

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

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ABSTRACT The purpose of this study is to analyze the level of social intelligence among teachers employed in government secondary schools based on a selected demographic variable. The sample of the study comprised 203 teachers. The findings of the study showed that there was a significant difference among the teachers from (Malaysia, India and China) and their social intelligence. The study also revealed that there were significant differences between teachers with high and moderate level of social intelligence in five strategies of classroom discipline used, that is, teachers with high level of social intelligence scored higher in the classroom discipline strategies of discussion, recognition, involvement, and hinting, whereas teachers with moderate level of social intelligence scored higher in the use of aggression. However, no significant difference was found concerning one strategy of classroom discipline (punishment).

INTRODUCTION

A teacher's most important activity in a typical class environment is the one related to classroom discipline strategies. Learning and teaching cannot take place in a classroom without discipline (Marzano et al. 2003). 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). Classroom discipline management involves many interrelated and complicated facets arising from class and environment. The teacher, as the class manager, is expected to lead the class environment, as stated by Lemlech (1988) considering these dimensions as an orchestra. Another important dimension of classroom management is to create a proper learning environment and to prepare the physical conditions of the class. Not only are the already present things pedagogically affective, so are their arrangement appearance (Becher 1993). A well-prepared physical environment and order facilitates the learning and teaching process and can enhance students' class participation. On the contrary, a dull, unaided, noisy and ill-prepared classroom environment adversely affects class participation and learning. Environment also affects the quality of teacher-student relations (Grubaugh and Houston 1990). The teacher has to make vari-

ous physical arrangements in the classroom according to the educational method and content (Evertson et al. 1997).

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 (Burden and Byrd 2002). Classroom discipline management strategies play an effective role in building positive teachers and students relationships (Wang et al. 1993).

Classroom discipline management strategies are 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 and Boyle 2007). Discipline, during the past decade, has been referred to as the main problem for classroom teachers (Chiodo and Chang 2000). Teachers, themselves accept that disciplinary problems are becoming an epidemic phenomenon in the public schools (Elam et al. 1996; Rose and Gallup 2004). Many teachers have been reported to have left schools because of the frequent problems of classroom

disruption (Ingersoll and Smith 2003). Charles (2008: 9) mentioned:

Overall, the tactics teachers use to manage student behavior are referred to as discipline or behavior management. 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.

Some scholars such as Lewis et al. (2005) indicated that both students and their teachers can be distinguished by two distinct discipline styles. The first is referred to as "coercive" discipline and includes punishment and aggression (yelling in anger, sarcasm, group punishments, etc.) and the second includes discussion, hints, recognition, involvement and punishment and is named "relationship based discipline".

Students who receive more relationship-based discipline are less disrupted when teachers deal with misbehavior and generally act more responsibly in that teacher's class. In contrast, coercive discipline appears to lead to more students' distraction from work and less responsibility (Hyman and Snook 2000: 315).

Yet, some results can be subtle as the teachers who experience stress as a result of other factors (for instance excessive workload) can interpret the students' behavior more negatively (Whiterman et al. 1985 as cited in Lewis et al. 2005) and hence exaggerate its importance as a stressor. Anyway, discipline matters are always among the strongest factors of the teacher's stressors.

It is important to study how teachers promote classroom discipline and limit or reduce disruptive behavior of students. 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 (Goleman 1997). Social intelligence is yet an effective element in classroom discipline management. Albrecht (2006) claimed, the teachers whose behaviors are associated with high social intelligence, stress the value of collaboration. Similarly, there is a need for educational system which equips the students to state their opinions obviously in order to make themselves understood, and to try to understand the others

before they show any reactions to the behavior. One concept of social intelligence referred to it as the "ability to read non-verbal cues or make accurate social inferences" and "one's ability to accomplish relevant objectives in specific social settings" (Brown and Anthony 1990: 197; Ford and Tisak 1983).

According to Zirkel (2000), social intelligence is closely related to one's own, personality and individual behavior. Those with social intelligence are fully aware of themselves and understand their environment. This enables them to control their emotions, make decisions about their goals in life. Her model centered on the term "purposive behavior" which is deliberate action taken after evaluating one's environment, opportunities and risks and the goals set. In fact this model of social intelligence assists in creating a sense of identity for the individual, emphasizes intrapersonal and interpersonal skills and focuses on thinking and resultant behavior within social contexts.

