

Article

# Mindfulness Exercise, Students' Self-awareness and Emotional Regulation in Ethical Decision-making in Secondary Schools in Ahoada West Local Government Area, Rivers State: Implications for Counselling

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**Abstract:** The research investigates how mindfulness training affects the self-perception and ability to manage emotions when making ethical choices among secondary students in Ahoada West, Rivers State. Research was conducted using a quasi-experimental design for studying two research objectives along with research questions and hypotheses. Students from 15 public Senior Secondary Schools in Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State formed the 3,760 individuals in the study's population. A total of 134 students from SSS II participated in the research through a simple random sampling method that distributed 74 students to the control group and 60 students to the experimental group. Researchers used two assessment tools which were Students' Self-awareness in Ethical Decision-making Survey (SSEDS) and Emotional Regulation in Ethical Decision-making Survey (EREDS) to gather required data. The SSEDS instrument displayed reliability of 0.832 and EREDS displayed 0.879 according to Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis indicating the survey instruments had valid reliability. The experimental group of students underwent 10-minute breathing-focused observations of their mental processes without judgment during each session before intervention data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study's results indicated that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of self-awareness in ethical decision-making among students exposed and those not to mindfulness exercise, and there is a significant difference in the mean rating of emotional regulation in ethical decision-making among students exposed and those not to mindfulness exercise. The study recommended among others that; teachers should consider incorporating mindfulness exercises into their curriculum to improve students' self-awareness and emotional regulation in ethical decision-making so that students can develop a deeper understanding of their values and beliefs.

**Citation:** Konye, N. Onisoya, M. Mindfulness Exercise, Students' Self-awareness and Emotional Regulation in Ethical Decision-making in Secondary Schools in Ahoada West Local Government Area, Rivers State: Implications for Counselling. Journal of Inclusive and Sustainable Education 2025, 4(1), 30-40.

Received: 11<sup>th</sup> Dec 2024

Revised: 26<sup>th</sup> Dec 2024

Accepted: 23<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025

Published: 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025



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**Keywords:** Mindfulness, Exercise, Students' Self-Awareness, Emotional Regulation, Ethical Decision-making

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the importance of social-emotional learning in educational settings has gained significant attention, particularly in the context of secondary schools. One area

that has emerged as a focal point in this field is the practice of mindfulness exercises, which are designed to enhance students' self-awareness and emotional regulation, among other critical aspects of students' lives [1]. Adolescents are revealing that elevated levels of stress are creating issues for them inside the domains of scholastic achievement, peer and family connections, and healthy decision-making [2]. Unmanaged, intense stress can prompt sentiments of tension and depression and lead to lowered self-efficacy and powerlessness to resiliently manage life's challenges. In Ahoada East, a Local Government Area of Rivers State, where the cultural and social dynamics greatly influence the decisions and behaviour of students, incorporating mindfulness practices may offer a unique approach to fostering ethical decision-making among adolescents, as well as contribute to a deeper understanding of how such practices can shape student behaviour in a school environment.

Mindfulness exercises, rooted in ancient contemplative traditions, involve training the mind to achieve a state of focused attention and emotional clarity [3] defined Mindfulness exercises as techniques that help individuals cultivate present-moment awareness and non-judgmental acceptance of their thoughts, emotions, and sensations. [4] highlighted that mindfulness mitigates outcomes of toxic stress by distinguishing people exposed to high-stress environments by improving both long-term coping and impacting related psychological effects of stress. Mindfulness improves resilience; the absence of resilience may predispose to conditions like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and further negative well-being outcomes as found in individuals who experience trauma [5]. The research investigates how mindfulness training affects the self-perception and ability to manage emotions when making ethical choices among secondary students in Ahoada West, Rivers State. Research was conducted using a quasi-experimental design for studying two research objectives along with research questions and hypotheses. Students from 15 public Senior Secondary Schools in Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State formed the 3,760 individuals in the study's population. A total of 134 students from SSS II participated in the research through a simple random sampling method that distributed 74 students to the control group and 60 students to the experimental group. Researchers used two assessment tools which were Students' Self-awareness in Ethical Decision-making Survey (SSEDS) and Emotional Regulation in Ethical Decision-making Survey (EREDS) to gather required data. The SSEDS instrument displayed reliability of 0.832 and EREDS displayed 0.879 according to Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis indicating the survey instruments had valid reliability. The experimental group of students underwent 10-minute breathing-focused observations of their mental processes without judgment during each session before intervention data collection.

