

# Relationship between Self-Awareness and Indulgence in Behavior Problems among Form Two Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya

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**Abstract** The study investigated the relationship between self-awareness and indulgence in behavior problems among form two students in public secondary schools in Kenya. The study was guided by the Problem Behavior Theory. The Concurrent Triangulation design within the Mixed Methods approach was used. The target population comprised two thousand six hundred (n=2600) form two students, 34 deputy principals and 34 HODs guidance & counseling. The sample size comprised 780 form two students, 10 deputy principals and 10 HODs guidance & counseling. The Emotional Intelligence and problem behaviors Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from students while interviews schedules were used to collect qualitative data from deputy principals and 10 HODs guidance & counseling. Validity of the instruments was established by expert judgment by university supervisors. Reliability test was done through split half method. In the previous study, a reliability coefficient value of alpha of 0.792 was reported. Credibility and dependability of qualitative instruments was also ensured. Quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics such as Pearson correlation while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The quantitative findings were presented in tables and charts while qualitative ones were presented thematically. There was statistically significant, (n=780  $r = .210^{**}$ ;  $p < .05$ ), positive correlation between Self-Awareness and indulgence in behavior among students. Its recommended that the teacher counsellors should initiate periodical students' psychological assessment on their self-awareness to be able to identify students with low level awareness.

**Keywords** Self-awareness, Indulgence, Behavior problems, Form two students, Public secondary schools, Kenya

## 1. Introduction

Educational programs require that students live in an environment where they are peaceful and are instructed with the right knowledge, skills values and attitudes (Ruto, 2009). However, in the past student behavior problems had been seen to increase and had become a challenge to almost all stakeholders in education, the student behavior problems had resulted into death, destruction of property, deformities, truancy among students, and interference with the learning and teaching in schools (Ruto, 2009). Because emotional and behavioral problems during young adulthood are evolving public health concern, it was important to identify parenting behavior in the family of origin that prevented or

exacerbated such problems. Disobedient pupils, off-task behavior, and bullying are common problems in schools in many countries; they interfered with teaching, created an unsafe learning environment, and challenged the staff. Effective programs involving entire schools to prevent and reduce such problems had already been designed and implemented (Sigrun & Grete Vaaland, 2007).

According to Alain (2011), self-awareness represented the capacity of becoming the object of one's own attention. In this state one actively identified, processed, and stored information about the self. Self-awareness refers to the capacity of becoming the object of one's own attention. In that state one actively identified, processed, and stored information about the self. The important distinction there were as follows: One can perceive and process stimuli from the environment (e.g., a color, food) without explicitly knowing that one was doing so (consciousness). One becomes self-aware when one reflects on the experience of perceiving and processing stimuli. Self-awareness represents a complex multidimensional phenomenon that comprises various self-domains and corollaries.

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The study was guided by the Problem Behavior Theory. Problem Behavior Theory (PBT) by the definition of Jessor (1987) is any behavior that deviates from both social and legal norms or behavior that is socially disapproved from those of authority and tends to elicit some form of social control response whether mild reproof, social rejection or incarceration (Jessor, 1987). The theory is a social-psychological framework focused on the explanation of variation in adolescents' involvement in behaviors that are socially defined as a problem and as undesirable by the norms of conventional society and that elicit some form of social sanctions. Problem behaviors of interest had included underage drinking, problem drinking, marijuana use, other illicit drug use, delinquent behavior, and precarious sexual behavior. The theory informed in the previous study in that while the theory focused on the explanation of variation in adolescents' involvement in behaviors, the study objectives are on elements of emotional intelligence as predictors of indulgence in behavior problems.

