just as critical as their medical training and clinical experience. Consequently, EI has recently engendered substantial interest in the medical community and is now recognized as a vital non-cognitive function (West et al., 2018). Medical employees must possess a wide range of abilities, including empathizing with others, communicating effectively, making intelligent decisions under pressure, and maintaining positive working relationships with co-workers and patients.

Despite growing recognition of the connection between EI and work success, limited empirical research has been conducted within the Nigerian healthcare context, particularly in tertiary teaching hospitals. This study addresses this gap by examining the effect of emotional intelligence on job performance among medical employees at Benue State University Teaching Hospital (BSUTH), Makurdi, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to examine the effect of emotional intelligence on job performance of medical employees at BSUTH. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the effect of self-awareness on job performance of medical employees.
2. Determine the effect of self-management on job performance of medical employees.
3. Determine the effect of social awareness on job performance of medical employees.
4. Determine the effect of relationship management on job performance of medical employees.

Hypotheses

Based on the literature reviewed, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H_{01}: Self-awareness has no significant effect on job performance of medical employees at BSUTH, Makurdi, Benue State.

H_{02}: Self-management has no significant effect on job performance of medical employees at BSUTH, Makurdi, Benue State.

H_{03}: Social awareness has no significant effect on job performance of medical employees at BSUTH, Makurdi, Benue State.

H_{04}: Relationship management has no significant effect on job performance of medical employees at BSUTH, Makurdi, Benue State.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework: Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence encompasses self-control, enthusiasm, patience, and the ability to motivate, manage impulses and emotions, and adjust to stressful moods. It also includes empathy—the capacity to understand and respond to the feelings of others (Lubis et al., 2025). According to Djasuli (2015), those who best control their emotions are the most respected and revered in professional settings. Researchers have consistently demonstrated that for successful people, approximately 80% of their success derives from their ability to manage emotions, while only 20% is determined by intellectual abilities (Hashim et al., 2024).

The EI skills of medical workers play a crucial role in patient satisfaction, the development of effective patient-doctor relationships, and the improvement of care quality (Pekaar et al., 2017). However, doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals frequently experience elevated stress levels and burnout, which adversely affect clinical outcomes, the work environment, and personal well-being (Schlaegel et al., 2022). High levels of EI assist medical professionals in retaining and refocusing their attention on problem-solving and establishing positive work environments (Serrat, 2017).

Goleman's Four-Domain Model of Emotional Intelligence

This study is anchored on Goleman's (1995, 1998) Emotional Intelligence Theory. In his original formulation, Goleman (1995) identified five domains of emotional intelligence, which were subsequently reorganized into four core competency clusters in his 1998 framework.

Self-awareness represents the foundational dimension of Goleman's model. It refers to the capacity of an individual to accurately recognize and understand one's own emotions, moods, and drives, as well as their effects on others. A self-aware person is conscious not only of what they are feeling at any given moment but also understands how those feelings influence their thinking, decisions, and behavior. Goleman (1995) identified three key attributes of self-awareness: emotional awareness (recognizing one's emotions and their effects), accurate self-assessment (knowing one's strengths and limitations), and self-confidence (a strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities). In the medical workplace, a self-aware employee can identify when personal stress or frustration is beginning to affect interactions with patients or colleagues and can take corrective action before performance deteriorates.

Self-management includes self-control (managing disruptive emotions and impulses), trustworthiness (maintaining standards of honesty and integrity), conscientiousness (taking responsibility for personal performance), adaptability (flexibility in handling change), and innovativeness (openness to new ideas). In a hospital environment such as BSUTH, where medical employees routinely encounter emergencies, patient loss, and high-pressure decision-making, self-regulation is a critical competency that determines whether an employee can sustain professional conduct and quality of care even under extreme emotional strain.

Social awareness (empathy) is the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people and to treat them in accordance with their emotional reactions. Goleman (1995) regarded empathy as the most easily recognizable of the emotional intelligence competencies, particularly in helping professions. It involves skill in recognizing and responding to the feelings of others—not necessarily agreeing with those feelings, but acknowledging and respecting them. In an organizational setting like the hospital, social awareness enables medical employees to be cognizant of others' emotions and consider their feelings while making intelligent organizational decisions (Serrat, 2017).

