Teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Its Relation with Classroom Discipline Strategies Based on Teachers and Students' Perceptions

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ABSTRACT The purpose of the study is to analyze level of emotional intelligence of teachers employed in the government secondary schools in Malaysia based on selected demographic variables and how they relate to students' perception and also on the classroom strategies used. The sample of the study comprises of 203 teachers and 2147 students. The findings of the study showed that there was significant relationship between teachers and students' perceptions of the teachers' classroom discipline strategies. The study also revealed that there were no significant differences in the teachers' emotional intelligence between teachers of different genders, and there were significant differences found between teachers' emotional intelligence and age groups. Further significant relationship was found between teachers' emotional intelligence and five strategies of classroom discipline (discussion, aggression, recognition or reward, involvement and hinting) and no significant relationship with one strategy (punishment) of classroom discipline.

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 et al. 2000). There has been great focus from media and much concern from the public about students' misbehavior toward classmates and school teachers (Elam and Rose 1995). Not only does students misbehavior interrupt the learning process in classroom, it also prevents them from pursuing their studies. Classroom-culture, such as teacher and student relationship, is also affected by students' misbehavior (Kronberg 1999). Classroom discipline management strategies play an effective role in building positive teacher-student relationships. This in turn could improve students' academic achievement and their emotional and behavioral operations (Wang et al.1993).

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There are a minimum of three major points of view about classroom discipline, each supporting special tactics (Burden 2003; Lewis 1997; Wolfgang 1995). At first, some psychologists discuss that for encouraging responsibility in children, teachers should establish obvious expectations for their students' behavior and then fairly use a range of rewards and encouragement for good behavior as well as punishments for misbehavior (Canter and Canter 2002; Swinson and Melling 1995). According to this point of view, children are viewed as being formed by the impacts received from the environment. Other researchers discuss that this objective can only be achieved by less stress on students' obedience and teacher's force, and more on the students' self-regulation. The teacher has the responsibility to structure the classroom environment in order to ease the students and have control over their own behavior (Burden 2003).

The third approach supports group participation and decision making, in which the group will be in charge to make sure about the suitability of the behavior for all its members (Edwards and Mullis 2003; Johnson and Johnson 2006). According to this point of view, the control of the students' behavior is a shared responsibility for both the students and the teacher. Medium control teachers advocate the student-oriented psychology which is manifested in the

low control philosophy, but they also realize 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. The methods used by teachers to control students' behavior are referred to as discipline or behavior management (Charles 2008). Violence, aggression, defiance, and fighting are most of classroom disruptions teachers regularly face (Elam et al. 1996).

According to Goleman (1995), Bar-On (1997) and Mayer et al. (1999), one of the factors that influence behavior management in the classroom is emotional intelligence. This may refer to the students' emotional intelligence. Need to link how teachers' emotional intelligence may influence students' Emotional intelligence in teachers could assist in creating a classroom environment for improving academic and emotional performance of students. Weisinger (2004) stated emotional intelligence as the intelligent application of emotions, you deliberately force your feelings to work for you through applying them in order to help to guide your behavior and thought in the ways that promote your consequences. Emotional intelligence is the ability to motivate one-self and insist in the face of hopelessness, also emotional intelligence is twice as important as technical skills and more important than IQ for success at all levels (Goleman 1995).

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, emotional and spiritual levels and relate effectively with others (Singh 2006). Psychologists point out that emotional intelligence differs from other types of intelligence, as emotions play a much greater role in thought and individual achievement than it is usually known (Sharp 2001). Scholars believe that high intelligent quotient (IQ) does not necessarily guarantee success in a person's life (Goleman 1997). It is not responsible for the differences beyond personality factors and characteristics (Mehrabian 2000). Hence, other forms of intelligence were investigated, such as emotional intelligence (Goleman 1997). Magida (2006) agreed that educators with high levels of emotional intelligence are able to mould individuals from different age groups to lead a whole some life (Dincer 2007).

Goleman (1998) stated that there are no perceptible gender differences in emotional intelligence. However, some variations between men and women could be observed in certain aspects of emotional intelligence (Goleman 1998). As Goleman (1997) found, emotional intelligence contributes significantly to improvements in the performance of schools because it empowers the students with confidence, self control, communication skills and cooperative behavior. In this study, the researcher used the Golemans' theory of emotional intelligence.