According to [6] self-regulation represents the means through which students achieve control over their feelings along with their concentration and attitudes to perform directed actions. Regarding self-regulation [7] noted that it entails mental social and psychological abilities that facilitate progress toward dreams during periods of stress. The researchers at [8] described self-regulation as the ability of people to understand their learning while developing knowledge and habits and controlling emotions and maintaining focus while contributing to team work to measure the progress of goal achievement.

Student perspectives about ethical decision-making and ethics in Ahoada West strongly depend on the local cultural dynamics. The levels of traditional values together with community expectations and societal norms will affect how much adolescents practice ethical conduct. The School curriculum benefits when educators include mindfulness exercises because it builds a setting which promotes both ethical understanding and reflective contemplation. Therefore, this study investigates the effect of mindfulness exercise on students' self-awareness and emotional regulation in ethical decision-making in secondary schools in Ahoada West, Rivers State.

In 1986 Albert Bandura offered Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) to society as the Canadian psychologist who suggested people learn from observing others perform actions together with their outcomes. Self-efficacy and self-awareness and self-regulation serve as essential factors which drive decision-making processes according to this principle. Through his theory schematization Bandura demonstrates how triadic reciprocal causation works [9]. SCT maintains that persons respond simultaneously to internal elements combined with environmental aspects along with behavioral responses that align to form a permanent cycle. Bandura's theory demonstrates wide usage in education and psychology and health promotion to understand skill acquisition which happens through modeling and observational learning.

Social cognitive theory can be appropriately applied to this study because of its focus on observation learning and social influences on behavior which generates important knowledge about mindfulness practices' effects on student emotional management and self-awareness. The study examines these aspects in ethical decision-making to furnish a better comprehension of how societal forces and individual behavior and cognition intersect with one another.

[10] conducted research to determine how self-awareness predicts the emotional regulation challenges faced by faculty members. A survey research design was the basis for the current quantitative study. The study gathered data through Self-Awareness Scale and Emotional Regulation Difficulties Scale from 172 teaching faculty members at Philadelphia University in Jordan together with Arab Open University in Jordan and Al Falah University in the U.A.E. Study results demonstrated how the increase of the self-awareness subscale (self-critical) behavior leads to lower emotional response non-acceptance among subjects. Faculty members showed decreased levels of non-acceptance toward emotional responses together with diminished goal-directed difficulties when their desire for realistic self-awareness increased according to the researchers. Research showed that boosting self-awareness through self-reflection brings down emotional response denial levels and goal-directed conduct difficulties and impulse control challenges.

[11] investigated the emotional intelligence and academic adjustments of second-year university students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The correlational design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of all the second-year university students from two universities in Akwa Ibom state. A sample of 500 students was selected for the study using the Taro Yamane Sampling formula. The subjects were drawn using a simple random sampling technique. The instruments for data collection were adopted standardized "National Health Service Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire" (NHSEIQ) and "Academic Adjustment Scale" (AAS). Three research questions and hypotheses were formulated and tested at a .05 significance level using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The results indicated that there is a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic adjustment.

### **1. Statement of Problems**

Students' self-awareness and emotional regulation are critical components of ethical decision-making issues among students in secondary schools, especially because at that age they are still developing their moral compass and values. Adolescence is a time that is noted for being stressful due to many developmental changes that take place as well as life transitions that accompany these changes [12]. These developmental changes for the adolescents can run across multiple domains during which, the adolescents stand a risk of internalizing problems of depression and anxiety including increased potential for sensation seeking and experimentation.

The inability to understand oneself along with poor emotional control results in rapidly made poor decisions which creates room for pressure from peers and unethical actions. A significant number of students find it difficult to detect their feelings together

with the way these emotions influence their cognitive processes and overall actions. Most students encounter challenges identifying correct and incorrect behavior in complex ethical situations which results in their inability to make sound choices and creates possible adverse outcomes. The management of emotions plays an equal role during this process. Emotional management skills help students solve ethical problems wisely when they encounter such situations.

