



Emotional Regulation Strategies And Decision Making Among Owners Of Small-Scale Businesses in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

Abstract

This paper examined the relationship between emotional regulation strategies and decision making among owners of small-scale businesses in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.. Consequently, two (2) specific objectives, two (2) research questions and two (2) null hypotheses were drawn to guide the study. Theoretical framework were drawn from decision science, emotion regulation, and small scale businesses, the study reviewed empirical findings linking cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression to decision making bothering on risk perception, opportunity recognition, resource allocation, and strategic persistence. A correlational survey design was adopted for the study. The population for this study consisted of all 7337 registered small scale businesses in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state. A sample size of 583 registered small scale business owners was selected through a simple random sampling technique. The researcher structured questionnaire titled "Emotional Regulation Strategies and Decision Making Questionnaire" (ERSDMQ) was developed and utilized for data analyses. Cronbach alpha formulae was used to determine a reliability of .91 which was deemed high for the study. The instrument was face validated by three (3) research experts in the Department of Business Education, University of Uyo, Uyo. Pearson Product Moment Correction ® was used to answer the research questions and analyze the null hypotheses. The study showed a significant positive relationship between the emotional regulation strategies and decision making of small scale businesses in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state. The study recommended that small scale businesses should employ psychologists to help in managing emotional imbalances that could lead to poor decision making of small scale businesses.

Keywords: Emotion regulation, decision making, small businesses, entrepreneurship, risk-taking, cognitive reappraisal, expressive suppression, mindfulness.

Dr Abasienie Sampson Bassey
Department of Business Education
University of Uyo
08162428134

Corresponding Authors Email:
abasieniesbassey@uniuyo.edu.ng

Date Received: 13th September, 2026

Date Accepted: 18th September, 2026

Introduction

Small-scale businesses (micro and small enterprises) are a major source of employment and innovation worldwide. Small-scale businesses (SSBs) are often defined by a limited number of

employees, restricted capital, and concentrated managerial control which constitute a large portion of the global economy and are a primary engine of employment and innovation in many regions (Bassey & Akpan, 2026: Bassey & Ebieme, 2026: Bassey, 2026). Small scale

business owners oftentimes expresses emotions as business trends are known to be very volatile (Ido & Bassey, 2015a). For SSBs to be successful, decision making in SSBs must be unique, owners must act as both leader and operator, making frequent, high-stakes decisions under time pressure and with incomplete information. Emotional states of owners and managers play a critical role in shaping these decisions. Emotions can serve adaptive functions (e.g., signaling threats, motivating action) but can also bias cognition (e.g., risk perception, attention allocation). How business owners regulate emotions, either by altering the emotional response itself or by modulating expression may therefore have meaningful consequences for decision quality and business outcomes.

Consequently, emotions are normal part of the everyday lives of business owners. For some though, feeling these emotions can seem overwhelming, like an out-of-control roller coaster (Agbo, 2019). Emotional regulation therefore is a term generally used to describe a person's ability to effectively manage and respond to an emotional experience (Akpan, 2020). People unconsciously use emotional regulation strategies to cope with difficult situations many times throughout each day (Akpan, 2024). Most business owners use a variety of emotional regulation strategies and are able to apply them to different situations in order to adapt to the demands of the environment and situations.

Based on the foregoing. Emotional regulation is defined by Bassey & Sampson (2024) as the ability to manage and respond to an emotional experience in a healthy, adaptive way. Rather than suppressing feelings, it involves recognizing intense emotions, understanding triggers, and utilizing self-soothing or cognitive techniques to maintain control and act constructively, even under pressure (Ido & Bassey, 2015a). According to Bassey *et al* (2024a), emotional regulation (ER) refers to attempts to influence emotions in ourselves or others. ER focuses on people's attempts to influence emotions, defined as time-limited, situationally bound, and valence (positive or negative) states. Compared with historical predecessors, ER is broader in that it is not limited to the down-regulation of negative emotions (fear, anxiety, stress) but encompasses up- and down-regulation of positive and negative emotions in accordance with regulation-related goals. Whereas goal pursuit (and therefore ER) is often conscious and deliberate, it can also occur implicitly, outside conscious awareness (Ido & Bassey, 2016a; Morinshka, *et al* (2011); Ebieme & Bassey, 2026). Consequently, emotional regulation techniques can be viewed from two broad perspectives vis-à-vis cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression.

