

# Emotional Intelligence and Performance of Police Officers at Gulu Central Police Station, Uganda

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## Abstract

The study examined the effect of EI on performance of police officers at Gulu Central Police station. Specifically, the study addressed: the effect of self-awareness and self-regulation in recruitment and selection on performance of Police officers, the effect of motivation and social skills in task assignment on performance of police officers, and the effect of empathy in training on performance of police officers. The study adopted a cross sectional descriptive study design with only quantitative approaches. The study used a sample size of 155 respondents. The items/constructs used in this research were measured on a five point Likert Scale. Factor analysis and principle component analysis were used to test whether the constructs were appropriate for the study. Pairwise correlation matrix was used to test for multicollinearity of the independent variables. Multiple linear regression model was used to examine the effect EI on the performance of police officers. The findings revealed that self-awareness and self-regulation in recruitment and selection had a positive and significant effect on performance of police officers in Gulu City Police Station at 5% significance level ( $B=0.461$ ,  $P\text{-value}=0.001$ ). Empathy in training was found to have a positive and significant effect on the performance of police officers in Gulu City Police Station ( $B=0.921$ ,  $P\text{-value}=0.000$ ). The study also found that motivation and social skills in task assignment had a positive and significant effect on the performance of police officers ( $B=0.586$ ,  $P\text{-value}=0.000$ ). It can be concluded that the effect of emotional intelligence on the performance of police officers at Gulu City Police Station was positive and significant. The study recommends that UPF improves knowledge dissemination on what EI is and its importance to the police officers.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Self-Regulation and control, empathy, performance

## 1.0 Introduction

Globally, the early concerns for staff productivity in Police can be traced from the 1820s (Sabella et al., 2019). The role played by recent law enforcement agencies first emerged in London in 1797 as a request from Patrick Colquhoun who persuaded the merchants from West Indies who operated at the Pool of London via the River Thames. The word police had existed in France which was used to coordinate, investigate and solve criminality among foreign importation (Bisht, 2020).

In Uganda, the Uganda Police Force was first established as Uganda Armed Constabulary in 1899 with the main aim of maintaining public order. In 1906, the Uganda Armed Constabulary was renamed the

Protectorate Police Force. The Protectorate Police was created on May 25, 1906 by the British government. The origins of the Uganda Force lay in the Kings African Rifles. In 1953, a Police college was opened at Naguru with the function of helping to produce a far better-quality policeman whose main responsibility would be the Prevention and detection of crime and Preservation of peace (Harris & Katusiimeh, 2020). The productivity of the Uganda police force since 1960s has been lacking evidenced in consistent delay of realizing justice, corrupt tendencies by police officers, partisanship and increasing crime rate (Munanura, 2007). According to JLOS (2015), over 22% of corruption cases are lost in courts of law basing on lack of credibility of evidence. They attributed this to the failure of the Uganda Police Force to make required investigation that leads to closing of cases. Gulu City Police just like other police units in Uganda falls under the Uganda police Force as established under Article 211 of the constitution of Republic of Uganda 1995(as amended) and The Police Act 2006 (as amended).

According to Uganda Police Force (UPF) (2020), Gulu district performance was as follows, 9<sup>th</sup> amongst the districts with the highest number of Common Assaults with 430 cases, 8<sup>th</sup> among the districts with highest number of cases of Domestic violence in 2020, with 330 cases, 4<sup>th</sup> amongst the districts which registered highest number of cases of breakings in 2020, with 163 cases, 5<sup>th</sup> in the country amongst districts leading in Burglary cases with 86 cases, 5<sup>th</sup> amongst the Districts/Divisions leading in Child Neglect with 133 cases, 4<sup>th</sup> amongst the Districts/Divisions leading in Child Desertion with 74 cases, 1<sup>st</sup> in the districts with the highest number of cases of murder by assault in 2020 which were 206, and 5<sup>th</sup> amongst the districts with highest arson cases in 2020 with 33 cases (Uganda Police Force (UPF), 2020).

