

The Mediating Effects of Emotional Intelligence and Training on Performance of Uganda Police Force

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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the mediating effects of training and EI on the performance of UPF officers with specific reference to analyzing the: effect of training on the performance of UPF officers; effect of EI on the performance of UPF officers.; mediating effect of EI on the relationship between training and performance of UPF officers and; the mediating effect of training on the relationship between EI and performance of UPF officers. This study used a cross-sectional study design with quantitative methods on the officers. By Krejcie & Morgan (1970) a sample of 139 was selected from a population of 290. The study employed a combination of quantitative data collection methods and objectives examined using linear regression models and mediation was carried out using Hayes Process Macro analysis in SPSS22. The null hypothesis that there is an insignificant positive effect of officer training on the performance of officers and when training is improved, performance will automatically improve was rejected. The null hypothesis that there is no significant positive effect of training on the performance of police officers was rejected ($\beta = 0.207$; $p < 0.05$); the null hypothesis that there is no significant positive effect of EI on the performance of officers ($\beta = 0.528$; $p < 0.05$) was rejected. Secondly, the null hypothesis that there existed a FULL mediating effect of EI in the relationship between training and officer performance was rejected. In conclusion, UPF should improve the training and also improve their recruitment screening process so as to hire emotionally intelligent officers.

Keywords: Uganda Police Force, Complex Emergence Situations, Emotional Intelligence

INTRODUCTION

Since the evolution of modern policing in the mid-19th century (Mangai et al., 2024), the measurement of Police performance has greatly varied yet emphasis has been put on the inputs, activities, and outputs of police force. Based on the above, a number of direct measures (crime rates; number of arrests and fines; clearance rates; and response times) has often been emphasized when measuring police performance.

However, during the 1930s, a number of other measures have been added to the ‘professionalized police’ to include how they perform the above tasks and their respect for human rights when doing so (Ekici et al., 2022; O’Reilly, 2022).

It is very difficult for lay men to accurately measure police officer performance unless the latter is tasked with calming down the situation in a pure Contemporary Political Emergencies (CPEs) issue (mainly demonstrations, strikes). In the globalized world, Bjørnskov & Rode (2020) note that CPEs are becoming a common occurrence albeit the way they are handled and the effects on society have greatly varied over the various jurisdictions. To Collier and Lakoff (2021), CPEs are mainly characterized by highly sensitive emotional charges and mood swings and calming them down requires that police officers must possess a stable mental and emotional state with the constraints of time, financial and human resources (Cox et al., 2022; DeVerteuil et al., 2021). This is where training the police officers on Emotional Intelligence should be emphasized by the police departments.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has caught the attention of researchers and policymakers because it is viewed as a performance improving mechanism especially in emotionally charged situations such as CPEs (Jacobs & Keegan, 2022; Doyle et al., 2021). EI is broadly defined as the ability of an individual to manage emotions of self and those of others in which the individual interacts with (Dooshima, 2024; Mustafa et al., 2023; Jacobs & Keegan, 2022). With mainly three models including the Ability Model (Mayer & Salovey, 2004), the Trait Model (Petrides et al., 2016, 2007, 2006) and the Mixed model (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2002), the conceptualization of EI has greatly undergone significant changes with the addition and subtraction of indicators to the concept.

In order to improve the performance of the police force, the government of Uganda has embarked on a series of officer training programs (both pre-service and in-service) at Police Training school Kabalye, Police training School Kibuli and Police Senior Command as well as staff College, Bwebajja (Mafundo, 2023). The training provided by the police force includes one related with handling citizens, community policing, handling violent and armed criminals as well as dealing with small crimes that have the potential to become a serious problem to national security (Ssegiriinya, 2020).

With a mandate of enforcing law and order, the performance of the Uganda Police Force has for the past decades been described as far from desirable (Taylor, 2021). This is because of the high levels of brutality, harassment and abuse exhibited by the force during arrests and detention and this does not exclude journalists, political activists, and political opponents. The fact that the force is ranked amongst the most corrupt (Kakumba, 2021; Daily Monitor, 2021) implies that Uganda Police Force has fallen short of the expected standards during the execution of their mandate. The constant use of excessive force, corruption and human rights violations jeopardize the image and reputation of the force in the midst of the citizens that they are meant to serve (Mafundo, 2023) which leads to distrust amongst the citizens, a fact that often leads to increased crime.

