The Influence of Emotional Intelligence of Secondary School Teachers on Classroom Discipline Strategies

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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to analyze level of emotional intelligence among teachers employed in government secondary schools based on selected demographic variable. The sample of the study comprised 203 teachers. The findings of the study showed that there was a significant difference in the teachers' races (Malay, Indian and Chinese) and their emotional intelligence. The study also revealed that there were significant differences between teachers with high and moderate level of emotional intelligence in five strategies of classroom discipline used i.e. teachers with high level of emotional intelligence scored higher in the classroom discipline strategies of discussion, recognition, involvement, and hinting, whereas teachers with moderate level of emotional intelligence scored higher in the use of aggression and no significant relationship with one strategy (punishment) of classroom discipline.

1. Introduction

One of the fundamental problems among educational systems of many countries is related to classroom discipline and students' misbehavior. Disciplinary problems have long been recognized as a major issue in schools (Edwards, 2008). Classroom discipline management refers to control of time and behavior of students as well as of teachers in a classroom setting (Fredrick, Deitz, Bryceland, & Hummel, 2000). Classroom discipline management involves teachers encouraging positive social interactions as well as active management in learning and self-motivation. They shape a positive learning society in which the students are actively engaged in individual learning process and classroom management. They establish the physical climate, control students' behavior, establish an environment full of respect, ease instruction, create safety, wellness, and communication with others when required. All these are related to classroom discipline management, the major objective of which is to establish a positive learning environment and take steps to maintain this positive climate by directing and correcting students' behavior (Burden & Byrd, 2002). Classroom discipline management strategies play an effective role in building positive teachers and students relationships (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993).

Behavior management is a set of interactions that assist teachers to influence students' behavior and teach them to act positively. These interactions are developed not only to reduce teacher's stress level but to help these professional people and students to establish social climates of cooperation, a setting in which children and adults can learn together, play together, and build quality relationship (Danforth & Boyle, 2007). The primary tactics to control behavior are still reward and punishment. As Thorndike (1920) observed, behavior is influenced by its results, this is, the outcome. However the impact is on the future occurrence of the behavior under the same or similar conditions (Wielkiewicz, 1995).

Discipline, during the past decade, has been referred to as the main problem for classroom teachers (Chiodo & Chang, 2000). Teachers, themselves, accept that disciplinary problems are becoming an epidemic phenomenon in the public schools (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1996; Rose & Gallup, 2004). Many teachers have been reported to have left schools because of the frequent problem of classroom disruption (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Charles (2008, p. 9) mentioned: "Overall, the tactics teachers use to manage student behavior are referred to as discipline or behavior management. Educators today often use the term behavior management to indicate preventing, suppressing, and redirecting misbehavior. The term of discipline has traditionally suggested teacher control, coercion, and forceful tactics' educators today often use the term behavior management to indicate preventing, suppressing, and redirecting misbehavior".

There are three major points of view about classroom discipline, each supporting special tactics (Burden, 2003; Lewis, 1997; Wolfgang, 1995). Firstly, some psychologists argue that to encourage responsibility among children, the teachers should set up obvious expectations for their students' behavior and then fairly use a range of rewards and support for

good behavior as well as punishments for misbehavior (Canter & Canter, 2002; Swinson & Melling, 1995). According to this point of view, children are viewed as being molded by the impacts received from the environment. Secondly, some researchers have the view that this objective could only be achieved by placing less stress on students' obedience and teacher's force, and more on students' self-regulation. The teacher has the responsibility to structure the classroom environment to make the students at ease and have control over their own behavior (Burden, 2003). The third approach supports group participation and decision making, in which the group is responsible for the behavior of its members (Edwards & Mullis, 2003; Johnson & Johnson, 2006). Hence control of the students' behavior is a shared responsibility between both the students and the teacher. Teachers who believe in moderate control advocate the student-oriented psychology, which is manifested in the low control philosophy, but they also recognize that learning occurs in a group environment (Burden, 2003).