Quebbeman and Rozell (2002) stated that it seems there is a significant negative relationship between emotional intelligence and aggression in workplace. In this regard, if school is considered as workplace of teachers, it can be claimed that teachers' emotional intelligence have a significant relationship to aggression. Some findings show that, there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and recognitions. Resnicow et al. (2004) suggest that, people who have high emotional intelligence their recognition in the different task were significantly correlated (r = .54).

Emotional intelligence levels of teachers are important in improving classroom discipline strategies and achieving positive work in relationship between teachers and students. To reflect on emotional intelligence and classroom discipline strategies, there is a need to carry out a comparative study between teachers and students' perception and demographic variables. According to Rahimah and Norani (1997), among the disciplinary problems faced in Malaysian schools are crimes, immoral conduct, untidiness, truancy, disrespect for others and maladjustment with the school environment. Bullying, violence and maladjustment are also becoming to be an increasing phenomenon.

Nowadays, teachers deal with discipline problems using milder approaches. But what is considered mild by the teacher may not be perceived the same way by the students. Thus, one of the important parts of this research is relationship between teachers and students' perception. The relationship between teachers and students' perception depends on several factors such as the time teachers invest in accommodating the needs of their students and the care and concern the teachers show for them. As far as the students' perceptions are concerned, due consideration should be given to their age, maturity, developmental phase, academic standing,

home situation, and a host of other factors as these are likely to affect not only their perceptions but also the relationship they have established with their teachers.

This study attempts to assess to teachers' classroom discipline strategies based on teachers and students perception, also the relationship between teachers' perceived emotional intelligence and their classroom discipline strategies. It is conjectured that teachers who have perceived themselves as being less emotionally intelligent might also perceived themselves as having low classroom discipline strategies and vice versa. Therefore, teachers may need assist in identifying their strengths and develop their emotional intelligence and classroom discipline strategies. In addition, in this study, secondary schools teachers' levels of emotional intelligence were also examined with respect to gender and age group.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Quantitative approach is applied in this study. This study is designed to use a descriptive correlational design to examine the relationship between classroom discipline strategies, and teachers' emotional intelligence.

Sample

This study employed in secondary schools of the Selangor State. The target of population for this study was secondary school teachers and their students in the state of Selangor in Malaysia. However, the accessible population was Form Two and Form Four students and their teachers of secondary schools in five areas in Selangor. This study employed the multi-stage sampling procedures: simple random sampling and cluster sampling. To have the required number of samples, 11 secondary schools need to be selected for the study. The 11 schools were chosen at random from the five areas in Selangor. Since the focus of the study was on moderate class, thus the class was chosen first. Two moderate classes (one class Form two and one class Form four) were chosen from each school. Once the class is identified, about 10 teachers teaching the class for different subjects were selected. This is based on cluster sampling where every

teacher teaching the selected class was included as sample for the study. Based on this method of identifying the samples needed, 203 teachers and 2147 students were chosen.

Moreover, a sample size of 180 based on Cohen table (1992) is sufficient to answer all the research questions that required the use of mean and standard deviation, Pearson "r", t-test and ANOVA. The sample was chosen according to government secondary school type (public) and region.

Measures

Three instruments were used to collect data from the respondents. They include:

Emotional Intelligence Scale (ECI)

This section describes emotional intelligence based on the Emotional Competencies Inventory (ECI) designed by Boyatzis et al. (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.

Classroom Discipline Strategies Based on Students' Perception

For measuring classroom discipline strategies, the researcher made use of Lewis's 24 item questionnaire. Lewis et al. (2005) was designed to measure the students' perception. These 24 items were agreed by the researchers in different countries to assess the six discipline strategies reported in this study (for any items, there were four questions). The strategies measured were punishment, rewarding or recognition, involvement in decision-making, hinting, discussion and aggression. Examination of a num-

ber of discipline texts (Charles 2008; Lewis 1997; Tauber 2007; Wolfgang 1995) indicated that one or more of these strategies were seen as underlying 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). The scale has a Cronbach alpha of .83.