Emotional intelligence is considered critical to improving employee productivity and assisting an organization in achieving its vision, purpose, and goals (Debrah & Ofori, 2006; McNamara, 2008). The Uganda Police Force (UPF) (2014) Training Policy emphasizes the need for recruiting emotionally intelligent officers and with the help of Non-Government Organizations like Human Rights Centre Uganda, Gulu Police officers have since 2021, attended these EI based training and officer recruitment exercises especially on the Sexual and Gender Based violence, theft management, Public Order Management Act, 2013, Suspect handling and the Prevention of Torture Act 2012.

Even with continued efforts to hire emotionally intelligent police officers, the productivity of Gulu City Police officers has not been convincing. For instance, the crime rate has remained high in Gulu city. With issues related with absenteeism, failure to track and stop crimes before they happen through effective community policing, the manifestation of poor productivity of individual teams can be manifested in increased crime rates (Divon, 2021). According to Uganda Police Force (UPF) (2018), the crime rate has been increasing by 3.2% on average which affects the police image and reputation. Further, the rate of conviction has remained below target set. In the financial year 2019/and 20, the rate of conviction was at 41% which is still below the 70% targeted and this is attributed to inadequate investigation done by the CID (Uganda Police Force (UPF), 2018, 2020). The effects of EI on productivity has been studied, albeit at a qualitative scale which means that the existing insufficient research lacks intuitive appeal. The implication is that there is a need for a practical study on the magnitude of how the variables under study are related.

The purpose of this research was to examine the effect of EI on performance of police officers at Gulu Central Police station. Specifically, the study addressed: the effect of self-awareness and self-regulation in recruitment and selection on performance of Police officers, the effect of motivation and social skills in task assignment on performance of police officers, and the effect of empathy in training on performance of police officers. The alternative hypotheses were used to get answers on the specific objectives.

**Methods**

The study adopted a cross sectional descriptive study design with only quantitative approaches. Quantitative approaches provide an objective way to measure and analyze data, reducing the impact of subjective biases and personal opinions on research findings (Choy, 2014). The study’s target population were users of the services for which Gulu City Police Station provides. The sample size was 155 respondents computed using the Margin of error technique (Fotis & Bix, 2006).

**Measurement scales**

The constructs used in this research were developed based on the reviewed literature of the previous studies. The items/constructs used in this research were measured on a five point Likert Scale: 1= Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Not sure, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree. The productivity of police officers was measured using five constructs. The police officers were asked: whether the time they take to accomplish a task has been improving over the last couple of years, whether their supervisors recently applauded them for the quality of work that they perform at the regional Police HQs, whether over the last few years, the number of criminals that they have successfully brought to justice has improved greatly, whether they are now very innovative when executing the assigned tasks at the regional HQs, and whether at the regional HQs, their ability to carry out more than two tasks at a time has increased. Self-awareness and self-regulation in

**Table 1: Factor Analysis Results**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Scaled Items</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>
<b>Performance of Police Officers</b>	1.The time I take to accomplish a task has been improving over the last couple of years	.810
	2.My supervisors recently applauded me for the quality of work that I perform at Gulu police station	.532
	3.Over the last few years, the number of criminals that I have successfully brought to justice has improved greatly	.736
	4.I am now very innovative when executing the assigned tasks at Gulu police station	.934
	5.At Gulu police station, my ability to carry out more than two tasks at a time has increased	.878

<b>Self-awareness and self-regulation in Employee Recruitment</b>	1. Subjecting officers to tests on ability to engage in critical and strategic thinking is considered in recruitment	.756
	2. Testing officers' ability to work with different stakeholders is prioritized during recruitment	.706
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Scaled Items</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>
	3. Officer's understanding of the problem solving skills is critically taken into consideration before recruitment	.802
	4. Officers' ability to regulate their happiness and surprise during an assignment is critically tested before recruitment into the police forces	.810
	5. Officers' ability to regulate sadness, disgust, fear and anger during task execution is also critically tested before recruitment into the police forces	.911
<b>Motivation and social skills in Task Assignment</b>	1. The officers at Gulu police station are motivated upon being assigned a specific task	.621
	2. At Gulu police station, non-financial incentives are used to motivate officers before task assignment	.762
	3. Generally, motivating officers has been a critical aspect in improving officer's ability to perform a task	.836
	4. Before assigning tasks, the officers' social skills are critically assessed	.764
<b>Empathy in Employee Training</b>	1. At Gulu police station, trainers physically feel along with the trainees during a training exercise	.664
	2. During employee training, the way officers feel is understood by the trainers who act accordingly	.827
	3. During officer training, the thoughts of the officers or trainees are given utmost consideration	.632