It is important to study how teachers promote classroom discipline and limit or reduce disruptive behavior of students. Teachers are expected to be able to create a non-disruptive classroom environment (Doyle, 1986). According to Goleman (1995), Bar-On (1997) and Mayer, Caruso and Salovey (1999), one of the factors that influence behavior management in the classroom is emotional intelligence. Weisinger (2004) defines emotional intelligence as the intelligent application of emotions, where one deliberately force one's feelings to work through applying them in order to help to guide behavior and thought in the ways that promote consequences. Goleman studied emotional intelligence as a different kind of knowledge. Emotional intelligence is the ability to motivate oneself and insist in the face of hopelessness, to control incentive and delay satisfaction, to organize one's moods and to empathize (Goleman, 1995).

Emotional intelligence in teachers could assist in creating a classroom environment for improving academic, social and emotional performance of students. Emotional intelligence can be instrumental in improving classroom discipline management and assisting teachers to achieve success in their professional life. Teachers must be in touch with their emotions and feelings to be able to resolve any problems. Emotional intelligence contributes towards an increased sense of creativity, promotes innovative thinking, reduces stress and improves relationships. It enables an individual to fulfill his/her desires at the physical, mental and emotional levels and relate effectively with others (Singh, 2006). The decision making abilities and empowerment of

teachers on a variety of issues relating to the school are crucial towards creating and sustaining a positive school culture (David, 1989; Murphy & Shiffman, 2002)

Findings by Michael and Idris (2003) and Ishak (1995) showed that teachers in Malaysia lack positive emotion and hence are not able to impart the feelings to their students (Noriah, Ramlee, Zuria & Siti, 2006). Studies by Stuhlman and Pianta (2002) affirmed that a teacher's negative comments on a student's grades would elicit difficult behavior from the student. Emotional intelligence is also linked with aggression, recognition, involvement and discussion. Quebbeman and Rozell (2002) stated that there is a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and aggression while Resnicow, Salovey, and Repp (2004) found that it has a positive relationship with recognition. Singh (2006) noted that emotional intelligence could stimulate discussions, while Obiakor (2001) believed emotional intelligence is linked to teamwork, discussions and rewards in classrooms.

According to Rahimah and Norani (1997), schools in Malaysia have some disciplinary problems such as petty crimes, immoral conduct, dressing, truancy, disrespect for others and maladjustments with the school environment. They also added that bullying, school violence and maladjustments are increasing among students. The Khaleej Times (March, 2006) stated that the government had warned that some school teachers will soon not be allowed to publicly punish students for disciplinary offenses. In earlier years, students who had severe disciplinary problems such as stealing, vandalism and smoking were punished by school principals. It was easier to manage classroom discipline then and there were lesser problems.

Golemans' theory of emotional intelligence is the most widely used and related theory in this area. It has been referred to as a guide for extensive research on teachers' decision making (Goleman, 1996) pointed out emotional intelligence is getting along with others, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, social-skill, regulation and one's mood. As a conclusion, he expressed that emotional intelligence plays an important role in school achievement since it lets students promote confidence, self-control, communication, and cooperativeness. Though both Goleman (1995) and Bar-On (1997) state that emotional intelligence contributes significantly to social, behavioral, and academic improvements, there is only limited empirical evidence that reflect such outcomes or findings. High emotional intelligence scores indicate a strong, well-developed, and efficient emotional intelligence skill while low scores indicate a deficiency and a need to improve particular

competencies and skills to meet environmental demands (Bar-On, 2004). Stuhlman and Pianta (2002) pointed, between the teacher's emotional feedbacks and the student's behavior, noticing that teachers' negative descriptors of their students cause greater examples of behavior conflicts.