Cognitive reappraisal is a potent emotional regulation technique which involves identifying and transforming

negative thought patterns into more effective ones (James,2020). By altering how one perceive situations, one can dial down negative emotions, making it easier to address triggers with skill and maintain emotional balance(James,2020). Cognitive reappraisal is a strategy that interrupts the feedback loop between negative thoughts and overwhelming emotions (Kelvin,2022). Instead of reacting automatically to distressing feelings, this technique helps you take a step back and reinterpret the situation through a more balanced lens (Rossi,2022).

The process of cognitive reappraisal involves identifying distorted or unhelpful thoughts, challenging their accuracy, and replacing them with more constructive interpretations (Sampson,2024).. The usage of cognitive reappraisal allows business owners to implement and produce interpersonal behavior that is appropriately focused on social interaction and is perceived by the others as emotionally engaging and responsive (Mbamalu, 2019;Ukpa,2021)..

Another form of emotional regulation is the expressive suppression. At odds, expressive suppression comes relatively late in the emotion-generative process and principally modifies the behavioral aspect of the emotional responses, without reducing the subjective and physiological experience of negative emotion, which is not directly targeted by

suppression and may thus continue to linger and accumulate unresolved. As expressive suppression comes late in the emotion-generative process, it requires the individual to effortfully manage emotional responses as they constantly occur (Bassey *et al.* (2024b). These repeated efforts deplete cognitive resources to the detriment of social performances and create a sense of discrepancy between inner experience and outer expression in the individual (Okoravo,2018)

Statement of the Problem

Small scale businesses are the nerve center of employment generation in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state. Majority of school leavers earn their living either through engaging in or are employed by small scale businesses. This has a multiplier effect of boosting the economy and also ensuring employees' lead productive and comfortable lifestyle. It is quite disheartening to note that most small scale businesses do not live beyond their first year anniversary due to poor decision making by the owners. Most small scale businesses do not make use of reliable data in decision making (Ukana, 2026). Most of the poor decisions made by the owners of these businesses could be also as a result of poor cognitive processes (Bassey, 2026), due to applying poor techniques and the seeming lack of cognitive wherewithal to tackle the rigorous processes and

solve immediate problems that may affect them. Most decisions taken by owners of small scale businesses lack logical dexterity and has resulted to low turnover, customers' dissatisfaction, low net profit and at times huge losses resulting to the death of these firms. Most owners of small scale businesses usually transfer aggressions from family and friends to customers which indicate that they have limited control of their emotions as at that time. This singular act can set the pace for withdrawal leading to low patronage and poor revenue generation. Owners and managers of such businesses routinely make high-stakes decisions under resource constraints, uncertain markets, and volatile emotional conditions. Emotion influences cognition and behavior and thus likely shapes business decision making (Ido & Bassey, 2016b). Moreover, searches on journals, online search engines, and libraries have shown that there exist limited literature on the subject matter of emotional regulation strategies and decision making of small scale businesses.

Moreover, the ways in which different emotional regulation strategies employed by small-business decision makers affect decision outcomes are under-explored.

Research Objective

The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between emotion regulation strategies and decision making of small scale business

owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state. Specifically, the study sought to determine the relationship between:

- i. Cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.
- ii. Expressive suppression strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to guide the study;

- i. What is the relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state?
- ii. What is the relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

- i. There is no significant relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale

- business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.

Theoretical Framework

Emotional Regulation: Strategies and Processes

Emotion regulation refers to processes by which individuals influence the onset, intensity, duration, and expression of their emotions (Ben, 2019). Key strategies include:

- Cognitive reappraisal: reframing a situation to change its emotional impact (antecedent-focused).
- Expressive suppression: inhibiting outward displays of emotion (response-focused).
- Mindfulness-based regulation: present-focused awareness and non-reactive acceptance.
- Problem-focused coping: active problem solving to modify the stressful situation.
- Avoidant coping: disengagement or denial.