4. During officer training, disappointments by the officers form a basis for the choice of training method	.652
5. Whatever frustrates or infuriates trainees is given utmost consideration during employee training	.659

employee recruitment and empathy in employee training were measured using five constructs while motivation and social skills in task assignment were measured using 4 constructs.

**Data collection**

The structured questionnaire was used for data collection from the selected Uganda police operation officers. This tool was considered because it reduces the risk of researcher bias, as the questions are pre-determined and presented in a standardized way, rather than being improvised by the researcher during the interview or survey (Bergelson et al., 2022).

**Reliability and Validity**

The reliability and validity of the instrument were examined to get reliable statistical conclusions on the study items. The second level involved evaluating the constructs using Factor Analysis to evaluate their dimensionality and reliability. The items which loaded above 50% were considered appropriate for the study as indicated in Table 1. The principle component analysis in Table 2 revealed that eight factors with eigenvalues above 1 accounted for 73.8% of the cumulative

**Table 2: Eigen values and cumulative percentage explained by the components**

Component	Eigenvalues	% of Variance	Cumulative % of Variance
1	3.719	18.595	18.595
2	2.449	12.245	30.839
3	2.069	10.347	41.186
4	1.694	8.470	49.656
5	1.380	6.900	56.556
6	1.256	6.281	62.837
7	1.127	5.634	68.471
8	1.067	5.336	73.807

variances. The KMO and Bartlett's Test in Table 3 show that the selected constructs for the study were adequate and reliable for the study (KMO=0.613, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity P=0.000).

**Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test**

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.613
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1366.201
	Df	190
	Sig.	.000

**Results and Findings**

The first step involved in running a multiple linear regression was to study whether there was no multicollinearity between the predictor variables. It is important to test for multicollinearity in regression analysis to ensure that the independent variables are not highly correlated to avoid spurious findings (Tu et al., 2005). The multicollinearity test was performed using pairwise correlation matrix and the results in table 2 indicate that there was no multicollinearity between the independent variables since their correlation values were below 80%.

**Table 4: Test for Multicollinearity using Pairwise correlation Matrix**

		<b>Self-awareness and self-regulation in Employee Recruitment</b>	<b>Motivation and social skills in Task Assignment</b>	<b>Empathy in Employee Training</b>
<b>Self-awareness and self-regulation in Employee Recruitment</b>	Correlation	1		
	Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.		
	N	155		
<b>Motivation and social skills in Task Assignment</b>	Correlation	-.079	1	
	Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.328	.	
	N	155	155	
<b>Empathy in Employee Training</b>	Correlation	.007	.088	1
	Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.931	.277	.
	N	155	155	155

**Multiple Regression Analysis**

Multiple linear regression model was used to examine the effect of EI on performance police officers in Gulu City Police Station. The model examined the effect of self-awareness and self-regulation in recruitment and selection on performance of Police officers; the effect of motivation and social skills in task assignment on performance of police officers; and the effect of empathy in training on performance of police officers in Gulu City Police Station. The findings in Table 5 reveal that self-awareness and self-regulation in recruitment and selection had a positive and significant effect on performance of police officers in Gulu City Police Station at 5% significance level (B=0.461, P-value=0.001). Empathy in

training was found to have a positive and significant effect on the performance of police officers in Gulu City Police Station (B=0.921, P-value=0.000). The study also found that motivation and social skills in task assignment had a positive and significant effect on the performance of police officers (B=0.586, P-value=0.000). The R-squared

**Table 5: Multiple Linear Regression Findings of the Effect of EI on Performance**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
1	(Constant)	3.647	.005		46.577	.000
	Recruitment	.461	.086	.422	2.365	.001
	Assignment	.586	.079	.571	4.407	.000
	Training	.921	.103	.849	11.644	.000
	R-squared	0.705				
	F-statistic	537.758				
	P-value (F-statistic)	0.000				

Dependent Variable: Performance

results indicated that 70.5% of the total variations in performance/productivity of police officers is explained by self-awareness and self-regulation in recruitment and selection, empathy in training, and motivation and social skills in task assignment. The predictor variables had an overall significant effect on the performance of police officers in Gulu City Police Station.