Ahoada West Local Government Area faces such high levels of socioeconomic difficulty along with peer pressure that students experience major obstacles toward maintaining self-regulation [13]. Social circumstances which unite with emotional challenges drive individuals to make risky choices that affect their personal reputation as well as the reputation of the entire community. The troubling long-run repercussions for student success and life well-being include situations that lead these at-risk behaviors into more dangerous levels.

Substance abuse along with criminal activities cause enduring damage to future opportunities and relationships of students. The failure of educational institutions to work with students about fundamental social and emotional issues raises their chances of adverse effects. This research evaluated how secondary students from Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State performed in ethical decision making following mindfulness exercises and self-awareness development.

## **2. Aim and Objectives of the Study**

This study aimed to investigate the effect of mindfulness exercise on students' self-awareness and emotional regulation in ethical decision-making in secondary schools in Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State [14]. The specific objectives were to:

- a. Determine the effect of mindfulness exercise on students' self-awareness in ethical decision-making
- b. Ascertain the effect of mindfulness exercise on students' emotional regulation in ethical decision-making.

## **3. Research Questions**

- a. What is the effect of mindfulness exercise on students' self-awareness in ethical decision-making?
- b. What is the effect of mindfulness exercise on students' emotional regulation in ethical decision-making?

## **4. Hypotheses**

- a. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of self-awareness in ethical decision-making among students exposed and those not to mindfulness exercise.
- b. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of emotional regulation in ethical decision-making among students exposed and those not to mindfulness exercise.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

This study adopted a quasi-experimental research design that involved a non-equivalent and non-randomized control group. The features of this design included a pre-test, post-test and the use of an intact class. By implication, the choice of this design was to enable a comparison between the experimental and control groups in terms of their self-awareness and emotional regulation after participating in the mindfulness exercise.

The study's population consisted of 3,760 students, drawn from 15 public Senior Secondary Schools in Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria (Source: Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board, 2023, Port Harcourt Zonal Office). This study used two intact classes (one experimental group and one control group), with a sample size of 134 students from SSS II classes. The school used and the classes were selected using a simple random sampling technique.

Two instruments: Students' Self-awareness in Ethical Decision-making Survey (SSEDS), and Emotional Regulation in Ethical Decision-making Survey (EREDES) were used to collect the required data. The authors created the instruments, and participants rated them using a four-point Likert scale: Very High Extent (4 points), to Very Low Extent (1 point). The questionnaire was reviewed for accuracy and relevance by experts in Measurement and Evaluation and a Psychologist. The reliability coefficients of SSEDS = 0.832, and EREDS = 0.879 were determined using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation; suggesting that the questionnaires had acceptable internal consistency.

The researchers obtained authorization from school principals for the study to proceed inside the selected educational institutions before beginning [15]. A two-day training session served to both teach and train research assistants about all study protocols and procedures. The teachers from the control group dedicated their assistance to support the research. The researchers avoided including teachers from the control group because they wanted to protect the study from being affected by a Hawthorne Effect. A specific mindfulness teaching protocol with meditation and breath control methods delivered the exercise to experimental group students. Each session of the experimental group protocol required students to follow their breath while monitoring mental thoughts without making judgments for a total duration of 10 minutes. The methodology intended to build participant awareness and achieve relaxation as its primary objectives [16]. The students included in the control group escaped any mindfulness training sessions during the study.

An initial pre-test for SSEDS combined with EREDS was administered to every participant from both study groups before the study started. Students assigned to the experimental group completed mindfulness exercises whereas the control group students received no intervention treatment [17]. [18] Post-testing occurred for all participating students to determine shifts in their self-awareness and emotional regulation capabilities. The research questions were addressed through mean and standard deviation and the hypotheses were tested through Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at the 0.05 level of significance.

### 3. Results

Research Question 1: *What is the effect of mindfulness exercise on students' self-awareness in ethical decision-making?*

**Table 1.** Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of the Effect of Mindfulness Exercise on Students' Self-Awareness in Ethical Decision-Making.