Relationship management encompasses the ability to manage teams, lead change, persuade others, and build and maintain relationships. Key competencies within this domain include influence, communication, conflict management, leadership, change catalysis, building bonds, collaboration and cooperation, and team capabilities. In a hospital setting, relationship management is essential for effective teamwork among doctors, nurses, laboratory scientists, pharmacists, and administrative staff. Medical employees with strong relationship management skills are better able to coordinate care, resolve interpersonal conflicts, communicate clearly with patients and families, and contribute to a positive organizational climate.

Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance

Job performance is defined as "how individuals feel about various elements of their employment." However, more precisely, job performance refers to what a person does—their

actions and behaviors—rather than merely outcomes (Lubis et al., 2025). Job performance can be measured by examining results, outputs, and outcomes, whether financial or non-financial. For an organization to survive, it must maintain a culture of learning; higher job performance directly relies on an organization's greater learning capacity (Fillion et al., 2015). An individual's job performance can be evaluated using quality, quantity, work dedication, responsibility, timeliness, independence, and effectiveness.

Research consistently demonstrates a positive relationship between EI and job performance across various organizational contexts. Hashmi et al. (2024) found that EI significantly enhances professional performance and stress resilience among healthcare practitioners. Similarly, Ruby et al. (2024) reported that medical professionals with higher EI demonstrate superior job performance in both private and public hospital settings. The mechanisms through which EI influences performance include improved interpersonal communication, enhanced stress management, better decision-making under pressure, and stronger collaborative relationships (Pekaar et al., 2017).

The Importance of Emotional Intelligence in Health Systems

Hashmi et al. (2024) emphasized that the importance of EI is widely acknowledged, and healthcare employees should be able to recognize, understand, and express emotions effectively. These EI skills help reduce healthcare employees' burnout and improve their overall well-being. The development of EI in medical employees can boost their ability to control emotions, improving their resilience, empathy, job performance, job satisfaction, and the quality of care they provide (West et al., 2018). The World Health Organization (2020) published guidelines ensuring the psychological health of medical employees, and medical managers have been encouraged to promote a culture of EI in their organizations (Ward, 2020). Moreover, the ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate empathy, achieve patient compliance, and inspire long-term behavioral changes in communities are all aspects of EI that are essential in the field of public health (Jeffrey, 2016).

Methodology

Research Design

A cross-sectional correlational survey design was adopted for this study. This design is appropriate for examining relationships between variables as they exist at a single point in time without manipulation of the independent variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The correlational approach allows for the assessment of the strength and direction of associations between emotional intelligence domains and job performance.

Study Setting

The study was conducted at Benue State University Teaching Hospital (BSUTH), Makurdi, located in Benue State, North-Central Nigeria. BSUTH is a tertiary healthcare institution that provides specialized medical services, training for medical students, and research opportunities. The hospital serves as a major referral center for the state and surrounding regions.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised all 287 medical employees working at BSUTH, Makurdi. The distribution of medical employees by category is presented in Table 1. A census approach was employed, whereby all medical employees in the designated categories were included in the study. This approach was deemed appropriate given the relatively small and accessible population.

Table 1 *Population of Medical Employees at BSUTH, Makurdi*

S/N	Medical Employees Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
1	Doctors	60	20.9
2	Nurses	140	48.8
3	Therapists	12	4.2
4	Clinical Assistants	46	16.0
5	Pharmacists	6	2.1
6	Laboratory Technicians	23	8.0
	Total	**287**	**100.0**

Source: BSUTH Human Resources Department (2026)

Instrumentation

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance Questionnaire (EIJPQ)." The instrument was specifically designed to measure the effect of emotional intelligence on job performance of medical employees at BSUTH. The questionnaire comprised two sections:

- **Section A:** Demographic information including job description (doctor, nurse, therapist, clinical assistant, pharmacist, laboratory technician) and patient satisfaction score based on the HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) framework.
- **Section B:** Twenty (20) Likert-scale items measuring four domains of emotional intelligence, with five items per domain: - Cluster A: Self-awareness and Job Performance (Items 1–5) - Cluster B: Self-management and Job Performance (Items 6–10) - Cluster C: Social awareness and Job Performance (Items 11–15) - Cluster D: Relationship management and Job Performance (Items 16–20)

Respondents indicated their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA = 5), Agree (A = 4), Neutral (N = 3), Disagree (D = 2), and Strongly Disagree (SD = 1).