Statement of the problem

The dynamic role of officer performance in improving the ability of police departments to enforce law and order cannot be underestimated. For police officers, the rising cases of radicalization and violent extremism often leading to complex political emergencies means that the police officers must be at their A-Game (Ssegiriinya, 2020). In realization of this, Uganda Police Force has emphasized and implemented various training programs (pre-service and in-service) designed to help the police officers withstand the challenges faced during the CPEs and this has been the case for the last decade (Mafundo,

2023). In addition, Emotional Intelligence training (Bias Awareness Training, Teambuilding Attitude Conflict Transformation (TACT) are being implemented in the various training bases for the police forces in Uganda.

Even with the various training programs in place for the Uganda police officers, the situation on their performance is far from desirable (Taylor, 2021; Kakumba, 2021). Okurut & Deya (2023) cite that the brutality and harassment exhibited by Uganda Police Force when handling emotionally charged situations (such as CPEs) does not reflect value for human rights as it often leads to wrong and uncalled for arrests and in extreme cases, injuries and death. This undermines the trust and reputation of the force mandated to keep law and order (Mafundo, 2023).

Whereas a number of studies have indicated that training and EI independently affected employee performance, none had investigated how EI or training can mediate the direct effects of each other in regard to improving the performance of police officers, leaving a knowledge gap the current study seeks to bridge.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to establish the mediating effects of training and EI in improving the performance of police officers in Uganda

Objective of the study

1. To examine the effect of training on the performance of police officers in Uganda
2. To examine the effect of EI on the performance of officers in Uganda.
3. To examine mediating effect of EI on the relationship between training and performance of police officers Uganda.
4. To examine the mediating effect of training on the relationship between EI and performance of police officers in Uganda.

Hypotheses

- A. H_01 : Training has an insignificant effect on the performance of police officers in Uganda
- B. H_02 : Emotional intelligence has an insignificant effect on the performance of police officers in Uganda
- C. H_03 : The mediating effect of EI on the relationship between training and performance of police officers in Uganda is insignificant
- D. H_04 : The mediating effect of training on the relationship between EI and performance of police officers in Uganda is insignificant

Conceptual framework

The model highlights the relationships between the variables under study.

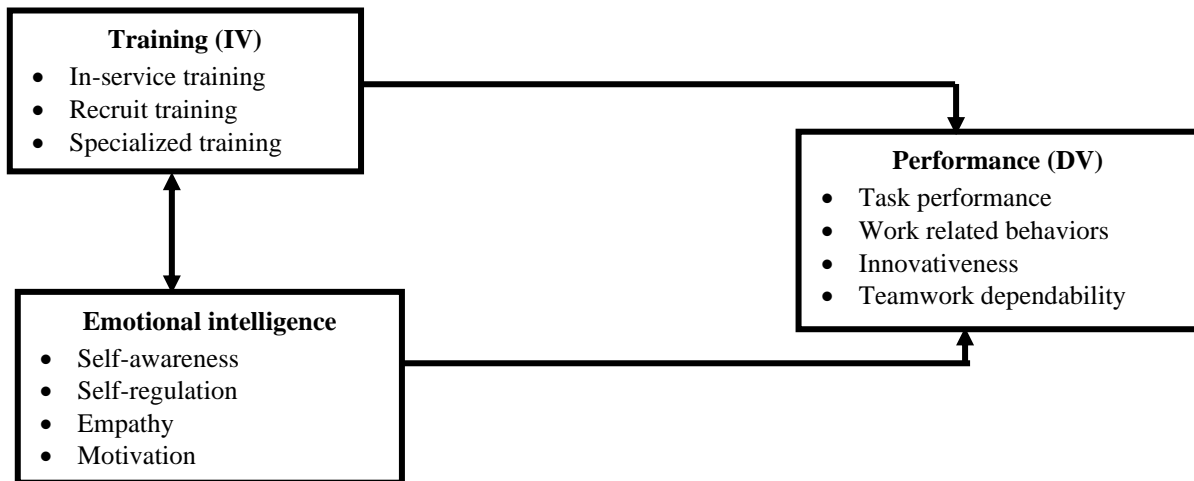


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Adopted from Helfers et al., 2020; Irene & Athanasios, 2022; Pranoyo, 2024)