Makewa and Ngila, (2018) reported that accurate self-assessment was found to be statistically and negatively significant. Gohm and Clore (2002a) showed that emotional clarity was positively correlated with healthy psychological well-being, and negatively associated with poor psychological well-being among college students. Similarly, Penza-Clyve and Zeman (2002) found that poor emotional awareness was positively associated with internalizing symptoms but not externalizing behaviors in a sample including early adolescents. However, the authors noted that these differential findings were due to differences in measurement in that aggression was measured using peer ratings of observed behavior, while emotional awareness was measured by self-report of perceived internal processes. Christensen (2002) study in South Africa explored the relationship between a dispositional tendency to become self-conscious and interpersonal effectiveness. Persons high in maladaptive self-consciousness were perceived by their peers as more socially inadequate. Alireza Mohammadiarya and Salar Dousti Sarabi (2012) study in Egypt investigated the effectiveness of self-awareness skills and Anger Management on Teenagers Aggression. Results showed that self-awareness skills and Anger Management had a positive effect on Teenagers Aggression. Abdullah, Phaik, Samsilah and Maznah (2014) examined the relationships between emotional intelligence (EI) and the delinquent behavior (DB) of the students. Multiple regression analysis revealed that EI was a significant predictor of DB and self-Awareness was the main factor of delinquent behavior DB.

Purvis, Gallagher, and Parrott (2016) examined whether an AMT-inspired self-awareness intervention manipulation reduced heavy drinking men's intoxicated aggression toward women. Results indicated that the self-awareness manipulation was associated with less alcohol-related aggression toward the female confederate for men who reported an internal, but not an external, locus of control. Rosen, (2016) study in USA examined longitudinal relations

between poor emotional awareness and these subtypes of emotion dysregulation and aggression, as well as concurrent pathways between the emotion dysregulation and aggression variables. Poor emotional awareness was not directly related to changes in subsequent frequency of physical or relational aggression. Scheier, Arnold H Buss and M Buss (2008) studied Self-consciousness, self-report of aggressiveness, and aggression among subjects in USA. The correlation between self-report of aggressiveness and aggressive behavior was significantly higher for high than for low-private self-conscious subjects. Seohee Sohn, Ho Chung Chung & Namkee Park (2019) aimed to replicate the findings in the context of CMC, by replacing the traditional mirror manipulation of private self-awareness with a real-time video image of oneself, and by measuring the intention of verbal aggression in abusive user comments on online news articles. A two-way ANCOVA test with self-monitoring and sex being covariates showed a significant main effect of private self-awareness on agreement to abusive comments.

In Kenya, student behavior problems constituted barriers to learning, which made school unsafe and negatively impacted on learning and overall well-being of students and teachers (Aloka & Bojuwoye, 2013). Student discipline had been found to have a direct impact on students' academic performance (Borkan, Cappa, Figueiredo and Loadman, 2003). The ill-discipline behaviors of secondary school students have caused public outcry and continued to feature more prominently in the national agenda of Kenya (Aloka and Bojuwoye, 2013). Ajowi and Simatwa (2010) reiterate that unrest has continued in secondary schools with a new dimension and are not only violent and destructive but they are also premeditated and planned and have caused maximum harm to human life.

Craig, Destroy, and Kevia, (2005) study concluded that, personality analysis provides a three facet organizational framework for understanding psychological significance of deviance makers (behavior problems). Thomas, Jawahar, and Jenifer (2010) study results supports both theories of planned behavior model and a partially mediated model in which prudence, but not adjustment was significantly related to model components; attitudes, norms, control and behavior but not intention to cheat. Aunola, Tolvanen, Viljaranta, & Nurmi (2013) showed that psychological control applied by mothers and fathers in daily interactions with their children leads to an increase in negative emotions in the child. Asads, Jewavia, Feheem, and Kaleem (2012) agree that there was a strong correlation between impulsive and compulsive buying behaviors and it was also observed that both impulsive buying and compulsive buying are positively related with all the big five. However, scanty literature was available on the emotional intelligence as a predictor of indulgence in behavior problems among form two students in public secondary schools in Subasub county, Kenya. Hence, the previous study sought to investigate emotional intelligence as a predictor of indulgence in behavior problems among form two students in public secondary schools in Suba sub

county, Kenya.