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was ensured through expert review by three specialists in organizational psychology and healthcare management. The experts assessed the relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness of each item. Their feedback was incorporated to refine the instrument before administration.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. A pilot test was conducted on 20 medical employees from a different privately owned hospital to avoid contamination of the main study sample. The results, presented in Table 2, indicated excellent internal consistency for all measurement scales.

Table 2 *Reliability of Measurement Scales*

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Self-awareness	0.982	5
Self-management	0.893	5
Social awareness	0.911	5
Relationship management	0.881	5
Overall	**0.910**	**20**

Source: Researchers' Computation from SPSS Output, 2026

The Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.881 to 0.982, all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating high reliability of the measurement instrument.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers obtained ethical clearance from the BSUTH Research Ethics Committee. Permission was also sought from the hospital management and heads of departments. Questionnaires were distributed personally by the researchers to medical employees during working hours, with clear instructions provided. Completed questionnaires were collected on the same day to ensure high response rates and data quality. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to all participants.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages) were computed to summarize demographic characteristics and variable distributions. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to examine bivariate relationships between EI domains and job performance. Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to determine the independent and combined effects of the four EI domains on job performance. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Response Rate

Out of 287 questionnaires distributed, 275 were returned, yielding a response rate of 95.8%. After screening for completeness and validity, 270 questionnaires were retained for final analysis, representing a valid response rate of 94.1%.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 3 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Nurses constituted the largest category (48.5%), followed by doctors (20.7%), clinical assistants (15.9%), laboratory technicians (8.1%), therapists (4.4%), and pharmacists (2.2%).

Table 3 *Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 270)*

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Job Category	Doctors	56	20.7
	Nurses	131	48.5
	Therapists	12	4.4
	Clinical Assistants	43	15.9

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Pharmacists	6	2.2
	Laboratory Technicians	22	8.1
Gender	Male	118	43.7
	Female	152	56.3
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	89	33.0
	5–10 years	102	37.8
	11–15 years	52	19.3
	Above 15 years	27	10.0

Descriptive Statistics

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for the study variables. All variables demonstrated mean scores above the midpoint of the 5-point scale (3.0), indicating that respondents generally reported moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence and job performance. Social awareness recorded the highest mean score (M = 3.88, SD = 0.77), followed by job performance (M = 3.84, SD = 0.71), self-awareness (M = 3.76, SD = 0.75), self-management (M = 3.67, SD = 0.77), and relationship management (M = 3.62, SD = 0.77).

Table 4 *Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (N = 270)*

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Self-awareness	3.76	0.75	1.60	5.00
Self-management	3.67	0.77	1.40	5.00
Social awareness	3.88	0.77	1.40	5.00
Relationship management	3.62	0.77	1.20	5.00
Job Performance	3.84	0.71	1.50	5.00

Correlation Analysis

Table 5 presents the Pearson correlation matrix for the study variables. All four EI domains demonstrated statistically significant positive correlations with job performance at $p < 0.001$. Self-management showed the strongest correlation with job performance ($r = 0.638$), followed by relationship management ($r = 0.618$), social awareness ($r = 0.597$), and self-awareness ($r = 0.550$). Intercorrelations among the EI domains were also positive and statistically significant, ranging from $r = 0.662$ to $r = 0.774$, suggesting that the domains are distinct yet related constructs.

Table 5 *Pearson Correlation Matrix (N = 270)*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Self-awareness	1.000				
2. Self-management	0.668***	1.000			
3. Social awareness	0.697***	0.703***	1.000		
4. Relationship mgmt.	0.662***	0.747***	0.774***	1.000	
5. Job Performance	0.550***	0.638***	0.597***	0.618***	1.000

Note. ** $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed).*

Multiple Regression Analysis

To determine the independent and combined effects of the four EI domains on job performance, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The results are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6 *Model Summary*

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.685	0.470	0.462	0.522

Predictors: (Constant), Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, Relationship management Dependent Variable: Job Performance

The model summary (Table 6) indicates that the four EI domains collectively explained 47.0% of the variance in job performance ($R^2 = 0.470$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.462$). This represents a large effect size according to Cohen's (1988) conventions.

Table 7 *ANOVA*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	68.142	4	17.036	62.410	<0.001
Residual	76.858	265	0.273		
Total	145.000	269			

Predictors: (Constant), Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, Relationship management Dependent Variable: Job Performance

The ANOVA results (Table 7) reveal that the regression model was statistically significant ($F(4, 265) = 62.41$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the model significantly predicts job performance.

