

Effects of Priming and modelling strategies in enhancing emotional intelligence of secondary school students of Imo state, Nigeria

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence is the ability of a person to be aware of and manage his and others' emotions for his own good and for the welfare of others. The unacceptable situation of things in the schools as far as interpersonal relationship is concerned is manifested in the school environments where students display arrogance, lack of interest in studies, fighting, bullying, etc. The aim of the researchers was to ascertain if the use of priming and modelling as teaching strategies can be effective in the enhancement of secondary school students' emotional intelligence as a means to solving the above problem. It is a quasi experimental work. The treatment groups were pre-tested, treated and post-tested, while the control group was given placebo treatment. The research questions were answered using the mean, while t-test statistical tool was used to analyze the hypotheses. Findings revealed that priming method was more effective than the modelling method. Suggestions were made for a better use of priming and modelling strategies for enhancement of emotional intelligence as well as achievement of the objectives in the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: priming, modelling, emotional, intelligence

Introduction

Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage one's emotions for the good of one and of others (Mangal, 2010). Irrational expression of emotions is partly responsible for many violent acts noticed in the schools and the larger society (Sullivan & Strang, 2012). Palmer, Walls, Burgess and Stough (2010) assert that an emotionally intelligent student is aware of his emotional expressions, is able to manage his emotions, is aware of others' emotions and has the ability to manage the emotions of others. Greentein (2007) admits that there are many instances of students' irrational expression of emotions in and

outside the school. This according to Charney (2008) is manifested in their apathy to studies, irregular attendance to schools, inattentiveness in class, neglect on take home assignments, flagrant disobedience of teachers, occupying their minds and study time with manipulation of handsets and phone calls, playing games or music. More so, many of them come late to school, loiter about and sneak out of school before dismissal. Some come to school with dangerous weapons. They engage in fierce fighting thus, causing damages to school as well as individual property (Bargh, Chen & Burrows, 2010).

Students often quarrel among themselves as a result of one misunderstanding or the other. Cosmos (2011) expressed concern for children who exhibit bad behaviour, as they are least likely to succeed, the most likely not to have friends, and the most likely to drop out of school. Children walking out of the class of the teacher they hate is a sad phenomenon experienced in many secondary schools. In some cases, Maida (2012) observed that there may be no provocation of any sort. Maida (2012) therefore identified three causes of such behaviour to be agitation, withdrawal and depression, which are noticed in many schools.

In Nigeria today, violence has reached its apogee as no one feels secure; the rich, the poor, child, youth or adult. Even those who are privileged to have armed security men around them do not feel safe because everyone is afraid, including those carrying guns. Many Nigerians have lost their sense of reasoning and no longer care about the good of others due to selfishness. These problematic issues could be reduced if handled through the appropriate means, which is why the researchers thought adopting priming and modelling approaches to sensitize people on the need to control or manage their emotions intelligently.

Priming as a strategy is important because of its influence on cognitive processes, especially memory activation. Becker, Moscovitch, Behrmann and Jordens (2007) submit that once the brain has been primed with an issue, it becomes familiar with it and recognizes it on any further encounter. This priming strategy was employed using classroom teaching method through which issues were exposed to the students creating the awareness of the consequences of lack of emotional control and the good reward that accompanies good emotional control.

Modelling is the practice of observing someone and copying what that person does. Pentland and Liu (1999) predicted that human behaviours can be accurately described as a set of dynamic models sequenced together by a Markov chain. That is to say that basic behaviour elements are chained together to produce larger behaviours. Nauert (2010) argues that it is not just learning from but following the footsteps of that person and doing things the way the person did them. Classroom modelling effect is demonstrated by Miska (2004) where she modelled respect, obedience, order and attention, and the students were affected.

Statement of the Problem

Emotional intelligence appears to be lacking in most students. The irrational manner with which the students express their emotions portrays gross lack of emotional intelligence, which manifests itself in lack of proper self-awareness, poor self-emotional management, poor self-control, unconcerned feeling for others and very poor relationship management (Nnachi, 2007).

Students are fond of going to school late, not paying attention in class, fighting among themselves and sometimes with their teachers, stealing school and individual property, loitering during school hours, engaging in immoral acts, bullying the junior ones, indulging in examination malpractice, indecent dressing and showing apathy to studies (Nwadinigwe & Azuka-Obieke, 2012; Petrides & Furham, 2011). Some engage in cultism and many other nefarious activities. Things have really fallen apart in the present day secondary schools (Nnodum, 2001). Teachers are restless, parents are complaining, the government is worried, and the examination bodies are not at ease. Stakeholders are calling for a state of emergency in the secondary schools. It is on this backdrop that the researchers felt the urge to correct this anomaly for the well-being of all, by establishing the effect of priming and modelling strategies in enhancing emotional intelligence of secondary school students of Imo state, Nigeria

Research Questions

Three research questions were raised to guide this research work.

