

Emotional Intelligence and Indiscipline among Secondary School Students in Kilifi County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Indiscipline among secondary school students has received little research attention in relation to their emotional intelligence level. The main objective of this study was to establish the relationship between emotional intelligence and indiscipline among public secondary school students in Kilifi County. The study was informed by Kohlberg's theory of Moral development. A Correlational research design was adopted. The independent variables in the study were emotional intelligence and indiscipline target population was all the year 2018 from four students in public secondary schools in Kilifi County. Purposive, simple random and cluster sampling procedures were used in the selection of schools, teachers and students respectively. The study sample size was 279, comprising 145 girls and 126 boys, 6 teachers and two discipline masters. Data was collected using an adapted Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test and an indiscipline scale for teachers and students. A pilot study was conducted to enhance the reliability, content validity and construct validity of all the research instruments. The pilot study was also used to ascertain administrative logistics. In the pilot study, 36 from four students from one of the extra-county school participated. Descriptive statistics including frequency distributions, mean of variance and percentages were used to describe sample characteristics. Inferential statistical procedures including Pearson correlation and multiple regression, were used to test study hypotheses at $\alpha=0.05$. Emotional intelligence showed a strong negative relationship ($r=-0.764^*$) with the students' indiscipline level. A major recommendation of the study was that teachers, educators and all stakeholders in education should work together to enable the development of emotional intelligence of students to reduce students' indiscipline levels.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Indiscipline, Inter personal and intrapersonal relationship

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) is an important skill that helps us navigate emotions not just in ourselves but also in others. Emotional intelligence encompasses a wide range of skills and abilities, they span from the ability to understand, perceive, and classify emotions to the capability to express, regulate and manage them (Melinda, 2022). Psychologists have found that emotional responses come before cognitive ones, which makes it vital to understand and correctly interpret one's emotional states. This ability is beneficial to a person in making the right decisions, knowing himself, and in reducing the influence of negativity (Sangeetha, 2017; Valente et al., 2020).

Emotional intelligence is a concept that was popularized through Gardners publication of his theory of multiple intelligences. Madhavi and Vijaya laxmi (2010) defined emotional intelligence (EI) as one's capacity to distinguish, assimilate, recognize and regulate emotions in promoting personal growth. This implies that an emotionally intelligent person has the ability to identify and, understand his or her emotions.

Further, they are able to experience and express emotions healthily and in a productive manner. Notably, the skill to experience and express one’s emotions is peculiar to each person; no individual portrays this behavior in a similar way to another. Emotional intelligence is a combination of advanced capabilities to recognize and value oneself, uphold a variety of strong fruitful and healthy interpersonal relationships, relate and work well with others to realize positive outcomes, and efficiently handle everyday life stress and working difficulties. Emotional intelligence is therefore a key skill in alleviating behavior problems which are acquired in the process of individual growth. According to Chew et al., (2013) these behavior problems take the form of indiscipline in schools. Studies have shown that high levels of emotional intelligence contribute to better discipline during classroom learning (Di Fabio et al., 2016, Melinda, 2022). Any absence of emotional intelligence may lead to lack of empathy, difficulty in controlling and expressing emotions, as well as depression.

Bar-On (2006) and Goleman (1995) additionally observed that the inappropriate behavior of particular students is often due, in part, to a lack of emotional intelligence, for example, lack of expressive and regulatory skills. Behavior problems have a bearing on EI of the students as indicated by Goleman (1995), who noted that increased emotional intelligence helps adolescents to make more complex, sophisticated and pro-social decisions. Further, students who lack emotional intelligence abilities are unable to deal with stress or handle stressful experiences at school (Fteiha and Awwad 2020). Therefore, unless the students undergo emotional growth and development, the learning interaction with the teacher may be ineffective and this may also contribute to behavior problems which may be acquired in the process of individual growth.

Ching, Jiar and Jafri (2015), affirmed that EI skills, that is, self-regulation and self-awareness, empathy, social skills and motivation, can be developed in order to promote students ways of articulating their emotions. These researchers confirmed that this could be achieved by using discipline as a strategy to impart, train, coordinate, regulate and organize individuals and their activities in the school. Bear (2010), additionally, noted that through learning self-discipline one is able to actively transform and endorse the internalized values, standards, beliefs and attitudes of their parents, teachers and others in society as their own. This proper discipline strategy should therefore yield specific behavior patterns and improvement of the moral standard of an individual as well as the mental well-being.