Classroom Discipline Strategies Based on Teachers' Perception

In 2009, Shlomo Romi developed this questionnaire. The questionnaire for classroom discipline strategies for teachers' perception comprised 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. This questionnaire is basically derived from Lewis et al. (2005) classroom discipline strategies focusing on student's perceptions. The scale has a Cronbach alpha of .86.

Data Analyses

SPSS version 17 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the relationship to respondents. Pearson correlation was used to examine the association between teachers' emotional intelligence and classroom discipline strategies. Independent sample t-test was used to examine gender differences, and ANOVA test was used to examine the different race and religion.

RESULTS

The result in Table 1 represents 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%) reported to have moderate emotional intelligence scores, while no respondent scored in the low level of emotional intelligence. Based on the seven point Likert scale used in the survey instrument, the minimum score result was 3.73 and the maximum was 6.76, with a standard deviation of 0.59. The mean

score for emotional intelligence was 5.38 implying that the level of emotional intelligence score was high.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents' emotional intelligence 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 = 4.38 Std. deviation = .59 Minimum = 3.73
Maximum = 6.76

Correlation between Teachers' Perception and Students' Perception

In order to test relationship between classroom discipline strategies as perceived by the teachers and students, the Pearson 'r' correlation coefficient analysis was performed to determine the nature and direction of the relationship.

Table 2 displays the results of Pearson Product Moment correlation between teachers and students' perceptions of the teachers' classroom discipline strategies. The correlation matrix reveals that, the teachers and students' perceptions had the strongest coefficient of correlation for the strategies of discussion (r = .51), followed by recognition or reward (r = 0.38), involvement (r = .36), hinting (r = .33), aggression (r = .32) and lastly punishment (r = .31). All of the relationships are significant at the level of .05. To conclude, it is observed that the relationship between teachers and students' perception of the teachers' classroom discipline strategies was positive, moderate and low. Thus, it is probable that teachers' perception regarding their discipline strategies was quite accurate based on their students' perception of their practice.

Table 3 showed about 14/8% of teachers in the study was male and 85.2% was female. The finding shows the mean score for Male is (5.48, Std .64), for women (M = 5.36,   Std, .59).

Table 4 shows the Levene's test values for the assumption of equality of variances for emotional intelligence (F = .541, p = .463).

The finding shows that there was no significant difference between female and male teachers' perceptions of total emotional intelligence [t (201) = .992, p = 0.322]. Furthermore, the findings of this study also support the study by

Table 2: Relationship between teachers' classroom discipline strategies based on the teachers' and students' perception

		(Students' Perception)				
Strategies	*Punishment*	*Discussion*	*Recognition*	*Aggression*	*Involvement*	*Hinting*
Punishment	0.31**					
Discussion		0.51**				
Recognition			0.38**			
Aggression				0.32**		
Involvement					0.36**	
Hinting						0.33**

(Teachers' Perception)

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of respondents' emotional intelligence

Variable	Teacher gender	N	Mean	S.D
Emotional	Male	30	5.48	.64
Intelligence	Female	173	5.36	.59

Table 4: Levene's test results for emotional intelligence

Variables	Status of equality	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Emotional Intelligence	Equal variances assumed	.541	.463	.992	201	.322

Birol et al. (2009), who revealed no significant difference between teachers' gender and emotional intelligence level.

Table 5 shows, the age of participants' ranges from 24 to above 54. About 32 % are between the ages of 24 and 34, 42.4% are between the ages of 35 and 44, 25.6% are between the ages of 45 and 54.

A one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. The results revealed that there was statistically significant differences in the means of emotional intelligence (F (2, 200) = 23.81, p = .000).

Relationship between Teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Teachers' Perception of Their Classroom Discipline Strategies

Table 7 displays the results of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation between teachers' emotional intelligence and their classroom discipline strategies. The data revealed that the relationship between emotional intelligence and the five strategies of teachers' classroom discipline is significant at the level of p < 0.05. The

results also revealed that there is a positive relationship between four strategies of teachers' classroom discipline (discussion, recognition, involvement, hinting) and emotional intelligence at the significance level of p < 0.05.