Magida (2006) agreed that educators' with high levels of social intelligence are able to mould individuals from different age groups to lead a wholesome life (Dincer 2007). Albrecht (2006) considers social intelligence as a prerequisite for teachers. He is of the view that the educational system and teachers should respect the rules and behaviors associated with high social intelligence.

In this study, the researcher used a multifaceted theory of social intelligence as it facilitated the understanding of social behavior in the academic settings (Silvera et al. 2001). Social intelligence involves a number of different capabilities, special social habits, and attitudes (Thorndike and Stein 1937). Some people argue that it is a multidimensional component that does not necessarily apply across all situations (Ford and Tisak 1983). Silvera et al. (2001) introduced three components of social intelligence meaning, social information processing, social skills and social awareness.

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. They 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.

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

METHODOLOGY

Design

Quantitative approach is applied in this study. This study is designed to use the influence between classroom discipline with six strategies (punishment, discussion, recognition, aggression, involvement and hinting) as a dependent variable, and, teachers' social intelligence as the independent variables.

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.

Measures

Social Intelligence Scale

Silvera et al. (2001) constructed a scale for the assessment of social intelligence, the Tromsø Social Intelligence Scale (TSIS). In this questionnaire, after recoding items that were negatively worded, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using principle components analysis and varimax rotation was conducted on the 103 preliminary TSIS items. This solution explained a total of 30% of the variance in the original item set. Based on this result, items were selected according to the following criteria: (a) a minimum factor loading of 0.45 on one of the three factors and a maximum cross-loading of 0.35 on the other factors; and (b) a maximum correlation of 0.30 with the MCSD (Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale). In addition, it was agreed that an equal number of items would be selected to represent each factor. This resulted in the selection of 21 items, seven of which represented each of the three factors in the EFA solution. Based on the content of the items loading on each factor, the subscales of items representing the three factors were labeled Social Information Processing, Social Skills, and Social Awareness. The scale has a Cronbach alpha of .89.

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 .086.

Data Analyses

SPSS version 17 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics such as; mean, standard deviation, percentage was used to describe the level of teachers' social intelligence and behavior management. MANOVA tests were used to examine the differences mean and influence between teachers' social intelligence and classroom discipline strategies. The ANOVA test was used to examine the teachers from different ethnic groups.

RESULTS

Level of Teachers' Social Intelligence

Table 1 displays the teachers' levels of social intelligence. The findings indicated that the majority of the respondents' social intelligence scores were moderate ($n = 151$, 74.4%). The data also showed that 52 respondents (25.6%) had high social intelligence scores, while none scored in the low level of social intelligence. Based on the results, the minimum score was 3.43 and the maximum was 6.19, with a standard deviation of .56. The mean score for social intelligence was 4.66 implying that the level of social intelligence score was moderate.

Teachers from Different Race Groups

This section would also fulfill the research objective, which is to determine the level of teachers' social intelligence with respect to the teachers from Malaysia, India and China. The

Table 1: Distribution of respondents' SI scores

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Low	1 – 3.0	0	0
Moderate	3.1 – 5.0	151	74.4
High	5.1 – 7.0	52	25.6
Total		203	100.0

Mean=4.66 Std=.56 Minimum=3.43 Maximum=6.19

following research is intended to pursue the stated question: Is there any significant difference in the level of teachers' social intelligent across teachers from Malaysia, India and China?

To answer the research question, the researcher used one-way ANOVA to compare the total scores of three variables; teachers' social intelligence across the teachers' from Malaysia, India and China. Table 2 shows that there were significant differences among teachers from Malaysia, India and China and their level of social intelligence, $F(2, 200) = 2.91$, $P = .047$. There was a statistically significant difference between teachers from India and China.

Teachers' Levels of social Intelligences across Classroom Discipline Strategies

The objective is to investigate the cross interaction effects of two levels of the social 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' social 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 social 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.

Table 2: ANOVA results of social intelligence of teachers from Malaysia, India and China

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Social Intelligence	Malay	130	4.65	.54	2.91	.047
	China	40	4.54	.47		
	India	33	4.86	.71		
	Total	203	4.66	.57		

Table 3: Multivariate analysis of SI across classroom discipline strategies

	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>H df</i>	<i>Error df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Partial Eta Squared</i>
Recod SI	Pillai's Trace	0.21	9.17 ^a	6	196	.000	0.21
	Wilks' Lambda	0.78	9.17 ^a	6	196	.000	0.21

Table 4: Test between subject effects

<i>Source</i>	<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Partial Eta Squared</i>
Recode EQ	T.punishment	1	2.69	.102	.013
	T.discussion	1	41.75	.000	.172
	T.recognition	1	38.19	.000	.160
	T.aggression	1	14.05	.000	.065
	T.involvement	1	19.70	.000	.089
	T.hinting	1	30.97	.000	.134

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 (Pallant 2007) 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 2008). Based on Table 3, it is clear that all the tests show significant difference between teachers with high and moderate social intelligence in using six disciplinary strategies.