Numerous studies have been carried out on indiscipline-related issues among Kenyan students. Most of these researches have focused on the impact of indiscipline on students’ academic progress, as well as establishing variables contributing to indiscipline trends among learners; emotional difficulties of the students have seldom been looked at. For these reasons, the researcher realized the need to unearth the relationship between emotional intelligence, indiscipline among secondary school students. The current study viewed indiscipline among students from an emotional viewpoint and also aimed provide an alternative approach to tackle the problem.

• **Conceptual Framework**

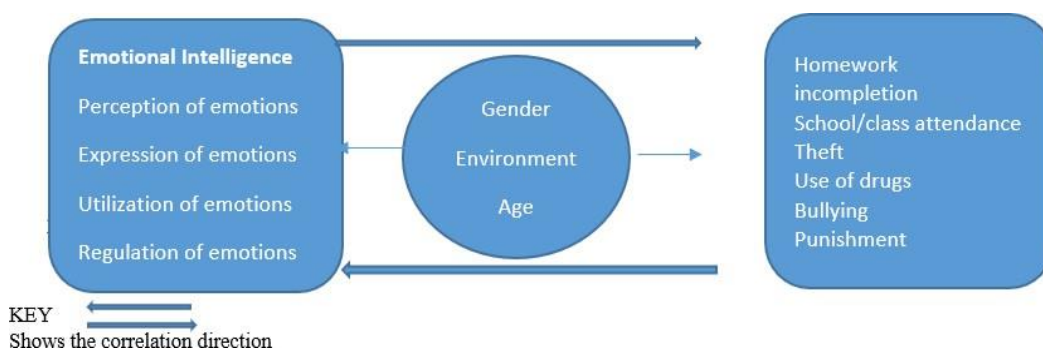


Figure 1: Conceptual Frameworks

LITERATURE REVIEW

A student who has emotional intelligence skills is most likely capable of handling everyday life challenges, notwithstanding the problems that emanate from the family, peers, school or even the community. Kohlberg (1975) observed that students can be taught to recognize their emotions and regulate them, which he referred to as emotional literacy, to avoid provoking fellow students, teachers and even parents as this would improve the moral standard of society. Consequently, this emotional literacy may help the students in decision making and adherence to stipulated rules, which is a demonstration of higher moral reasoning. Goleman (2010) clarified that emotional intelligence underlined the role of emotion and has a close relationship with individuals' behavior; further Goleman explained that higher ability for emotional responsiveness assists a person in recognizing the influence that emotions have on behavior.

In a related study Valente, Monteiro and Lourenco (2018) sought to establish how teacher's emotional intelligence related to classroom discipline management. The study sample was 559 which comprised basic and secondary school teachers in Portugal. The study employed an Emotional Competence Questionnaire. To measure the classroom management variables a Scale of Teacher Efficacy was used. The teachers filled-out a form was employed to solicit personal and professional information. The results showed that superior abilities in managing discipline in the classroom were demonstrated by teachers who had more capability to handle emotions. The findings indicated that the teachers' perception of their emotions, the manner in which they expressed them and their capability to manage their emotions impacted their practice. The study recommended the incorporation of EI skills in teacher training to enhance appropriate management of their emotions.

In another related study Jeloudar, Yunus, Roslan and Shariff (2011) examined emotional intelligence of the teachers and its relationship with classroom approaches of discipline based on perceptions of the teachers and students in secondary schools in Malaysia. The study sample involved 203 teachers and 2147 students. From the results of the study, there was a significant relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and the perceptions of students on teachers' classroom approaches on discipline. Further the results provided a substantial association between EI levels of teachers and five tactics of dealing with discipline in classroom which included: dialogue, violence, hinting, appreciation or reward and participation. Further, the findings showed that there was no significant relationship between punishment and discipline in a classroom. From this study, the researcher predicted that high emotional intelligence might strongly impact the students discipline levels in school, thus the present study was conducted to test the prediction.

Another study was conducted among students in different age groups in Malaysia. Durlak and Weissberg (2011) focused on Socibal-Emotional Learning (SEL) as a way of developing discipline among students in schools. The study involved a sample of 213 students who were selected from kindergarten up to high schools. The students included those from urban, suburban and rural school settings. The findings indicated a momentous improvement in student's attitude, emotional pressure, social-emotional abilities, behavior and academic achievement while social emotional learning programs were incorporated. Further the researcher suggested incorporation of SEL in the curriculum as a principal subject or as an imperative component in subjects. These research studies were done in other countries and the findings showed that discipline can be improved through developing student's social-emotional skills. The current study sought to establish whether EI of the students was related to their indiscipline level.