The findings of the study also revealed that emotional intelligence has negative correlation with the classroom discipline strategy, aggression at the significance level of p < 0.05; however, the relationship with punishment strategy was not found to be significant. The magnitude of the correlation coefficients showed a range of -.246 to .652. The strongest moderate and linear relationship was seen for discussion (r = .652). The strength of the relationship is followed by recognition or reward (r = .602), hinting (r = .574), involvement (r = .473). The relationship between classroom discipline strategies (aggression) and teachers' emotional intelligence is negative (r = -.246). For punishment, the relationship is low and not significant (r = -.085).

DISCUSSION

The results showed that there was no significant difference between teachers' gender and their emotional intelligence. The findings of the current research are in line with Goleman's (1998). The findings of this study also support the study by Birol et al. (2009) who revealed no significant difference between teachers' gender and emotional intelligence level. Petrides and Furnham (2004) found that there are no significant differences among their research participants with respect to gender.

The findings also revealed that there was a significant difference between teachers' age and

Table 5: Comparison of teachers' emotional intelligence across age groups

Variable	Age group	N	Percentage	Mean	S.D	F	Sig.
Emotional	24-34	65	32	5.13	.54	23.81	.000
Intelligence	35-44	86	42.4	5.32	.56		
	45-54	52	25.6	5.81	.48		

Table 6: Tukey HSD multiple comparisons for age groups

Dependent variables	Age group	Age group	Mean difference	Sig
Emotional	35 – 44	45 - 54	-.48	.000
Intelligence	45 – 54	24 - 34	.67	.000
		35 - 44	.48	.000

Table 7: Relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and teachers' perception of their classroom discipline strategies

Variables	r	p
Punishment	-.085	.273
Discussion	.652*	.000
Recognition or reward	.602*	.000
Aggression	-.246*	.000
Involvement	.473*	.000
Hinting	.574*	.000

*Significant at $p < 0.01$

their emotional intelligence. The findings of the current research are in line with Goleman's (1998) in relation between ages and emotional intelligence level. The findings of this study also support the study by Birol et al. (2009) who revealed there was statistical significant difference between teachers' ages and emotional intelligence level.

This section discusses there was significant relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and their classroom discipline strategies. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used. Statistically significant relationships were found between the five strategies of classroom discipline and teachers' emotional intelligence. Positive relationships were found between teachers' emotional intelligence and discussion, recognition or reward, and hinting, followed by involvement, and negative relationships were established for aggression and no statistically significant relationship was established between punishment and teachers' emotional intelligence. Some researchers stated that punishment to a small extent is necessary for school. Punishment in school 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 et al. (2003) stated that the purpose of negative reinforcement or punishment is to change misbehaviors, and not to torture students.

The findings of the current research also agreed with the study done by Goleman (1998), who concluded that emotional intelligence significantly contributes to the teachers' achievement and teachers' behaviour 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) 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 (Bar-On 2004). These findings are emphasized by the findings of the current research.

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. Furthermore, emotional intelligence can help individuals to stimulate to discussion (Singh 2006). Resnicow et al. (2004) suggest that, people who have high emotional intelligence their recognition in the different task were significantly correlated (r = .54). 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.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that gender made no difference in the teachers in their emotional intelligence, while age did. The results also revealed that the teachers and the students' perceptions of classroom discipline strategies had moderate to low similarity. Finally, with the exception of punishment, the teachers' classroom discipline strategies were related to their emotional intelligence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education include some teacher training program-

mes in order to enhance teachers' emotional intelligence for classroom discipline strategies. Such programmes will assist teachers in developing better strategies for classroom discipline. Teacher education programmes should provide instruction for novice teachers to increase their understanding and knowledge of emotional intelligence, methods, programmes, or strategies that might be employed to teach and discipline classroom students.

Understanding emotions and how they affect teacher's behavior management would be valuable to any teacher who lacks this knowledge. Research indicates that emotional intelligence encompasses various abilities that can be improved when a person learns about these intelligences, thus reflecting upon his or her own behavior in the classroom.

It is suggested that this study be replicated with other variables such as different ethnic groups and different religions. It is also recommended that a future study take into account the perceptions of school principals and parents as well.

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