The main objective of the study is to analyze the teachers' emotional intelligence and their classroom discipline strategies in secondary schools in Selangor State of Malaysia. The emotional intelligence level of teachers is important for teachers and students communication and to improve classroom discipline strategies. The specific objectives of the study involve examining the significant difference between levels of teachers' emotional intelligence based on classroom discipline strategies (punishment, discussion, recognition, aggression, involvement, hinting), possible differences between the level of teachers' emotional intelligence and teachers of different races (Malay, Indian and Chinese).

2. METHODOLOGY
2.1 Design

Quantitative approach is applied in this study. A descriptive correlational design is implemented in order to decide if there are any relationships between the variables under investigation. A descriptive method is explained as gaining information which is related to the present situations of the phenomena (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2007). This study is designed to use a descriptive correlational design to examine the relationship between classroom discipline strategies as a dependent variable, and, teachers' emotional intelligence as the independent variables.

2.2 Sample

The target population for this study was secondary school teachers, however the accessible population was form Two and form Four teachers in secondary schools. This study employed the multi-stage sampling procedures: random sampling and cluster sampling. To obtain the required number of samples, two moderate classes (one class form two and one class form four) in secondary school teachers were chosen from each school. Once the class is identified, about 10 teachers teaching different subjects in the class were selected. This is based on cluster sampling where each teacher teaching the selected class was included as sample for the study. Based on this method, 203 teachers were chosen. Moreover, a sample size of 180, based on Cohen table (1992) is considered sufficient to answer all the research questions that required the use of mean, standard deviation, percentage, ANOVA and MANOVA. The sample was chosen according to

government secondary school types (public) and region.

3. Measures
3.1 Emotional Intelligence Scale (ECI)

This section describes emotional intelligence based on the Emotional Competencies Inventory (ECI) designed by Boyatzi, Goleman, and Rhee, (2000). The ECI was developed in order to evaluate the emotional competencies of people as well as organizations. The ECI was used in this study because it was shown to have high validity and reliability (Norsidh, 2008). The emotional competence inventory scales of twenty five competencies are classified into four subscales: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social-skill. The inventory includes 110 items showing adaptive orientation toward emotional intelligence. Each item in the questionnaire explains a single behavior. Participants use a 7-point scale on which they are supposed to show if the items are "slightly", "somewhat" and or "very" traits of themselves (Boyatzis, et al., 2000). The scale has a Cronbach alpha of .98.

3.2 Classroom Discipline Strategies

In 2009 Shlomo Romi developed this questionnaire. The questionnaire for classroom discipline strategies for teachers' perception comprises 25 items and six strategies. The strategies measured include punishment, reward or recognition, involvement in decision-making, hinting, discussion and aggression, all of which are based on teachers' perceptions. Examination of a number of discipline texts (Charles, 2008; Lewis, 1997; Tauber, 2007; Wolfgang, 1995) indicated that one or more of these strategies were the basis for most of the available approaches to classroom discipline. It would have been possible to utilize exploratory factor analysis on data sets from point of view of nationality to obtain assessments of discipline most appropriate to other countries (Australia and China). This questionnaire focused on teachers' perceptions on classroom discipline strategies. The scale has a Cronbach alpha of .083.

3.3 Data Analyses

SPSS version 17 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics such as; mean, standard deviation, percentage was used to describe the relationship to respondents. MANOVA tests were used to examine the association and influence between teachers' emotional intelligence and classroom discipline strategies. The ANOVA test was used to examine the different races

4. RESULTS

4.1 Level of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence

Table 1, displays the teachers' levels of emotional intelligence. The finding indicated that the majority of the respondents' emotional intelligence scores were high (n = 145, 71.4%). The data also showed that 58 respondents (28.6%) had moderate emotional intelligence scores, while none scored in the low level of emotional intelligence. Based on the results, the minimum score was 3.73 and the maximum was 6.76, with a standard deviation of .059. The mean score for emotional intelligence was 5.38 implying that the level of emotional intelligence score was high.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents' EQ Scores

Levels	Mean	Frequency	Percentage
Low	1.0-3.0	0	0
Moderate	3.1-5.0	58	28.6
High	5.1-7.0	145	71.4
Total		203	100.0

Mean=5.38; Std=0.059;
Minimum=3.73; Maximum=6.76

4.1 Teachers' Races

This section would also fulfill the research objective, which is to determine the level of teachers' emotional intelligence with respect to their races (Malay, Indian and Chinese). The following research is intended to pursue the stated question: Is there any significant difference in the level of teachers' emotional intelligent across teachers of different races (Malay, Indian and Chinese)?