Moneva and Gatan (2020) in a related study surveyed the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-discipline among students in senior high school in the Philippines. The sample was made up of 245 senior high school students. To obtain data on emotional intelligence and self-discipline the students' questionnaires were constructed. The data collected was cleaned, coded and analyzed then interpreted. The

researcher used descriptive statistics such as measures of central tendency and measures of variance to describe the sample characteristics. In order to establish whether there existed differences among students' emotional intelligence and self-discipline Chi-square was computed. The results of the study revealed that the emotional intelligence and self-discipline of the students related significantly. This was an indication that the two variables influenced each other, such that an emotionally intelligent student had high self-discipline. The study recommended that teachers should help students to develop their emotional intelligence as this would improve learner's self-discipline.

In Kenya, educational researchers have not directly explored the relationship between EI and indiscipline, but this relationship can be deduced from related studies. For instance, Makewa and Ngila (2016) conducted a study to establish the association between students EI and their self-discipline levels in secondary schools in Kenya. The study employed both descriptive and comparative design in the sense that the participants were assessed first and the variables were compared in terms of class levels and sex. High school students were selected purposively. The target population of the study was 725 students, out of which a sample of 224 students was drawn. To acquire data on the EI levels and self-discipline, a students' questionnaire was constructed. In comparing and analyzing the descriptive information that was obtained mean ratings were used. One-way ANOVA was used to establish whether there were differences in EI levels of male and female in different class levels.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to assess whether emotional intelligence was associated with students' self-discipline. On Emotional intelligence and self-discipline, female students recorded slightly higher values in comparison to those of male students, however the difference was not statistically significant. There were substantial differences in EI levels between the classes that the respondents attended, which were closely linked to their high school experience. Student's EI level correlated positively with their self-discipline level. This research having been conducted using a sample in Kenya and revealed a positive relationship between the variables under study, formed a basis for comparison when a sample in Kenya was used.

Considering the above reviewed literature, it is evident that the link between emotional intelligence and indiscipline has not yet been exhaustively explored and therefore this calls for further research. The current discipline strategies have not focused on the role of emotions which is an important factor to reduce the cases of indiscipline. In the present study the researcher therefore scrutinized the relationship between emotional intelligence and indiscipline among secondary school students in Kilifi County, Kenya. The findings might provide a new paradigm to resolve the documented indiscipline cases in the County and Kenya in general.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A Correlational research design was used in current study. The design was used to establish the relationship between emotional intelligence and the indiscipline of the students. According to Jackson, (2014) correlational designs allow researchers to describe the relationship between two measured variables.

Study participants

The study target was extra county secondary schools whose total population is 2120. The study sampled 13% equivalent to 271 participants of the population which was comprised of 145 girls and 126 boys. According to Gorard (2001), a sample size above 10 percent is considered appropriate. Other participants were two deputy principals and six teachers from the two selected schools.

Research instruments

The study employed two research instruments in data collection; emotional Intelligence scale and Indiscipline scale for the students.

Data collection procedure

The researcher presented the research permit to the administration of the sampled schools, then familiarized with the school and established time for administration of the instruments. The researcher then sought consent from the students to administer the research tools. The identified participants were given instructions on the completion of emotional intelligence scale. The researcher made an effort to clarify some of the terms in the tools to make them clear to the respondents. The researcher then collected the instruments immediately after the participants filled them in. The response rate was 100%.

Data analysis

Quantitative data which was obtained from the scale was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as measures of central tendency and percentages were used to describe sample characteristics and were presented in tables. Inferential statistical procedures specifically Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression were used to test each hypothesis at $\alpha = 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results were analyzed in line with the study objectives.

The adapted version of the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test was used to collect data on EI of students in this study. Students' emotional intelligence scores were categorized into low, average or high levels. Mean and standard deviations were also calculated to provide detailed information on the participants self-rating scores on emotional intelligence. Comprehensive descriptive statistical analysis was analyzed using the overall emotional intelligence scores as presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Emotional intelligence scores of the students

N	271
Range	103
Min	46
Max	149
Mean	123.71
SD	12.20
Skweness	-1.227
Kurtosis	5.157
Std Error Kurtosis	.295

Key: Min- Minimum Score Max- Maximum Score SD- Standard deviation

The information presented in Table 4.1 shows a summary of the scores computed from the Emotional

Intelligence Scale administered to the students. The highest score attained was 149 while the student who scored the least had 46. The standard deviation was 12.20 which implied relatively wide dispersion of scores among the participants with high emotional intelligence level and those with low emotional intelligence level. The mean was 123.71 which showed that the majority of the participants scored an average in their overall EI. The distribution of EI self-rating scores was negatively skewed (skewness-1.227) meaning that majority of the participants rated themselves average on the overall emotional intelligence test. Kurtosis was 5.157 which showed a positive distribution affirming the large variation of scores.