As revealed in the figure above, training has both direct and indirect effects on the performance of the police officers because it improves their task performance and work-related behaviors. The direct effect comes into play when the employee receives in service, recruitment and situation-based training. In the police forces, Recruitment training includes computer aided exercises, situational training exercises, field training exercises, battle inoculation and support weapons shoot (Jeong et al., 2024). In-service training is when the officers undergo through a number of tactical, technical, physical, and leadership development training exercises (Etter & Griffin, 2011). Specialized training, on the other hand is one given to officers depending on the set of skills e.g. driving, engineering brigade, health officer, cooks etc. (Haberfeld, 2016). The indirect effects of training on performance occurs when bias awareness as well as team building and conflict transformation (TACT) are included in the training at various levels.

Along similar lines EI has been documented to directly improve work related behaviors, innovativeness and teamwork dependability which helps the officers solve the problems encountered in an amicable way. On the other hand, EI can improve performance when the officers are trained in adverse case scenarios such as training during countrywide demonstrations and conflicts. Hence, in the current study, EI mediates the effect of training on officer performance and, training mediates the effect of EI on officer performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical foundation

The current study's results will be based on the models of EI as well as the theories of Employee training. First and foremost, the relationship between staff training and performance is explained by Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1971) as well as Human capital Theory (Baker, 1962). Based on Social learning Theory, it is acceptable to conclude that the performance of the police officers is improved by training because with training, the police officers are able to learn by observing and imitating. The implication is that for any type of training received, the officers can put it into context to ensure that performance is enhanced. For Bakers' Human Capital theory, training of the police officers improves the durability and flexibility of the existing innate skills and modifies them to ensure that the police officers are in position to cope up with the demands of the situations that are emotionally exhausting (Hung et al., 2021; Angrist et al., 2021; Blair, 2021; Widarni & Bawono, 2021). Whereas both studies present good bases on how performance is related to training, they seldom indicate the magnitude of the relationship which reduces their predictive validity.

To establish the relationship between EI and performance, three models of Emotional Intelligence are applied. The Ability Model (Mayer & Salovey, 2004) emphasizes that EI is a cognitive tool and the police officer can use it to change or refine action when faced with emotionally challenging situation, implying that EI training improves the performance of the police officer during the CPE situations. The Trait Model (Petrides et al., 2016, 2007, 2006) argues that police officers can portray self-emotions to cope up with emotionally challenging scenarios such as CPEs and EI training serves to give officers a leeway for improving self-emotional regulations to apply whenever required. Finally, the Mixed model of EI (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2002) can be based upon to conclude that EI is positively related with performance of police officers through ensuring that the officers use both their self-emotions and their abilities to overcome emotionally challenging situations.

Conceptual review

Employee performance

Whereas earlier studies (Paoline, 2004; Paoline & Terrill, 2013) concentrated on task performance (completion of tasks and the time taken to do so), other scholars (Mafundo et al., 2023; Ssegiriinya, 2020) argue that task performance (number of arrests, detentions etc.) is necessary for improving perceptions about police office performance yet concept performance (innovativeness, teamwork as well as behaviors during task execution) are the sufficient condition because they help the police officer reduce cases of brutality, harassment as well as wrong and unlawful arrests.

Employee training

In this study, staff training has been defined as a program designed for the police officers to help them realize and put their innate abilities to use especially when executing a number of mandated roles (Salamon et al., 2023). As in the conceptual framework, the variable (training) is conceptualized as In-service training, pre-service training and specialized training with each variable having a number of sub components such as orientation, coaching, mentoring and so on.

Emotional Intelligence

In the current study, Emotional intelligence is conceptualized as how police officers are in position to recognize and regulate their emotions as well as the emotions of the others. Whereas various models (Ability Model, Mayer & Salovey, 2004; Trait Model, Petrides et al., 2016, 2007, 2006 and Mixed model of EI, Goleman & Boyatzis, 2002) have various components of EI, the mixed model is preferred since it uses the strengths of one of the models to minimize the flaws of the other model.