Cognitive reappraisal generally yields better interpersonal and intrapersonal outcomes (Francis, 2024). Suppression often reduces visible affect but increases

physiological costs and impairs memory and social functioning.

Emotions and Decision Making

Emotion affects judgment via several mechanisms: affect-as-information (Camilus, 2023; Daniel, 2025), mood-congruent processing, and influence on risk perception (Francis, 2024). Incidental emotions can alter preferences, while integral emotions tied to the decision context often provide useful signals. Emotion regulation changes the emotional experience and expression and thereby can alter the informational and motivational role emotions play in decisions.

Small-Business Decision Contexts

Small-business decision makers face constraints—limited time, capital, and access to expertise—making them reliant on heuristics and affective cues (Ben, 2024). The owner's affective state can directly influence hiring, pricing, investment, and strategic pivoting. For example, fear may prompt conservative decisions while enthusiasm may promote opportunity pursuit (Ido & Bassey, 2016).

Research Methods

A correlational survey design was utilized for this study because the researcher was interested in establishing the relationship between the emotional regulation strategies and decision making by owners of small scale businesses in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. The study was conducted in Uyo local government area

of Akwa state. The population of the study consisted of all 7337 registered small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state. A sample size of 583 registered small scale business owners was selected through a simple random sampling technique. The researcher structured questionnaire titled "Emotion Regulation Strategies and Decision Making Questionnaire" (ERSDMQ) was used to elicit responses from the respondents. The research instrument was divided into two parts; Parts A and B. Part A dealt with the bio data of the respondents, while Part B dealt with the sub variables of emotional regulation vis a vis cognitive reappraisal strategy which was differentiated as section 1 and expressive suppression as section 2. The items were measured using a five point likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA)(5.0), Agreed (A)(4.0), Undecided (3.0)(U), Disagreed (D)(2.0) and Strongly Disagreed (D)(1.0). The instrument was face validated by three research experts from the department of Business Education, Faculty of Vocational Education, Library and Information Science, University of Uyo.

Their comments, suggestions and criticisms were incorporated into the final draft. Cronbach alpha reliability formular was used to determine the reliability of the instrument with a high r value of .91 which was deemed high for the study. The researcher together with an assistant who was briefed, administered the instrument to the respondents. Thirty

seven percent (37%) of the respondents got their instruments through their official mails and returned sane to the researcher's official mail. A return rate of 95% was achieved. Pearson Product Moment Correlation $\otimes$ was used to analyze data for this study. In answering the research questions, r value of + or - 0.00 to + or - 0.49 were seen as having a weak relationship while items with an r value of + or - 0.50 to +- 1.00 were seen as having a strong relationship. The researcher ensured that the respondents remain unanimous and their permissions were sought after before engaging them. The researcher acknowledged all authors whose works formed the bulk of the literature utilized in the reference section.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa?

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) testing the Relationship between Cognitive Reappraisal and decision making of Small Scale business owns N = 583

Variable	ΣX	Σxy	Σx^2	r	Decision
	Xy		Σy^2		
Cognitive reappraisal (x)	376		2916		
		1781		.98	
Decision making (y)	268		1786		Positive relations

Citation: Bassey, Abasienie S. "Emotional Regulation Strategies And Decision Making Among Owners Of Small-Scale Businesses in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)*, 2026: pp184-194.

Source: Field study (2026)

Data analysis on Table 1 has shown that the r cal value testing the relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area is 0.95. This value indicates that there exists a strong positive relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions 2

What is the relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state?

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) testing the Relationship between experience suppression and decision making of Small Scale Broadowns N = 583

Variable	ΣX	Σxy	Σx^2	r	Decision
	Xy		Σy^2		
Expressive supportive (x)	279		1846		
		1811		.87	Positive relations
Decision making (y)	268		1786		

Source: Field study (2026)

Data analysis on Table 2 has shown that the r cal value testing the relationship

between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners is 0.87. This value indicates that there exists a string positive relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.