1. What difference exists among the mean scores of the treatment (modelled) group and the control group at post-test?
2. What difference exists among the mean scores of the treatment (primed) group and the control group at post-test?
3. What difference exists among the mean scores of the treatment (modeled and primed) groups at post-test?

Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the students' emotional intelligence rating mean scores between the treatment (Modelled) group and the control group at post-test.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the students' emotional intelligence rating mean scores between the treatment (primed) group and the control group at post-test.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the students' emotional intelligence rating mean scores between the treatment (Modelled and Primed) groups at post-test.

Methodology

The study was a quasi experimental type, which adopted the pre-test, post test and control group design. Priming and modelling strategies were manipulated by the researchers to determine their effects on the emotional intelligence of the subjects. There

were three groups, which comprised experimental priming group (EPG), experimental modelling group (EMG) and the control group (CG), which was simulated by giving them unrelated topics to do assignments in order to keep them active and under control. The three groups were pretested and post-tested.

Out of all the students of the selected school, the ones with low emotional intelligence were identified with the Pre-treatment Instrument to Determine Students' Eligibility for Emotional Intelligence Treatment (PIDSEET). PIDSEET instrument was administered to all the students of the school. Those who scored 0-9 were seen as having high emotional intelligence level while those who scored 10-20 were of low emotional intelligence level. The PIDSEET has 20 items probing into negative behaviours with Yes (1) and No (0) response pattern. From the identified students that were eligible for treatment who were 389 in number, 150 of them were selected as the sample for the study. They were divided into three groups of 50 students each. Each group was made up of 25 boys and 25 girls. The students were drawn from both the Junior and Senior secondary schools with 75 students from JSS and 75 from SSS respectively. 25 students were randomly selected from each of the six classes; JS1 to JS 3 and SS 1 to SS 3. The boys as well as the girls were 75 in number. For the formation of the three groups, 12 boys and 13 girls were drawn from JS I and JS III. 13 boys and 12 girls were drawn from JS11 giving total of 37 boys and 38 girls while in the senior Secondary School, SS1 and 111 had 13 girls and 12 boys each while SS11 had 13 boys and 12 girls to give a total of 38 boys and 37 girls. The sampling techniques that were used were the stratified and simple random sampling techniques of balloting using YES and NO cards.

The Pre-treatment Instrument to Determine a Student's Eligibility for Emotional Intelligence Treatment (PIDSEET) was developed by the researchers and used to guide this study at the pre-treatment stage. The PIDSEET was administered to all the students of the school. Another instrument Pre-test Emotional Intelligence Instrument (PEII-A) was adapted by the researchers and used for the pre-test. Part of this instrument is the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), which covered the empathy component of emotional intelligence. The Post-test Emotional Intelligence Instrument (PEII-B) was also used. The instruments have 20 items covering much irrational behaviour of students such as stubbornness, disobedience, immorality, lack of interest in studies and inclination towards violent actions. With a response pattern on a five-point Likert Scale expressing extent of description, the Pre-test Emotional Intelligence Instrument (PEII-A) as well as the Post-test Emotional Intelligence Instrument (PEII-B) have 77-items each.

The instrument was administered twice to each member of the sample groups. The whole experimental exercise went through three stages, beginning with the pre-treatment stage. The PEII-A instrument was later administered to them and their responses collected. The second stage is the treatment proper. The third was at the end of

the nine-week priming and modelling exercise. Data gathered for the study was analyzed using mean scores and t-test.

Presentation of results

Research question one: What difference exists among the mean scores of the treatment (modelled) group and the control group at post-test?

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the students' emotional intelligence rating mean scores between the treatment (Modelled) group and the control group at post-test.

Table 1: t-test of significant of difference between treatment (modelled) group and control group at post test

Groups	N	Mean	df	Mean difference	p	α	Decision
Modelled	50	184.52	98	68.78	0.00	.05	Reject Ho
Control	50	115.74					

From the result on table 1, the mean scores for the control group and modelled group are 115.74 and 184.52 respectively. This implies a mean difference of 68.78. There is therefore difference among the students' emotional intelligence rating mean scores of the treatment (modelled) group and control group at post-test. However, to ascertain whether this difference was statistically significant, hypothesis one was tested. The summary of the results of the test, as shown in table 1, indicates that $p < .05$; the null hypothesis was therefore rejected. For modelled and Control groups, probability (0.00) is less than the level of significance (0.05). This implies that the mean difference of the groups is significant at 0.05. One can conclude that Modelled group with higher mean scored higher than the Control group with lower mean.