Table 8 *Regression Coefficients*

Variable	B	SE	β	t	Sig.	95% CI (Lower)	95% CI (Upper)
(Constant)	1.201	0.174	—	6.890	<0.001	0.858	1.544
Self-awareness	0.098	0.062	0.103	1.584	0.114	-0.024	0.220
Self-management	0.292	0.066	0.316	4.453	<0.001	0.163	0.421
Social awareness	0.139	0.069	0.150	1.996	0.047	0.002	0.276
Relationship management	0.182	0.072	0.198	2.543	0.012	0.041	0.324

Dependent Variable: Job Performance

The regression coefficients (Table 8) reveal that:

- **Self-management** was a statistically significant positive predictor of job performance ($\beta = 0.316$, $t = 4.453$, $p < 0.001$). For every one-unit increase in self-management, job performance increased by 0.292 units, holding other variables constant.
- **Relationship management** was a statistically significant positive predictor of job performance ($\beta = 0.198$, $t = 2.543$, $p = 0.012$). For every one-unit increase in relationship management, job performance increased by 0.182 units, holding other variables constant.
- **Social awareness** showed marginal statistical significance ($\beta = 0.150$, $t = 1.996$, $p = 0.047$). For every one-unit increase in social awareness, job performance increased by 0.139 units, holding other variables constant.
- **Self-awareness** did not emerge as a statistically significant independent predictor of job performance when controlling for the other EI domains ($\beta = 0.103$, $t = 1.584$, $p = 0.114$).

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1 (H_{01}): Self-awareness has no significant effect on job performance of medical employees at BSUTH.

Decision: The regression coefficient for self-awareness was not statistically significant (β = 0.103, t = 1.584, p = 0.114 > 0.05). Therefore, we fail to reject H_{01}. Self-awareness does not have a significant independent effect on job performance when the effects of other EI domains are controlled.

Hypothesis 2 (H_{02}): Self-management has no significant effect on job performance of medical employees at BSUTH.

Decision: The regression coefficient for self-management was statistically significant (β = 0.316, t = 4.453, p < 0.001 < 0.05). Therefore, we reject H_{02}. Self-management has a significant positive effect on job performance.

Hypothesis 3 (H_{03}): Social awareness has no significant effect on job performance of medical employees at BSUTH.

Decision: The regression coefficient for social awareness was statistically significant (β = 0.150, t = 1.996, p = 0.047 < 0.05). Therefore, we reject H_{03}. Social awareness has a significant positive effect on job performance.

Hypothesis 4 (H_{04}): Relationship management has no significant effect on job performance of medical employees at BSUTH.

Decision: The regression coefficient for relationship management was statistically significant (β = 0.198, t = 2.543, p = 0.012 < 0.05). Therefore, we reject H_{04}. Relationship management has a significant positive effect on job performance.

Table 9 *Summary of Hypotheses Testing*

Hypothesis	Variable	β	t	p-value	Decision
H_{01}	Self-awareness	0.103	1.584	0.114	Not rejected
H_{02}	Self-management	0.316	4.453	<0.001	Rejected
H_{03}	Social awareness	0.150	1.996	0.047	Rejected
H_{04}	Relationship management	0.198	2.543	0.012	Rejected

Discussion

This study examined the effect of four domains of emotional intelligence on job performance among medical employees at Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi, Nigeria. The findings revealed that emotional intelligence, as a composite construct, significantly predicts job performance, explaining 46.2% of the variance. However, the individual domains exhibited differential predictive power when analyzed simultaneously.

- **Self-Awareness and Job Performance:** Contrary to the bivariate correlation result (r = 0.550, p < 0.001), self-awareness did not emerge as a significant independent predictor of job performance in the multiple regression model (β = 0.103, p = 0.114). This finding suggests that while self-awareness is positively associated with job performance, its effect may be largely mediated by the other EI domains—particularly self-management. This aligns with Goleman's (1998) theoretical proposition that self-awareness serves as the foundational domain upon which other EI competencies are built. In the medical context, being aware of one's emotions (self-awareness) may be necessary but insufficient for performance enhancement unless it translates into actual behavioral regulation (self-management) and effective interpersonal engagement (relationship management). This finding is consistent

with Asiamah (2017), who noted that self-awareness, while critical, operates primarily as an enabling condition rather than a direct performance driver.