To answer the research question, the researcher used one-way ANOVA to compare the total scores of three variables; teachers' emotional intelligence across their races (Malays, Indians and Chinese). Table 2 shows that there were significant differences among different races and their level of emotional intelligence, $F(2, 200) = 3.23$, $P= .041$. There was a statistically significant difference between Indians and Chinese teachers.

Table 2: ANOVA Results of Intelligence by Race

variable	Races	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
	Malay	130	5.39	.59	3.23	.041
EQ	Chinese	40	5.21	.51		
	Indian	33	5.56	.65		
	Total	203	5.38	.59		

4.2 Teachers' Levels of Emotional Intelligences across Classroom Discipline Strategies

The objective is to investigate the cross interaction effects of two levels of the emotional intelligences with the classroom discipline strategies as practiced by respondents, and the research question is if there were any significant differences between level of teachers' emotional intelligence based on classroom discipline strategies (punishment, discussion, recognition, aggression, involvement, hinting)?.

This study proceeds with a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The purpose of this test is to see if there are any significant differences between teachers with high and moderate emotional intelligence in their level of usage of the six disciplinary strategies. Only two groups (moderate and high) are used because there is no respondent in the low category group.

The first step is to ensure if there are significant differences using multivariate tests. In this study, both Wilk's Lambda and Pillai's Trace are referred. Table 3 shows both tests are suitable when comparing two groups. However, in cases where there are violations of assumptions, Pillai's Trace is normally recommended as it is more robust (Pallant, 2007). Based on table 3 below, it is clear that all the tests show significant difference between teachers with high and moderate emotional intelligence in using six disciplinary strategies.

Table 3: Multivariate Analysis of EQ across Classroom Discipline

Effect		Value	F	H-df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Reco-d EQ	Pillai's Trace	0.381	20.075	6	196	000	0.381
	Wilks' Lambda	0.619	20.075	6	196	000	0.381

According to Pallant (2007), as there are many numbers of separate analyses involved, a stricter alpha level is set to reduce the chance of Type 1 error. This is done by applying Bonferonni adjustment, involving dividing the original alpha level (.05) by the number of analyses conducted (in this study, six) resulting in a new alpha level of .0083. Therefore only those findings with significant values of less than .0083 will be considered as significant. Table 4 indicates the findings show that there are significant differences between teachers with high and moderate emotional intelligence in all of the six disciplinary strategies used, except punishment. Referring to the partial eta square values, emotional intelligence was found to have the most impact on discussion strategy, explaining 30.1% of its variance. This is followed by recognition (29.4% variance explained), hinting (27.2% variance explained), involvement (12.6% variance explained) and aggression (8% variance explained).

Table 4: Test between Subject Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Recode EQ	T.Punishment	1	1.779	.184	.009
	T.Discussion	1	86.643	.000	.301
	T.Recognition	1	83.508	.000	.294
	T.Aggression	1	17.583	.000	.080
	T.Involvement	1	28.950	.000	.126
	T.Hinting	1	74.918	.000	.272

The estimated marginal means computed in Table 5 shows that teachers with high level of emotional intelligence scored higher in discussion, recognition, involvement and hinting. In contrast teachers with moderate level of emotional intelligence scored higher in the usage of aggression and punishment.