Hypothesis development

Training and employee performance

Pre-service (Recruitment) Training has a number of effects on the performance of the employees and with this respect, a number of studies (Mahmood et al., 2022; Martini et al., 2023; Rodrigues et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020; Van Harten et al., 2020; Sorribes et al., 2021; Onkila & Sarna, 2021; Jeronimo et al., 2020; Akilo et al., 2021; Seeg et al., 2021; Quratulain et al. 2021; Dixit & Sinha, 2022; Nosike, 2022; Kyei-Frimpong et al., 2022) have been carried out using a number of techniques to conclude that pre-service (recruitment training) positively affects the performance of the police officers yet there were differences in the significance of the relationships between the two variables based on the indicators used for this variable. However, Mafundo (2023) finds that this kind of training positively and significantly affects the performance of the police officers.

In-service training (on-job and off-job training) has also been studied (Park, 2021; Cui et al., 2022; Lyons & Bandura, 2023; McCarthy & Milner, 2020; Eby and Robertson, 2020; van der Baan et al., 2022; Kwon & Cho, 2020; Järvensivu, 2020; Malik & Kanwal, 2018; Beer & Mulder, 2020; Kairinos, 2022) and its effect on both task and concept performance has been found to be positive yet the significance and magnitude have differed across the various studies. From the above literature on the effects of training on performance of employees, the following hypothesis can be put forward; **Ha1: Training has a significant relationship with the performance of police officers in Uganda**

Relationship between EI and Officer performance

Based on existing evidence on employees outside the police forces (Onuegbu, 2021; Anastasiadou et al., 2022; Chang & Tsai, 2022), it is evident that EI, based on a number of models, positively affects performance of the employees albeit the fact that significance of the effect varies by the conceptualization of the individual components thereof and of course methodological issues. Whereas a number of studies (Chezue & Mbuti, 2023; Ziryawulawo, 2023; Kangogo, 2023) have documented how EI affects the performance of police officers and indicated positive effect, it is worth noting that the scholars had not concentrated on the mediating effects of incorporating EI in officer training, leaving a knowledge gap that requires efforts to bridge. From the above literature on the effects of training on performance of employees, the following hypothesis can be put forward; **Ha2: EI has a significant relationship with the performance of police officers in Uganda**

Mediating effect of training in the relationship between EI and performance

The capacity of the officer to manage their emotions is mainly done through situation-based form of training where the officers are subjected to reality i.e. whereas some officers face a simulated scenario, often involving police officers or students as demonstrators, in other cases, the trainee officers come face-to-face with the actual demonstrations, though these cases are dependent on the level of prior training one has undergone. For those with no experience, the mediating effects of training on the relationship between EI and performance is presumed to be negative and for the officers with some experience, the mediating effects range from weak positive to strong positive. Nonetheless, there is limited academic evidence on how training mediates the relationship between EI and performance. From the review of the above studies, the following hypothesis can be put forward: **Ha3: The Mediating effect of training in the relationship between EI and performance is significant**

Mediating effects of EI in the relationship between Training and performance

Though few, studies (Deb et al., 2023; Arief et al., 2023) have indicated that EI mediates performance outcomes because of the fact that individuals high in EI are able to deal with work pressures and emotionally challenging situations. Some scholars (Sayed, 2024; Chang & Tsai, 2022) have indicated that EI does not directly affect employee performance; however, it directly and positively impacts their motivation and self-efficacy during the training process. This is so because of the fact that those who rate high with respect to EI are more likely to be highly motivated to learn during training sessions as compared to the trainees low in EI. These conclusions are however based on challenges not related to handling hundreds of emotionally charged individuals such as those in CPEs which calls for more literature on the same. Using police officers with CPE experience is vital for broadening the knowledge base. Hence, based on the above literature, the following hypothesis can be put forward: **Ha4: Mediating effects of EI in the relationship between Training and performance is significant.**

METHODS

This study used a cross-sectional study design with quantitative methods on the police officers in the operations directorate. Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table was used to compute the sample size of police officers in the operations directorate and random and non-random sampling methods were used in the selection of respondents. Based on Krejcie & Morgan (1970) a sample of 139 was selected from a population of 290. The study employed a combination of quantitative (Self-administered questionnaire) data collection methods. The SAQs were subjected to validity testing using Content Validity Index (CVI) which yielded a figure of 0.845 whereas Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (0.788) was used to establish the internal consistency of the SAQ. The study objectives will be examined using linear regression models and mediation was carried out using Hayes Process Macro analysis in SPSS22.

