PERSONAL IDENTITY AND SOCIO-EMOTIONAL ISSUES AMONG MALAYSIAN GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

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Abstract

Personal identity serves as a foundation of character building that becomes a symbol of personality for a person or a nation. This study aims to identify the level of personal identity and its relationship with socio-emotional issues faced by gifted and talented students in Malaysia. One hundred and ninety four students from the secondary education program at PERMATApintar National Gifted Centre, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia were selected to respond to two research surveys, namely Students' Personal Identity Instrument with 72 items, comprising six Personal Identity components, and Students' Socio-emotional Issues Instrument with 60 items, comprising ten socio-emotional issues components. Students responded to the surveys using a 5-point Likert scale. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were used to determine the mean and correlation between variables (SPSS version 19.0). The results showed that gifted and talented students scored high on Personal identity (3.86, sd value of 6.41) and average on socio-emotional issues (2.71, sd: 7:39). Out of five components of self-identity, spiritual identity obtained the highest mean score (4.13), while leadership identity earned the lowest mean score (3.63). As for socio-emotional issues, social justice pressure obtained the highest score of 4.13 while family relationship pressure obtained the lowest score of 2.09. Pearson correlation analysis showed a significant negative correlation between personal identity and socio-emotional issues among gifted and talented students. The results of this study emphasize the importance of a self-development program for gifted and talented students as well as the crucial role of guidance and counselling services for students.

Keywords: Personal identity, psychological issues, socio-emotional pressure, gifted and talented students, guidance and counselling

1. Introduction

Personal identity is a catalyst in the development of quality human capital. The quality of personal identity among youth, particularly the gifted and talented are very important to ensure the country's continuous development in the future. According to Mohd. Yusof, Jawiah, Abd. Latif, Mohd. Safar, Noor Aziah, Shamsul, Azhar, Rosilawati, Noralina, and Mujahid (2012) personal identity is a special and unique individual characteristic, which includes values, customs, language, culture, religion, idealism, patriotism and integrity. Malaysia as a nation needs outstanding youth with a positive personal identity to ensure the continuous development that can stimulate a positive change in himself or herself, as well as the family, community and country. These special characteristics are intrinsic and become a foundation to personality development among individuals or ethnic groups.

According to Teo (2015), identity can be divided into two; namely personal identity and national identity. Personal identity comprises innate attributes such as positive attributes that are manifested through ways of thinking, behaviour, and self-presentation. These characteristics include excellent work culture (high quality and dedicated), being committed, law-abiding, helpful and exhibiting a high level of integrity. Thus, individuals with a strong personal identity are referred to as individuals with identity (Wan Muhamad, 2010). According to Wan Muhamad (2010), identity refers to an outward identity of the true self or the original self of a person as well as the values that he holds. Individual identity refers to his national identity, while the values that he holds refer to religious teachings as well as cultural practices and heritage he follows.

In other words, personal identity can be conceptualized as individual characteristics that include values, religiosity, language, and patriotism that can all be translated into consistent behavior. Such individuals are also trustworthy, holding on to strong humanitarian principles and are not easily influenced. These are in line with Erikson's (1968) view on individual identity that exhibits characteristics of confidence and high self-esteem, open to other peoples' views or ideas based on ability, loyalty, personal values, and honor. This personal nature can be developed systematically across the life. Therefore, individuals with strong identity are often associated with a noble personality, practice noble and commendable values, are honest and reliable, strongly principled and not easily influenced.

Gross (1989) in a study on gifted learners stated that the process of identity development among gifted children and adolescents is complicated compared to their peers. Identity formation is complicated due to many factors related to, or arising from their differences from most or other individuals in the environment, whether in the school or in adult life. According to Gross (1989) for the purposes of social adjustment, gifted and talented

students (GTS) may occasionally cover their ingenuity and mimic the identity of the others, so that they can be accepted and valued in a culture that values conformity among peers. Accordingly, the issue of gifted identity was viewed by Brankovic (2006) from two perspectives, namely (1) gifted individuals always mask and can exchange identity. It is not because of problems that exist, but because of the social environment in which they are not given the freedom to be themselves; (2) gifted individuals need assistance in determining their identity in a context that does not allow for natural differences.