Profile of indiscipline levels of the students

This study aimed to profile the indiscipline levels of the students. The data on indiscipline was obtained from the self-rating indiscipline questionnaire administered to the students ratings of the students' indiscipline. The participants' indiscipline scores from the self-rating scale were analyzed as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Indiscipline scores of the students

N	270
Range	54
Min	26
Max	80
Mean	69.71
SD	7.80073
Skweness	-1.750
Kurtosis	6.392

Key: Min- Minimum Score Max- Maximum Score SD- Standard deviation

The above scores were computed from 270 students who conclusively responded to the scale. The minimum score which was obtained by the participants was 26 while the maximum score was 80; the minimum score denoted low level of indiscipline while the maximum score indicated high level of indiscipline. The mean score was 69.71 which indicated that majority of the students scored highly in indiscipline scale since the high level of indiscipline range was between 70-100 scores. The standard deviation (7.80073) showed a moderate dispersion of the score distribution between highly indiscipline and the disciplined students. The skewness coefficient was established to be -1.750 which meant that the majority of participants rated themselves above the mean on this scale. Kurtosis of 6.392 shows a wide range of the score on indiscipline scale.

Relationship between emotional intelligence and indiscipline

The study also aimed to establish the relationship between emotional intelligence and indiscipline of the students. The scores obtained from EI scale and indiscipline self-rating scales for the students were used.

The following null hypothesis was tested.

H01: There is no relationship between emotional intelligence and indiscipline levels of students.

The relationship between overall emotional intelligence and academic achievement was tested. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Relationship between overall emotional intelligence and indiscipline of the students

		Emotional intelligence	Indiscipline
Emotional intelligence	Pearson Correlation		.764**
	Sig (2-tailed)	1	.000
Indiscipline	Pearson Correlation	.764**	
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	1

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed as shown in Table 1.1 using the students' scores from EI and indiscipline scales. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used and a correlation coefficient of ($r=-.764^{**}$, $p<0.01$) was obtained. This showed that there was a strong negative and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and level of indiscipline. This implied that students who had high levels of indiscipline had low emotional intelligence levels. In that student who had a low level of expressing his emotions may be involved in confrontations or fights in school. On the other hand, this meant that students who are able to regulate their emotions are able to relate well with their teachers and fellow students. The findings were in line with a study by Makewa and Ngila (2016) who found a weak but positive relationship between self-discipline and emotional intelligence at ($r=.219^{**}$, $p=.001$). This was an indication that student's emotional intelligence was associated with their self-discipline. Further the researcher noted that to improve on emotional intelligence there was a need to improve self-discipline and vice versa. Equally, the current study findings agreed with Moneva and Gatana (2020) and Durlak (2011) who reported that there was a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-discipline. These researchers suggested the incorporation of social-emotional learning in the curriculum after revealing that social-emotional learning improved the discipline level of the learners.

Another study by Valente et al., (2020) revealed a connection between emotional intelligence ability and teacher efficacy, labeling the two of them as fundamental characteristics of a teacher. The authors argued that teaching is an activity that causes a significant emotional workload and thus requires a teacher to possess sensitivity and knowledge of how to optimize the quality of interpersonal relationships with their students. It once again emphasizes how important the teachers' emotional intelligence is. These studies finding were consistent with the current study in that there was a strong relationship between student's emotional intelligence and their indiscipline levels. From the study results, a student with high level of emotional intelligence was found to have low levels of indiscipline. For instance, they were less involved in punishment, bullying, homework incompleteness or even theft cases. The

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study results proved that there existed a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and the indiscipline of the students. This showed that the lower the emotional intelligence level of the students the higher their indiscipline levels. This may explain why students are involved in cases of fighting, harassment and even provoking fellow students and teachers.

The study therefore recommended that the learners should be exposed to the concept emotional intelligence through incorporating of emotional intelligence related topics in guidance and counseling programs in order to help them develop their emotional intelligence skills. This can be done through training them, on their

emotional perception, expression, regulation and utilization and of their emotions and those of others. Consequently, this will improve their intrapersonal, interpersonal relationships as well as communication skills both at school and out of school, thus reducing the indiscipline cases among students.

More research is necessary to unpack how emotional intelligence relates to students in boarding and day schools. There is a dire need to carry out research on the relationship between students' emotional intelligence levels in urban and rural areas.

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