**Discussion**

This study has addressed the effect of self-awareness and self-regulation in recruitment and selection on performance of Police officers; the effect of motivation and social skills in task assignment on performance of police officers; and the effect of empathy in training on performance of police officers in Gulu City Police Station. The study found that self-awareness and self-regulation in recruitment and selection had a positive and significant effect on performance of police officers in Gulu City Police Station. The results are consistent with Kreibich et al. (2020) who found that self-awareness played a crucial role for identifying obstacles. The reason for the findings could be that police officers in Gulu City Police Station who are self-aware and able to regulate their emotions are more likely to experience job satisfaction and to remain in their positions for longer periods of time. This can lead to better performance and continuity within police departments (Thomas, 2018).

The study found that motivation and social skills in task assignment had a positive and significant effect on the performance of police officers. The findings are line with the findings of Johnson (2014) who cited in his model that infusing motivation into the task assignment function of HR helps to improve the task and concept performance of those assigned the task. The findings are explained in the following perspective; when police officers are motivated, they are more likely to be engaged and committed to their work. This can lead to improved performance, as officers who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to put in the effort required to complete their tasks effectively (Magny, 2012).

The study also found that Empathy in training had a positive and significant effect on the performance of police officers in Gulu City Police Station. The findings are consistent with Simon (2013) who previously noted that the performance would be enhanced from integrating empathy in training. The findings are explained in two perspectives, the first perspective is that empathetic police officers are better equipped to understand the concerns and needs of the communities they serve. This can lead to improved community relations, increased trust, and better communication between the police and the public. The second perspective is that empathy can be a valuable tool in conflict resolution. Police officers who are able to empathize with the perspectives and emotions of the people they are interacting with may be better able to defuse potentially volatile situations and prevent violence (Posick et al., 2014).

### **Conclusion**

It can be concluded that the effect of emotional intelligence on the performance of police officers at Gulu City Police Station was positive and significant. For instance, infusing self-awareness and self-regulation into officer recruitment and selection was positive and significantly related with officer performance. Further, infusing motivation and social skills into officer task assignment was significantly related with officer performance. Lastly, infusing empathy component into officer training was significantly related with officer performance. On the whole, emotional intelligence, when infused into HR functions, significantly improved the performance of Gulu City police officers.

### **Recommendations**

The study results indicated that the Uganda Police Force includes segregated components of EI into the various functions of HR. However, a sizeable chunk of the officers was not sure of what it was in the first place. The study recommends that UPF improves knowledge dissemination on what EI is and its importance to the police officers.

Secondly, the study results indicated that when self-awareness and self-regulation were infused into HR function of recruitment and selection, the effect on performance of the police officers was significant. However, the infusion of the two is not overly emphasized by UPF. The study thus recommends that UPF should strictly carry out self-awareness and self-regulation tests on potential new recruits more than once before they join the forces.

Third, the study results indicated that when motivation and social skills were infused into HR function of task assignment, the effect on performance of the police officers was significant. However, the results indicated that the officers were not satisfied with the motivation before the assignment. The study thus recommends that UPF should use a combination of financial and non-financial motivation strategies before assigning some tasks to the officers in order to improve their performance.

Lastly, the study results indicated that when empathy infused into HR function of employee training, the effect on performance of the police officers was significant. However, the officers stated that training was not fair to all the officers. The study thus recommends that UPF should improve the selection process for the training of trainers so as to ensure that the trainers best apply their empathy skills to improve the success of a training process.



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