S/N	Items	Control (n=74)		Experimental (n=60)	
		$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD
	Pre-test				
1	I am aware of my values and beliefs that influence my ethical decision-making	1.31	0.47	1.48	0.50
2	I regularly reflect on the consequences of my actions on others	1.80	0.84	1.92	0.96
3	I seek feedback from others to improve my ethical decision-making skills	1.92	0.87	1.48	0.50
4	I am open to considering different perspectives when making ethical decisions,	1.92	0.89	1.92	0.89
5	I take responsibility for my mistakes and learn from them	2.05	0.99	2.02	1.08
6	I can identify ethical dilemmas in various situations	1.92	0.28	1.90	0.30

7	I prioritize honesty and integrity in all aspects of my life	2.12	1.09	2.22	1.01
8	I am aware of the impact of my decisions on the well-being of others	2.12	1.12	2.02	1.05
9	I actively seek opportunities to practice ethical decision-making in real-life scenarios	1.54	0.53	2.02	0.93
10	I believe that self-awareness is essential for making ethical decisions.	1.99	1.01	1.97	0.99
Grand Mean		1.87		1.90	
Post-test		$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD
1	I am aware of my values and beliefs that influence my ethical decision-making	2.91	1.04	3.18	0.91
2	I regularly reflect on the consequences of my actions on others	2.59	1.08	3.20	0.88
3	I seek feedback from others to improve my ethical decision-making skills	1.89	.73	3.17	0.98
4	I am open to considering different perspectives when making ethical decisions,	1.93	.85	3.48	0.60
5	I take responsibility for my mistakes and learn from them	1.97	.94	3.33	0.73
6	I can identify ethical dilemmas in various situations	1.92	.74	3.40	0.72
7	I prioritize honesty and integrity in all aspects of my life	2.11	1.05	2.92	0.87
8	I am aware of the impact of my decisions on the well-being of others	2.19	1.02	3.28	0.80
9	I actively seek opportunities to practice ethical decision-making in real-life scenarios	2.18	1.04	3.43	0.81
10	I believe that self-awareness is essential for making ethical decisions.	2.69	1.08	3.22	1.03
Grand Mean		2.24		3.26	

Criterion Mean = 2.5, Mean: 1.0-1-2.49= Low Extent (LE), Mean: 2.5-4.00 = High Extent (HE).

Table 1 shows the effect of mindfulness exercises on students' self-awareness in ethical decision-making. The pre-test result shows the responses from the control and experimental groups. The result from the control group revealed that the majority of the respondents indicated low extent to items 1-10, with their mean score less than the criterion mean of 2.5, and within the mean range of 1.0-2.49. On the other hand, the result from the experimental group revealed that the majority of the respondents indicated low extent to items 1-10, with their mean score less than the criterion mean of 2.5, and within the mean range of 1.0-2.49.

The post-test result shows the responses from the control and experimental groups. The result from the control group revealed that the majority of the respondents indicated low extent to items 3-9, with their mean score less than the criterion mean of 2.5, and within the mean range of 1.0-2.49, while the majority of the respondents indicated high extent to items 1, 2, & 10, with their mean score greater than or equal to the criterion mean of 2.5, and within the mean range of 2.50-4.00. On the other hand, the result from the experimental group revealed that the majority of the respondents indicated a high extent to items 1-10, with their mean score greater than or equal to the criterion mean of 2.5, and within the mean range of 2.50-4.00. The grand mean of 1.87 as the pre-test, and 2.24 as the post-test for the control group shows that the extent to which mindfulness exercise affects students' self-awareness in ethical decision-making is low, while the grand mean of 1.90

as the pre-test, and 3.26 as post-test for the experimental group shows that the extent to which mindfulness exercise affects students' self-awareness in ethical decision-making is high.

**Research Question 2:** *What is the effect of mindfulness exercise on students' emotional regulation in ethical decision-making?*

**Table 2.** Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of the Effect of Mindfulness Exercise on Students' Emotional Regulation in Ethical Decision-Making.