Null Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) testing the Relationship between cognitive reappraisal and decision making of Small Scale business owns N = 583

Variable	ΣX	Σxy	Σx^2	r-cal.	r-crit.	Decision
	Xy		Σy^2			
Cognitive reappraisal (x)	376		291			
		179		.98	.48	5*
Decision making (y)	268		1786			

5* = significant at 0.05 level of significance

Data analysis on Table 3 had shown that the r cal value of 0.95 was higher than the r crit value of 0.49, degree of freedom of 581 and at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected thus, there exist a significant relationship between cognitive

Citation: Bassey, Abasienie S. "Emotional Regulation Strategies And Decision Making Among Owners Of Small-Scale Businesses in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)*, 2026: pp184-194.

reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom State.

Null Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) testing the Relationship between Expressive Suppression and decision making of Small Scale business owns N = 583

Variable	ΣX	Σxy	Σx^2	r-cal.	r-crit.	Deci
	Xy		Σy^2			
Expressive supportive (x)	279		1846			
		1811		.87	.49	5 ^x
Decision making (y)	268		1786			

5^x = significant at 0.05 level of significance

Source: Field study (2026)

Data analysis on Table 4 has shown that the r cal value of 0.87 was higher than the r crit value of 0.49, degree of freedom of 381 and at 0.05 level with of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected thus there exist a significant relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Findings

Cognitive Reappraisal Strategy and Decision Making

Data analyses on Tables 1 and 3 had indicated that there exist a strong significant and positive relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo Local government area of Akwa Ibom State. This findings showed that cognitive reappraisal strategy can help business owners make concrete decisions that can improve the fortunes of their small scale businesses. This findings is in consonance with Bassey (2026) who opined that cognitive optimization is a strategy for managing customers of the business. This goes to enable the business owner make informed decisions that are data driven and not out of emotion.

The findings of this study agrees with the findings of Bassey and Ebieme (2026) which opined that a business man with a reappraised cognitive strategy can win the customer base due to the strength of the decision

Expressive Suppression and Decision Making

Data analyses on Tables 2 and 4 had shown that there exist a strong significant and positive relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom State. This finding showed that

suppressing expressing negative emotions goes a long way in helping the business owners make informed decisions. This finding is supported by the findings of Ebieme and Bassey (2026) who opined that emotional intelligence helps business owners to make decisions that can help sustain small scale businesses.

Conclusion

The study was necessitated by the high failure rate of small scale businesses in Uyo due partly to poor business decision making accompanied by emotions instead of applying emotional regulation strategies to help them minimize emotions and maximize the utilization of accurate and precise data for such decision making. The study identified the emotional regulation strategies of cognitive reappraisal strategy which involves a self-reappraisal of their cognition to minimize random decisions from emotions and optimize the utilization of data driven scientific data for core decision making and the expressive suppression as core strategy that can relate with decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa state.

Adopting a correlational survey design and using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation ® as the data analysis technique, the study found out that there is a positive significant relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale

business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom State. The study also discovered that there exist a positive significant relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom State.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions reached, the following are recommended:

- i. Small scale business owners should as a matter of urgency learn to make business decisions by relying on reliable and valid data rather than resorting to emotions that can ruin their businesses
- ii. Small scale business owners should as a matter of urgency employ professional psychologists to help counsel the owners whenever they encounter emotional issues
- iii. Small scale business owners should endeavor to differentiate between logical decision and emotional decisions in order to boost the confidence of the customers.
- iv. Small scale business owners should endeavor to upgrade their businesses through improved cognitive appraisal strategy.
- v. The chambers of commerce should organize symposium, seminars and workshops on understanding

emotional regulation which will help to improve decision making done by the business owners.

- vi. The Counseling unit of the state ministry of education should organize a refresher course for owners of small scale businesses in Uyo.