## 2. Research Methodology

The Concurrent Triangulation design was used. Triangulation refers to a combination of methodologies in a study of the same phenomenon (Rothbauer, 2008). In this design therefore, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed at the same time of the research study. The target population of the study was 34 secondary schools in Suba sub-county. The number of the targeted form two students was to be two thousand six hundred ( $n=2600$ ), 34 deputy principals and 34 HODs guidance & counseling. The stratified sampling procedure would be used to obtain a sample size of 780 form two students which translate to 30% of all form twos from the selected public secondary schools. This was in accordance to Gay (2010) who observed that at least 30% of a given population was a representative sample. In addition, 10 deputy principals and 10 HODs guidance & counseling would be obtained for interviews. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used for data collection in the study.

Validity of the instruments was established by expert judgment by university supervisors (Creswell, 2014). In the study, a reliability coefficient value of alpha of 0.792 was reported. This meant that the questionnaires were highly reliable because if a correlation coefficient value of  $r=0.6$  and above was obtained, then the value of reliability is considered to be appropriate (Kothari, 2011). Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis approach, in particular, correlation and regression analyses were used to test hypotheses of the study. Qualitative data was analyzed using the thematic framework.

## 3. Findings & Discussions

**Table 1.** Correlation between Level of Self Awareness and Indulgence in problem behavior Indulgence

	Self-Awareness	: Indulgence in problem behavior
Self-Awareness	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.210**
	N	780
: Indulgence in problem behavior	Pearson Correlation	.210**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1
	N	780

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To establish whether there was any statistical significant of Level of Self Awareness and Indulgence in problem behavior, the researcher computed a bivariate Pearson's Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation between the

scores of the two variables. The SPSS output Table 1 shows the correlation results.

It is evident that there was statistically significant, ( $n=780$   $r=.210^{**}$ ;  $p<.05$ ), positive correlation between Self-Awareness and indulgence in behavior among students. Since that the p-value was less than .05, the null hypothesis "*There is no statistically significant relationship between self-awareness and indulgences in behavior problems among form two students in public secondary schools in Suba Sub-County*" was rejected. It is therefore acceptable to conclude that there is statistically significant positive relationship between Self-Awareness and indulgence in behavior, with more Self-Awareness associated to higher indulgence in behavior among students.

From qualitative findings, another theme which emerged was low level awareness. Penza-Clyveand Zeman (2002) found that poor emotional awareness was positively associated with internalizing symptoms but not externalizing behaviors in a sample including early adolescents. Makewa and Ngila, (2018) reported that accurate self-assessment was found to be statistically and negatively significant.

From qualitative findings, another theme which emerged was low self-awareness. This means that an individual has relatively low manner in understanding themselves by being at peace with who they are and proactively managing our thoughts, emotions and behavior. Most respondents reported that students with low self-awareness are always engaged in behavior problems while in school. Such students have lost direction in the academic work and are thus likely to use bad energy by engaging in antisocial behaviours. Some deputy principals, heads of guidance & counseling and students interviewed reported that:

*"It's easy to know students that are having low or negative self-awareness among themselves by looking at their behavior problems frequency and intensity in school. such students have lost focus and hence are always found in more problems with teachers and other students"* (DP, 6)

*"Most problematic students are those with low self-awareness of themselves. Such students disturb the prefects so much and they are stubborn to teachers and are unruly to other students. Thus the students are always in behavior problems"* (G&C Teacher, 7)

*"In our school, it's very easy to know students with low self-awareness among themselves. Such students are always in the list of noise makers, they fail to do manual work, and they are unruly to prefects and teachers. Such students are very difficult to deal with because their focus is not in school work"* (Student, 4, FGD, 2)

From the interview excerpts with the deputy principals, heads of guidance and counseling and focus group discussions with students, it can be concluded that low self-awareness in a strong indicator of a likelihood of indulgence in behavior problems. Christensen (2002) study in South Africa reported that persons high in maladaptive

self-consciousness were perceived by their peers as more socially inadequate. Purvis, Gallagher, and Parrott (2016) results indicated that the self-awareness manipulation was associated with less alcohol-related aggression toward the female confederate for men who reported an internal, but not an external, locus of control.