Table 5: Descriptive of Means across Level of Emotional Intelligence

Dependent Variable	Recode of EQ	Mean	Std. Error
T. Punishment	Moderate	3.879	.090
	High	3.737	.057
T. Discussion	Moderate	3.858	.092
	High	4.869	.058
T. Recognition	Moderate	4.073	.085
	High	4.995	.054
T. Aggression	Moderate	3.272	.120
	High	2.676	.076
T. Involvement	Moderate	3.440	.094
	High	4.038	.059
T. Hinting	Moderate	4.026	.087
	High	4.914	.055

5. Conclusion

In terms of emotional intelligence and race, the findings of above indicated that there were significant differences in emotional intelligences among teachers of different races (Malays, Indians and Chinese). One-way ANOVA was conducted which explored the differences between races across levels of emotional intelligences. The analysis showed Indian teachers scored significantly higher than Chinese teachers in their emotional intelligence as measured by the research instrument. However, the results obtained in the study did not find statistically significant differences in emotional intelligences between Malay and Indian teachers, as well as Malay and Chinese teachers. The results of above are also in keeping with the findings by Encinas (2001) who conducted an exploratory study on emotional intelligence, ethnicity and generational groups in higher education settings. Encinas found that white participants reported a higher overall level of emotional intelligence than the non-whites. The findings of this study are also similar to those of Okech (2004) who conducted a study on relationship between emotional intelligence among primary school teachers. Okech found that there were statistically significant differences in emotional intelligence among African, Hispanic, and White elementary school teachers.

This section discusses the research objective of the study which was to determine the level of teachers' emotional intelligence based on classroom discipline strategies (punishment, discussion, recognition, aggression, involvement and hinting. MANOVA has clearly indicated that teachers of different levels of emotional intelligence significantly differ in their usage of both positive disciplinary strategies (discussion, recognition, hinting and involvement) and negative ones (punishment and aggression). The effect size of the impact of teachers intelligences on the strategies used ranged from small (explaining around 5% of the variance) to quite large (explaining 30.1% of variance). This implies that the teachers' intelligences play an important role in influencing the kind of strategies teachers use and implement in their quest to achieve educational goals.

On the role of emotional intelligence, the findings of this study were found similar to the findings of Moriaty and Buckely (2003). Studies have also shown that it is possible to learn emotional intelligence techniques and improve emotional intelligence ability which will increase the chance of success in classroom. Results are also in line with Obiakor (2001) who believed educators' emotional intelligence relates to teamwork, discussion and reward. Furthermore, emotional intelligence can help individuals to stimulate to discussion (Singh, 2006). Results of this study are also supported by Quebbeman and Rozell (2002) who showed that aggression is seen to have a significantly negative relationship with emotional intelligence.

Some researchers stated that punishment, to a small extent is necessary for schools. Punishment in schools is related to various factors. The SUHAKAM journal in Malaysian education (2008) stated that majority of the teachers and administrators agreed that class teachers should be given the authority to cane students with serious disciplinary problems. However, Curwin and Mendler (1997) believed that teachers should punish students in private to allow students to maintain their dignity. In addition, McLeod, Fisher and Hoover (2003) stated that the purpose of negative reinforcement or punishment is to change misbehaviors, and not to torture students. Resnicow, Salovey and Repp (2004) suggest that, people who have high emotional intelligence and their recognition in the different tasks were significantly correlated (r=.54). The findings of

the current research also were in line with the study done by Goleman (1998), who concluded that emotional intelligence significantly contributes to the teachers' achievement and teachers' behavior management. Goldman (1995), Bar-On (1997) and Mayer et al. (1999) stated that emotional intelligence is related to the ability in behavior management. They contended that emotional intelligence contributes significantly to improving behavior. Brownhill (2009) also found that high emotional intelligence scores indicate that the emotional intelligence skills are functioning efficiently in classroom and school environment; low scores suggest a deficiency and lack of skills in meeting environmental demands.

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Abbreviations:
EQ=Emotional Intelligence
"T." stands for the Teachers'
H=Hypothesis

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