References

- Agbo, C. (2019) *Element of business*. Port Harcourt. Empress publishers.
- Akpan, E. (2020) *Small scale business management*. Uyo. Unpublished.
- Akpan, N.(2024) *Lecture notes on Small scale business management*. Uyo. Unpublished.
- Bassey, A. S. (2026). Sudoku induced cognitive skills and decision making of small scale businesses in Uyo local government area. *Journal of people and worldviews*, 1(3), 99-111.
- BASSEY, & SAMPSON, A. (2026). Sudoku Skills and Business Education Students Academic Performance in Spreadsheet Applications in Federal Universities, South South, Nigeria:-Bassey, Abasienie S . Michael Okpara University of Agriculture. Retrieved July 22, 2026, from <http://repository.mouau.edu.ng/works/sudoku-skills-and-business-education-students-academic-performance-in-spreadsheet-applications-in-federal-universities-south-south-nigeria-bassey-abasienie-s-7-2>
- Bassey, A. S., & Akpan, K. E. (2026). Office Technologies and Workflow Outcomes of Junior Employees in UyoLocal Government Area. *UniUyo Journal of Business Education and Entrepreneurship*, 3(1), 63-72.
- Bassey, A. S., Udo, D. D., & Obayi, A. U. (2024). Assessment of Soduku Skills Acquired By Business Education Students' in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria. *Aau Journal of Business Educators*, 4(1), 359-366.
- Bassey, A. S., Obayi, A. U., & Agbaegbu, C. N. (2024). An Assessment of Sudoku Proficiencies for Spreadsheets Applications among Business Education Students in Federal Universities in South-South Nigeria. *AAUJournal of Business Educators*, 4(2), 182-188.
- Bassey, A. S., & Ebieme, E. E. (2026). Integration of Artificial Intelligence into the Business Education Programmes: A Panacea for Building a Technological Driven Workforce. *Studies in Education*, 24(1), 95-102.
- Ben, J. (2024). Examining the roles of cognitive reappraisal on decision making in the banking industry. *Journal of studies*. 2(3), 129-134.
- Camilus, W. (2023). *Psychology of education*. London. McGraw Hills.
- Daniel, S.A. (2025). *Understanding how emotions work*. New York. Nate publishers.

Citation: Bassey, Abasienie S. "Emotional Regulation Strategies And Decision Making Among Owners Of Small-Scale Businesses in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)*, 2026: pp184-194.

Emotional Regulation Strategies And Decision Making Among Owners Of Small-Scale Businesses in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

- Ebieme, E. E., & Bassey, A.S. (2026). Evaluating the role of emotional intelligence in employees' job performance in First Bank, Akwa Ibom North-East, Nigeria. *African Journal of Management and Business Research*, 22 (1): 365-383.
- Francis, D. (2024). *Psychology of business*. Aba: Draught.
- Godwin, S. (2019). *Principles of psychology*. Benin: Trust publishers
- Ido, C. F., & Bassey, A. S. (2015). Challenges of business education in achieving employment efficiency. *Journal of Qualitative Education*, 2(1), 56-61.
- Ido, C. F., & Bassey, A. S. (2015). Research in Business Education; A panacea for Employment Generation through Entrepreneurship. *Journal for Sustainable Education*, 6(1), 160-166.
- Ido, C. F., & Bassey, A. S. (2016). Improving business education contents; a prerequisite for achieving economic recovery in Nigeria's post oil era. *Knowledge Review*, 34(1), 256-24.
- Ido, C. F., & Bassey, A. S. (2016). Tvet Partnership and Profitability of Small Scale Business in Akwa Ibom State; A Panacea for Economic Growth. *Journal of Association of Vocational and Technical Educators of Nigeria*, 21(2), 47-55.
- James, S. (2020). *Principles of small scale businesses*. Bright shining.
- Kelvin, C. (2022). *Business education in Nigeria*. Fountain publishers.
- Moroshkina, M., Den, V., Agboyi, B., & Skrint, V. (2021). *A text on business applications*. Tyler
- Russi, J. (2022). *Business operations in climates*. Adorning publication
- Sampson, G. (2024). *Business decision Analysis*. Goodness publishers
- Ukana, A. A. (2026). *Principles of computer programming*. McMillan
- Ukpa, X. (2021). *Business and leaders*. McGraw Hill.
- Mbamalu, K. (2019). *Essentials of businesses*. Zaria, Alternative
- Okoravo, D. (2018). *Business and Education*. Jos: Academics