S/N	Items	Control (n=74)		Experimental (n=60)	
		$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD
		<b>Pre-test</b>			
11	I can remain calm and composed when faced with ethical dilemmas	1.82	1.18	1.88	1.26
12	I can control my emotions effectively in difficult ethical situations	2.01	0.93	1.97	0.97
13	I can regulate my emotional reactions when making ethical decisions	2.36	1.05	2.60	1.12
14	I can manage stress and anxiety while making ethical choices	1.92	0.87	2.08	1.01
15	I can stay focused and rational when dealing with moral issues	1.88	0.83	2.07	0.97
16	I can consider the feelings of others while making ethical decisions	1.92	0.87	2.13	1.03
17	I can empathize with those affected by my choices	1.91	0.86	2.08	0.98
18	I can balance my own emotions with the needs of others in ethical dilemmas	1.97	0.89	2.08	1.01
19	I can recognize and address biases that may influence my emotional responses in ethical decision-making	1.92	0.90	2.15	1.06
20	I can reflect on my emotional reactions after making ethical choices.	2.34	0.98	2.17	0.94
	Grand Mean	2.01		2.12	
		<b>Post-test</b>			
		$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD
11	I can remain calm and composed when faced with ethical dilemmas	2.95	0.96	3.03	0.92
12	I can control my emotions effectively in difficult ethical situations	2.41	1.03	3.17	0.81
13	I can regulate my emotional reactions when making ethical decisions	1.91	0.89	3.18	0.87
14	I can manage stress and anxiety while making ethical choices	2.49	1.17	2.88	1.08
15	I can stay focused and rational when dealing with moral issues	1.80	0.57	3.02	0.93
16	I can consider the feelings of others while making ethical decisions	1.91	0.78	3.12	0.85
17	I can empathize with those affected by my choices	1.80	0.57	3.23	0.77
18	I can balance my own emotions with the needs of others in ethical dilemmas	2.32	1.07	3.28	0.80
19	I can recognize and address biases that may influence my emotional responses in ethical decision-making	2.27	1.02	3.60	0.62

20	I can reflect on my emotional reactions after making ethical choices.	2.04	0.94	3.20	0.78
	Grand Mean	2.19		3.17	

Criterion Mean = 2.5, Mean: 1.0-1-2.49= Low Extent (LE), Mean: 2.5-4.00 = High Extent (HE).

Table 2 shows the effect of mindfulness exercise on students' emotional regulation in ethical decision-making. The pre-test result shows the responses from the control and experimental groups. The result from the control group revealed that the majority of the respondents indicated low extent to items 11-20, with their mean score less than the criterion mean of 2.5, and within the mean range of 1.0-2.49. On the other hand, the result from the experimental group revealed that the majority of the respondents indicated low extent to items 11, 12, & 14-20, with their mean score less than the criterion mean of 2.5, and within the mean range of 1.0-2.49. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents indicated a high extent to item 13, with their mean score greater than or equal to the criterion mean of 2.5, and within the mean range of 2.50-4.00.

The post-test result shows the responses from the control and experimental groups. The result from the control group revealed that the majority of the respondents indicated low extent to items 12-20, with their mean score less than the criterion mean of 2.5, and within the mean range of 1.0-2.49, while the majority of the respondents indicated high extent to items 11, with their mean score greater than or equal to the criterion mean of 2.5, and within the mean range of 2.50-4.00. On the other hand, the result from the experimental group revealed that the majority of the respondents indicated a high extent to items 11-20, with their mean score greater than or equal to the criterion mean of 2.5, and within the mean range of 2.50-4.00.

The grand mean of 2.01 as the pre-test, and 2.19 as the post-test for the control group shows that the extent to which mindfulness exercise affects students' emotional regulation in ethical decision-making is low, while the grand mean of 2.12 as the pre-test, and 3.17 as the post-test for the experimental group shows that the extent to which mindfulness exercise affects students' emotional regulation in ethical decision-making is high.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of self-awareness in ethical decision-making among students exposed and those not to mindfulness exercise.

Dependent Variable: Post-test Self-awareness.

**Table 3.** Summary of ANCOVA on the Difference in the Mean Rating of Self-Awareness in Ethical Decision-Making among Students Exposed and Those not to Mindfulness Exercise.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	3473.23 <sup>a</sup>	1	3473.23	235.89	0.00	0.64
Intercept	100213.28	1	100213.28	6806.05	0.00	0.98
<b>Group</b>	<b>3473.23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3473.23</b>	<b>235.89</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.64</b>
Error	1943.59	132	14.72			
Total	102833.00	134				
Corrected Total	5416.81	133				

a. R Squared = .641 (Adjusted R Squared = .638)

Table 3 shows that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of self-awareness in ethical decision-making among students exposed and those not to mindfulness exercise ( $F_1 = 235.89$ ,  $df = 132$ ,  $P < 0.05$ , Partial Eta Sq. = 0.64). Hence, the null hypothesis one was rejected at the 0.05 alpha level. The finding implied that the difference



in the control and experimental mean rating of students' self-awareness in ethical decision-making before and after exposure to mindfulness exercise differs significantly.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of emotional regulation in ethical decision-making among students exposed and those not to mindfulness exercise.