RESULTS

This section presents the results on the various objectives as analyzed from the data captured from the police officers. The table below presents results on how training affects performance

Table 1 Effects of Training on police officer performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.672	.327		8.158	.000
	TRA	.213	.086	.207	2.471	.015

a. Dependent Variable: PERF

As in the table above, it is evident that a training of police officers explains 59.3% of their performance and is weak but significant at a 5% significance level ($\beta = 0.207$; $p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis of an insignificant effect of training on officer performance. The table below presents the results on how EI affects performance of officers

Table 2 Effects of EI on police officer performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.904	.218		8.727	.000
	EI	.441	.061	.528	7.285	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PERF

As in the table above, it is evident that Emotional Intelligence explains 52.8% of their performance and is moderate but significant at a 5% significance level ($\beta = 0.528$; $p < 0.05$), leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis of a significant effect of EI on officer performance. The table below presents the mediating effects of EI on the relationship between training and performance.

Mediating effects of EI in the relationship between Training and performance

Model : 4 Y : PERF X : TR M : EI Sample Size: 139

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

EI

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.1868	.0349	.2686	4.9549	1.0000	137.0000	.0277

Model

coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2.6916	.3937	6.8360	.0000	1.9130 3.4702
TR	.2304	.1035	2.2260	.0277	.0257 .4351

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

PERF

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5397	.2912	.1386	27.9429	2.0000	136.0000	.0000

Model

coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1.5308	.3275	4.6738	.0000	.8831 2.1785
TR	.1151	.0757	1.5204	.1307	-.0346 .2648
EI	.4238	.0614	6.9065	.0000	.3025 .5452

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
TR	.1151	.0757	1.5204	.1307	-.0346 .2648

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
EI	.0977	.0453	.0123 .1881

The results indicate that the influence of training on EI is weak, positive but significant ($\beta = 0.2304$, $p < 0.000$). Secondly, the influence of EI on performance is moderate and significant ($\beta = 0.4238$, $p > 0.05$). The direct effects of Training on performance are positive and insignificant ($p = 0.1307$) whereas the indirect effect of training on performance through EI is significant (because there is no zero value between the lower and upper intervals the model). The implication is that EI has a full mediation effect on the relationship between training and officer performance meaning that the null hypothesis of an insignificant mediating effect is rejected in favor of the alternative. The study however found inconclusive results regarding the mediating effect of training on the relationship between EI and performance because the direct effect was significant yet the indirect effect of EI on training was insignificant.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, four main conclusions were drawn;

First and foremost, the study accepted the null hypothesis that there is a significant positive effect of officer training on the performance of police officers and when training is improved, performance will

automatically improve. Based on the fact that training improves task and concept performance as well as improving teamwork amongst the police officers, the study results are consistent with the scholarly work of Kyei-Frimpong et al. (2022); Mafundo (2023) as well as Lyons and Bandura (2023) and implication that the study has added to the body of knowledge.

Secondly, the study accepted the null hypothesis that there is a significant positive effect of EI on the performance of police officers and when EI of police officers is improved, performance will automatically improve. Based on the fact that IE improves concept performance as well as assisting in the management of self and teams, the study results are consistent with the scholarly work of (Onuegbu, 2021; Olise, 2018; Anastasiadou et al., 2022; Chang & Tsai, 2022) though the current study has included the role of significance to improve the efficiency of policy direction.

Thirdly, the study accepted the null hypothesis that there existed a FULL mediating effect of EI in the relationship between training and police officer performance. This means that the effect of training on performance of officers is significant mainly because of EI of police officers. The mediating effect of training on the relationship between EI and officer performance yielded inconclusive results because of the fact that police officers cannot be trained to effectively improve their EI.

To this end, the study recommends the following;

- Uganda Police force should improve the training of her officers
- The police force should improve their recruitment screening process so as to hire emotionally intelligent officers

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