H=Hypothesis

According to Pallant (2008), 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 Bonferroni 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 level of social intelligence in all of the six disciplinary strategies used, except punishment. Referring to the partial eta square values, social intelligence was found to have the most impact on discussion strategy, explaining 17.2% of its variance. This is followed by recognition (16.0% variance explained), hinting (13.4% variance explained), involvement (8.9% variance explained) and aggression (6.5% variance explained).

The estimated marginal means computed in Table 5 shows that teachers with high level of

social intelligence scored higher in discussion, recognition, involvement and hinting. In contrast, teachers with moderate level of social intelligence scored higher in the usage of aggression and punishment.

Table 5: Descriptive of means across level of SI

<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Recode SI</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. deviation</i>	<i>N</i>
<i>T-Punishment</i>	Moderate	3.82	.68	151
	High	3.64	.69	52
<i>T-Discussion</i>	Moderate	4.37	.81	151
	High	5.16	.57	52
<i>T-Recognition</i>	Moderate	4.55	.76	151
	High	5.25	.51	52
<i>T-Aggression</i>	Moderate	2.98	.95	151
	High	2.43	.82	52
<i>T-Involvement</i>	Moderate	3.73	.69	151
	High	4.25	.83	52
<i>T-Hinting</i>	Moderate	4.49	.76	151
	High	5.13	.57	52
	Total	4.66	.77	203

SI = stands for the Social Intelligence

DISCUSSION

In terms of social intelligence and teachers from Malaysia, India and China, the findings above indicated that there were significant differences in social intelligences among teachers from (Malaysia, India and China). One-way ANOVA was conducted which explored the differences between teachers from Malaysia, India and China across levels of social intelligences. The analysis showed teachers from India scored significantly higher than from China in their social intelligence as measured by the research instrument. However, the results obtained in the study did not show statistically significant dif-

ferences in social intelligences between teachers from Malaysia and India, as well as Malaysia and China

Another objective of the study was to determine the level of teachers' social intelligence based on classroom discipline strategies (punishment, discussion, recognition, aggression, involvement and hinting). To this end, MANOVA clearly indicated that teachers of different levels of social 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 17.2% 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.

Concerning the role of social intelligence, the findings of this study were similar to the findings of Albrecht's (2006) who believed, social intelligence is a requirement for the teachers and plays an important role in classroom behavior management. He pointed out that we need teachers who enjoy high level of social intelligence and model them for their students. He stated that the teachers who were socially intelligent, organize the classroom through establishing supportive and encouraging relationships with their students, developing the lessons which are based on the students' strong points and abilities, creating and applying behavioral guidelines in the ways which enhance intrinsic motivation, such as discussion, hinting, recognition and involvement.

Bjorkqvist and Osterman's (1999) findings are also in line with the findings of this study. These researchers stated that social intelligence has a negative relationship with aggression in school. The result in this study supported by 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 support the theoretical foundations by Mayer et al. (1999) who acknowledged that social intelligence may share common ground in relation to

human behavior. The findings of the present research also agree with Zirkel (2000) which pointed out that social intelligence is closely related to individual behavior. Those with social intelligence are fully aware of themselves and understand their environment. This enables them to control their emotions, make decisions about their goals in life.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that teachers from Malaysia, India and China, were significantly different in their social intelligence. The results also revealed that to determine the level of teachers' social intelligence based on classroom discipline strategies (punishment, discussion, recognition, aggression, involvement and hinting). The MANOVA clearly indicated that teachers of different levels of social intelligence significantly differ in their usage of both positive disciplinary strategies (discussion, recognition, hinting and involvement) and one negative strategies (aggression). However, no significant difference was found concerning one strategy of classroom discipline (punishment).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the researcher makes a few recommendations in this section. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education include some teacher training programmes in order to enhance teachers' social 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 social intelligence, methods, programmes, or strategies that might be employed to teach and discipline classroom students. 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 age 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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