Therefore, development of personal identity among gifted learners should be given attention by using the many approaches available. GTS are perceived as future leaders, who possess leadership characteristics and the ability to motivate their peers (Karnes & Stephens, 1999; Roberts, 2013; Rorlinda, 2015). Inborn leadership quality should be integrated with holistic personal identity values in line with the Malaysian National Philosophy of Education as stated below;

> Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing individual potential in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonic, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards and who are responsible and capable of achieving high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large. (Annual Report Ministry of Education, 2015)

2. Literature Review

2.1. Gifted and talented students

Gifted and talented students vary in terms of their nature and abilities. To date, there is no universally accepted definition of students who can be identified as having particular gifts or talents. However, Gagné's model is one of the existing models that provide the most generally accepted definition of both giftedness and talent. Gagné (2014) in Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent provides research-based definitions of giftedness and talent that are directly and logically connected to teaching and learning. According to Gagné, gifted students are those whose potential is distinctly above average in one or more of the following domains of human ability: intelligence, creativity, sociability, and physical health. Gagné's model recognises that giftedness is a broad concept that encompasses a range of abilities; it also recognises that giftedness is only a potential and that it must go through a transformative

process in order to become a talent. As such, Gagné makes it clear that adequate school support is necessary if students are to develop their gifts or exceptional abilities into talents or achievements.

There are a number of other models of giftedness which includes the Sea Star Model developed by Abraham Tannenbaum (1983). According to Tannenbaum (2003), giftedness in a child is his or her potential to become an adult with a developed talent. Tannenbaum asserts that there are two types of gifted people: producers, who produce either things or ideas; and performers, who interpret or re-create these things or ideas. Both kinds of gifted people demonstrate their talent either creatively by adding something new or original, or proficiently by having high levels of skill. Like Gagné's model, Tannenbaum's model attempts to explore the process by which ability becomes actual achievement. He identifies five factors that influence this conversion: (i) superior general intellect, (b) distinctive special aptitudes, (c)a supportive array of non-intellective traits such as personality, self-concept or motivation, (d) a challenging and facilitative environment, (e) chance. Tannenbaum argues that all factors need to be present for gifted potential to be reflected in talent.

Next, according to Renzulli's Three-Ring Model (2000), giftedness results from a dynamic interaction between three basic clusters of human traits; (a) above-average general ability, (b) high level of creativity, and (c) high levels of task commitment. His model goes on to argue that the 'gifted' are those who possess or are capable of developing this composite set of traits and apply them to any potentially valuable area of human performance. Renzulli's model draws attention to the developmental nature of behaviours such as creativity and task commitment. Similar to Gagné's and Tannenbaum's models, it recognizes that a range of factors must be in place in order for students with natural abilities to develop their gifts into talents.

The PERMATApintar National Gifted Center at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia perceives the concept of GTS as those possessing attitudes and personal attributes that enrich and support the development of self-potential (Noriah, Rosadah, & Siti Fatimah, 2009). This includes individuals with the following attributes: (i) internal abilities related to cognitive skills such as thinking skills, problem solving and planning skills, which are demonstrated through speed learning and information management; (ii) opportunity to belong to a learning environment that promotes high levels of cognitive ability, enrichment, speed learning, and curricular consolidation, and (iii) attitude and personality that significantly develop and support the individual's ability to reach the level of giftedness. Criteria like being community-friendly, influential, eloquent and possessing leadership skills will contribute to self-development that can lead these individuals to become gifted and talented individuals.

2.2. Socio-emotional issues among gifted students

Children or youth with exceptional abilities may have additional affective needs resulting from their increased capacity to think beyond their age, greater intensity in response, combinations of unique interests, personality characteristics, and conflicts that are different from those of their age mates (Roedell, 1986). They become uncertain on issues of trust in the environment as a result of their ingenuity like unrealistic expectations of their behavior, self-pressure to be the best, continuous criticism or praise, pressure to follow the rules, and difficulties in finding a partner (Silverman, 1987).