Qualitative findings were also obtained from Focus Group Discussions with students in secondary schools on how self-awareness relates with indulgence in behavior problems. Most respondents reported that high level of self-awareness reduces indulgence in behavior problems among students. This is because the participants felt that more focused students are aware of who they are and are thus engaged in positive behaviours with other students at school. Some respondents reported that:

*“Self-aware students are focused on their wellbeing therefore are not likely to indulge in behavioral problems. Such students are always self-guided in most cases and are thus very disciplined”* (Student 4, FGD, 4)

*“Students who have self-awareness are less likely to indulge in behavioral problems compared to the less exposed ones without good knowledge of life skills. More self-awareness reduces involvement in behavior problems while less self-awareness tend to increase chances of behavior problems involvement”* (Student 3, FGD, 3)

*“Students who have self-awareness can mislead the less self-aware are to get into indiscipline cases claiming they will seek justice in return. Students who understand themselves have humble time being in school following the school routine”* (Student, 5, FGD, 2)

From the excerpts from the focus group discussions with students, it can be concluded that students who have higher level of self-awareness are less likely to involve in behavior problems unlike the ones who have low self-awareness that are more likely to involve in behavior problems. Fossati and colleagues (2009) indicated that difficulties with emotional awareness and the identification of feelings were significantly related to impulsive aggression.

Another theme which emerged from qualitative findings was high self-awareness. This meant that the students were able to accurately monitor their emotions every time and this helped them to adjust appropriately hence they mostly involved in pro-social behaviours. Most respondents reported that students who have high self-awareness are not likely to indulge in behavioral problems. The students who have high self-awareness engage in pro-social behaviours and are thus regarded as well adjusted. Students with good knowledge of life skills are more likely to engage in pro-social behaviours. Some respondents reported that:

*“A student who is aware of whom he/she is will have the full confidence of negatively influencing others to*

*take part in strikes, boycotts or go slows for lesson attendance. Self aware students have self confidence and self actualization as they plan their work and they get humble time following the school routine”* (DP, 5)

*“Students understand their well being targets /goals in life hence they are not likely to indulge in behavior problems unlike the non-self aware one who are likely to indulge in behavior problems”* (DP, 7)

*“Students having self-awareness have less behavior problems, they understand themselves; have self confidence and self-actualization. They have proper planning of their work and have humble time following school routine”* (DP, 8)

From the interview excerpts of the deputy principals above, it can be concluded that having high self-awareness makes students to be more focused on their school goals and are thus likely to engage more in the pro-social behaviours. Abdullah, Phaik, Samsilahand Maznah (2014) self-Awareness is the main factor of delinquent behavior. On the contrary, Maya et al (2015) reported that aggression was positively correlated with self enhancement and openness to change values, and negatively correlated with self-transcendence and conservation values. Similarly, Rosen, (2016) also disagrees that poor emotional awareness was not directly related to changes in subsequent frequency of physical or relational aggression.

## 4. Conclusions & Recommendations

From inferential findings, it is evident that there was statistically significant positive correlation between Self-Awareness and indulgence in behavior among students. Qualitative findings reported that there were students with high level of self-awareness while there were others with low self-awareness. Most respondents reported that students who have high self-awareness are not likely to indulge in behavioral problems. The students who have high self-awareness engage in pro-social behaviours and are thus regarded as well adjusted. From interviews with the heads of guidance and counseling, it was also reported that students with high self-awareness are more likely to engage in pro-social behaviors and thus the students are less likely to be found in behavior problems. Most respondents reported that students with low self-awareness are always engaged in behavior problems while in school. Such students have lost direction in the academic work and are thus likely to use bad energy by engaging in antisocial behaviours.

The teacher counsellors should initiate periodical students' psychological assessment on their self-awareness to be able to identify students with low level awareness. This would help them develop appropriate mechanisms to empower them.

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