Research question two: What difference exists among the mean scores of the treatment (primed) group and the control group at post-test?

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the students' emotional intelligence rating mean scores between the treatment (primed) group and the control group at post-test.

Table 2: t-test of significant of difference between treatment (primed) group and control group at post-test

Groups	N	Mean	df	Mean difference	P	α	Decision
Primed	50	203.02	98	87.28	0.00	.05	Reject Ho
Control	50	115.74					

Result of mean analysis showed that the mean scores for control group and primed group were 115.74 and 203.02 respectively. It also shows that the difference in the mean scores is 87.28. This shows that there exists a difference among the mean scores of the treatment (primed) group and the control group at post-test. The testing of the corresponding hypothesis two indicated that the difference is statistically significant; this is as the $p < .05$ which led to the rejection of the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference. For primed and Control groups, probability (0.00) is less than the level of significance (0.05). This implies that the mean difference of the group is significant at 0.05. One can conclude that primed group with higher mean scores higher than the Control group with lower mean.

Research question three: What difference exists among the mean scores of the treatment (modeled and primed) groups at post-test?

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the students' emotional intelligence rating mean scores between the treatment (Modelled and Primed) groups at post-test.

Table 3: t-test of significant of difference between the treatment (modelled and primed) groups at post-test

Groups	N	Mean	df	Mean difference	p	α	Decision
Primed	50	203.02	98	18.5	0.000	.05	Reject Ho
Modelled	50	184.52					

The summary of the results on table 3 shows that mean scores for primed and modelled groups are 203.02 and 184.52 respectively. It shows that the difference in the mean scores is 18.50. It can therefore be concluded that there is difference in the students' emotional intelligence rating mean scores of the treatment groups at post-test. The hypothesis was then tested to ascertain the statistical significance or otherwise of this difference. Results on table 3 show that modelled and primed groups' probability (0.00) is less than the level of significance (0.05). This implies that the difference in means of the groups is significant at 0.05. One can conclude that primed group with higher mean scored higher than modelled group with lower mean.

Discussion of results

The findings of the study from the various analyses show that differences exist in the students' emotional intelligence rating mean scores. The treatment groups (priming and modelling) recorded significant differences between them and the group that was not treated. This was seen to be as a result of the treatment carried out which affected those treated. The treatment exercise affected the Students' emotional intelligence of the treated students while those not treated were not affected. If the treatment had not taken place, their emotional intelligence level would have remained the same as it happened to those in the control group.

Significant difference was also recorded between the treatment groups themselves. This is as a result of the fact that both treatments were not the same, and so they made different impacts on the treated students. The reason for the disparity is that the two treatment methods of priming and modelling are not the same hence, the difference in their effects on the students. More so, priming and modelling strategies vary in their effect on the students' emotional intelligence reactions to the test items and emotional intelligence mean scores of the emotional intelligence components. This is because various individuals react differently to various issues in their various dispositions.

Conclusion

Enhancement of students' emotional intelligence is a *sine qua non* in the loud call for the restoration of discipline in schools. It is therefore high time a crusade for the enhancement of emotional intelligence of all students was started beginning from primary schools to the tertiary level.

Priming and modelling have been found to be good enhancement strategies for emotional intelligence although none can guarantee 100% success. The four emotional intelligence components of self-awareness, management of self-emotion, empathy and relational management cover basically all areas of human intra and inter-personal relationships. Priming as a teaching strategy works differently from modelling as a teaching strategy. All have not been said about this research topic as there is a big room for further research.

Recommendations

Priming and modelling strategies are good teaching methods which teachers can employ to enhance the learning abilities of their students. The two strategies (priming and modelling) must not go together because both are different methods of teaching.

For proper relationship management, students should be taught to be very open towards one another and other people and be willing to consider other people's point of view rather than being selfish or myopic. They must liberate themselves from prejudice and have realistic expectations from others. They must have the ability to organize and to

motivate others into getting things accomplished as a sign of good leadership quality. This they put in practice when they are appointed class or school prefects.

Teachers should be good role models for their students. Teachers who cannot effectively control their emotions should not be allowed to teach in schools (both primary and secondary) to avoid showing bad example to the children who tend to model their teachers consciously or unconsciously.

Students who lack self-emotional control and are not making effort to check-mate it should be punished each time they misbehave. Only students who display good emotional intelligence should be given leadership positions in schools.

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