#### Dependent Variable: Post-test Emotional Regulation

**Table 4.** Summary of ANCOVA on the Difference in the Mean Rating of Emotional Regulation in Ethical Decision-Making among Students Exposed and Those not to Mindfulness Exercise.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	3207.14 <sup>a</sup>	1	3207.14	170.01	0.00	0.56
Intercept	95176.00	1	95176.00	5045.30	0.00	0.98
<b>Group</b>	<b>3207.14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3207.14</b>	<b>170.01</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.56</b>
Error	2490.09	132	18.86			
Total	98268.00	134				
Corrected Total	5697.22	133				

a. R Squared = .563 (Adjusted R Squared = .560)

Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of emotional regulation in ethical decision-making among students exposed and those not to mindfulness exercise ( $F(1) = 170.01$ ,  $df = 132$ ,  $P < 0.05$ , Partial Eta Sq. = 0.56). Hence, the null hypothesis two was rejected at the 0.05 alpha level. The finding implied that the difference in the control and experimental mean rating of students' emotional regulation in ethical decision-making before and after exposure to mindfulness exercise differs significantly.

#### 4. Discussion

The result of research question one showed that the grand mean of 1.87 as the pre-test, and 2.24 as the post-test for the control group shows that the extent to which mindfulness exercise affects students' self-awareness in ethical decision-making is low, while the grand mean of 1.90 as pre-test, and 3.26 as post-test for the experimental group shows that the extent to which mindfulness exercise affects students' self-awareness in ethical decision-making is high. Furthermore, the result of hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of self-awareness in ethical decision-making among students exposed and those not to mindfulness exercise. The finding is consistent with the findings of, which revealed there is an increase in the self-awareness subscale (desire for realistic awareness).

The result of research question two showed that the grand mean of 2.01 as the pre-test, and 2.19 as the post-test for the control group shows that the extent to which mindfulness exercise affects students' emotional regulation in ethical decision-making is low, while the grand mean of 2.12 as pre-test, and 3.17 as post-test for the experimental group shows that the extent to which mindfulness exercise affects students' emotional regulation in ethical decision-making is high. Furthermore, the result of hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of emotional regulation in ethical decision-making among students exposed and those not to mindfulness exercise. The finding is consistent with the findings of, which revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic adjustment.

#### 5. Conclusion

This study investigated the effect of mindfulness exercise on students' self-awareness and emotional regulation in ethical decision-making in secondary schools in

Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study concludes that mindfulness exercises have a positive impact on students' self-awareness in ethical decision-making, as well as students' emotional regulation in ethical decision-making, ultimately leading to improved academic adjustment. This suggests that incorporating mindfulness practices into educational settings can help students make more thoughtful and ethical choices, and could be a beneficial strategy for enhancing their overall well-being and academic success.

### **Counselling Implications**

1. There is need for the establishment of counselling units and the employment of professional guidance counsellors in all the secondary schools in the Ahoada West Local Government area of Rivers State. This will help to provide the counselling services to help students to handle their psychological problems and to focus effectively on their academics.
2. Counsellors through counselling should help students to practice mindfulness regularly and identify what triggers emotional dysfunctions that will affect students' academic performance and well-being. Regular practice of mindfulness will help students to effectively manage students' stress and effective decision-making process.
3. Counsellors through counselling should help students to create an enabling or supportive environment where students can express themselves in relation to their emotions and explore their environment without breaking school rules. Counsellors can help students to use mindfulness exercises to help students to regulate their emotions and relationship coping skills.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommended as follows:

1. Teachers and counsellors should consider incorporating mindfulness exercises into their curriculum to improve students' self-awareness in ethical decision-making so that students can develop a deeper understanding of their values and beliefs.
2. Teachers should incorporate mindfulness exercises into their curriculum to help students improve their emotional regulation in ethical decision-making so that students can also learn how to manage stress and anxiety effectively, leading to more thoughtful and intentional choices in their actions.

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