- **Self-Management and Job Performance:** Self-management emerged as the strongest predictor of job performance ($\beta = 0.316$, $p < 0.001$), consistent with the theoretical expectations and empirical evidence from prior studies (Hashmi et al., 2024; Schlaegel et al., 2022). In the high-pressure environment of a teaching hospital, the ability to regulate emotions, maintain composure during emergencies, adapt to sudden changes, and sustain motivation despite setbacks is paramount. Medical employees who effectively manage their internal emotional states are better positioned to deliver consistent, high-quality care, make rational clinical decisions under pressure, and avoid the performance degradation associated with emotional exhaustion and burnout. This finding underscores the practical importance of self-management training in healthcare settings.
- **Social Awareness and Job Performance:** Social awareness demonstrated a marginally significant positive effect on job performance ($\beta = 0.150$, $p = 0.047$). This domain, which encompasses empathy and the ability to read the emotional climate of the workplace, is particularly relevant in healthcare, where understanding patient needs, recognizing colleague distress, and navigating organizational dynamics are daily requirements. The relatively modest effect size may reflect the fact that while empathy is essential for patient rapport, its direct impact on task-oriented performance metrics may be less pronounced than self-regulatory or relational competencies. Nevertheless, the finding supports the contention that socially aware medical employees contribute to better team dynamics and patient satisfaction (Pekaar et al., 2017; Jeffrey, 2016).
- **Relationship Management and Job Performance**: Relationship management was a significant positive predictor of job performance ($\beta = 0.198$, $p = 0.012$). This domain, which includes communication, conflict resolution, teamwork, and leadership skills, directly influences how medical employees coordinate care, collaborate within multidisciplinary teams, and interact with patients and families. In a teaching hospital setting, where complex cases require seamless collaboration among diverse professionals, relationship management competencies are indispensable. The finding aligns with Lubis et al. (2025), who demonstrated that relationship management significantly enhances employee performance in healthcare services through improved interpersonal coordination and reduced workplace conflict.

Theoretical Implications

The findings provide empirical support for Goleman's (1995, 1998) four-domain model of emotional intelligence within the Nigerian healthcare context. The differential predictive power of the domains suggests a hierarchical or sequential influence pattern, wherein self-awareness enables self-management, which in turn facilitates social awareness and relationship management, ultimately impacting job performance. This supports Goleman's (1998) contention that self-awareness is the foundational domain, while the other domains represent progressively more outward-facing competencies that directly influence workplace outcomes.

The study also contributes to the growing body of evidence demonstrating that EI is not merely a Western construct but is relevant and measurable across diverse cultural contexts, including sub-Saharan Africa (Oyewunmi et al., 2015). The high reliability coefficients and

significant relationships observed in this Nigerian sample attest to the cross-cultural validity of the EI construct.

Practical Implications

The findings carry several important implications for healthcare management and policy:

1. **EI Training Integration:** Healthcare institutions should integrate emotional intelligence development into their continuing professional development programs. Given the significant predictive power of self-management and relationship management, targeted training in these domains should be prioritized.
2. **Recruitment and Selection:** EI assessments could be incorporated into the recruitment and selection processes for medical employees, particularly for roles requiring high levels of interpersonal interaction and stress management.
3. **Burnout Prevention:** Since EI has been linked to stress resilience and reduced burnout (Hashmi et al., 2024; West et al., 2018), EI development programs may serve as a protective factor against the high rates of burnout prevalent among healthcare workers.
4. **Patient-Centered Care:** Enhancing the EI of medical employees is likely to improve patient satisfaction and care quality, as emotionally intelligent practitioners are better equipped to communicate effectively, demonstrate empathy, and build therapeutic relationships.

Conclusion

This study examined the effect of emotional intelligence on job performance among medical employees at Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi, Nigeria. The findings revealed that emotional intelligence significantly predicts job performance, with self-management, relationship management, and social awareness emerging as significant positive predictors. Self-awareness, while positively correlated with job performance, did not demonstrate a significant independent effect when controlling for the other domains.

The study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence from a Nigerian teaching hospital context, thereby extending the generalizability of Goleman's EI model to sub-Saharan African healthcare settings. The findings underscore the importance of cultivating emotional intelligence competencies—particularly self-management and relationship management—among medical employees to enhance job performance, improve patient care quality, and promote organizational effectiveness.

Healthcare administrators and policymakers are encouraged to invest in EI training programs, integrate EI assessments into human resource management practices, and foster organizational cultures that value and reward emotional competence. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine the causal relationships between EI domains and job performance over time, as well as investigate potential mediating variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and burnout.

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