Psychological researchers have discovered that these children face psychological socio-emotional issues, despite high level of cognitive abilities and creativity (Rorlinda, 2014; Rosadah, Noriah, & Melor 2009; Robinson, 2006; Abu Yazid & Aliza, 2009; Aliza & Hamidah, 2009). Silverman (1987) has listed the socio-emotional issues faced by the GTS; refusal to perform routine tasks that are repetitive, criticism of others who do not conform, the lack of awareness about the impact of his/her actions on others (lack of empathy), difficulty accepting criticism, trying to hide the talent to adapt to friends, disobedience and resistance to a higher authority.

Next, studies by Neihart, Reis, Robinson, and Moon (2002) found out that GTS experience socio-emotional issues such as frustration, irritability, anxiety, rapid boredom and the desolation or isolation of social due to extreme sadness caused by loss or loneliness, strong social pressure, lack of motivation, low self-concept, social rejection, low emotional awareness including the ability to control emotional, interpersonal problem such as having difficulties making friends with peers that have lower cognitive ability, phobias, fear of failure, perfectionism, setbacks for social acceptance, and lack of endurance. The fear of failure, the risk of their desire for perfection, and depression is more serious among the highly creative GTS. Therefore, parents and teachers who understand the social and emotional implications of the GTS can provide an environment that accepts and teaches social skills that can help them deal with the difficult experiences.

The existence of psychological or socio-emotional issues among GTS is due to the discrepancy between their mental age and chronological age. GTS have a very high cognitive ability, but are mediocre in terms of emotional, social and spiritual development. This is known as asynchronous development. Therefore, being caught in this situation may pose problems for the GTS, as well as the surrounding community. Indeed, such a situation arises from the unique characteristics displayed by the gifted like self-independence, phobias, values and moral development, imbalance in ability, and some limitations in areas related to social skills and development of their potential. The problem is made worse with communication

challenges, discrimination, family issues, lack of adaptation skills, and negative perception from the community.

3. Problem Statement

Research on GTS has recently increased with specific discussions on cognitive quality which neglects social and emotional needs. GTS' personal quality aspects seem to be related to their personal attributes in leading themselves and others (Karnes & Bean, 1986; Sternberg, 1985). The emphasis of current research among the GTS is now being focused on evaluating their abilities to handle risks and solve problems. Based on the literature, social and emotional adaptation relates to type of intelligence, educational adaptation and personal attributes. Research findings both local and abroad have discovered several socio-emotional issues that may pose an obstacle in developing GT potential to the maximum (Rorlinda, 2015; Rosadah, 2003; Robinson, 2006; Abu Yazid & Aliza, 2009; Aliza & Hamidah, 2009).

An individual is perceived as gifted when he possesses an outstanding cognitive ability and able to use it well. According to Gagne (2014), an individual is gifted when he exhibits potential in any specific field. When this potential is polished, it will enable the GTS to achieve excellence. Nevertheless, gifted individuals sometimes encounter challenges or do not have the opportunity to demonstrate his or her potential. This may be due to interpersonal or environmental factors that do not support the needs and requirements of his or her learning environment (Gagne, 1995).

Robinson (2006) found GTS experiencing socio-emotional issues, such as frustration, irritability, anxiety, becoming quickly bored. Abu Yazid and Aliza (2009) and Aliza and Hamidah (2009) also discovered that some gifted and talented individuals experience pressure due to high expectation, boredom in learning, imbalanced or asynchronous overall development, and several related social skill issues.

Researchers have shown that GTS students faced socio-emotional issues that could affect their personal potential. Mohd Yusof (2012), Teo (2013), and Wan Muhamad (2010) stated that individuals with a stable personal identity manage themselves well, have good attributes that are manifested through ways of thinking, behaviour, and self-presentation as compared to those with a low sense of identity.

Hence, it is important to address socio-emotional aspects as related to personal identity in order to ensure a healthy development and maximum achievement among the GTS. This study aims to identify the profile and level of personal identity and socio-emotional issues among GTS. The relationship between personal identity and socio-emotional issues among GTS will be identified.

4. Research Objectives

a. To identify the mean score of personal identity and social-emotional issues score for gifted and talented students at PERMATApintar Gifted Centre UKM

b. To identify the personal identity and socio-emotional issues profile among gifted and talented students at PERMATApintar National Gifted Centre UKM.

c. To compare the mean between personal identity and socio-emotional issues according to gender and ethnic group.

d. To identify the relationship between personal identity and socio-emotional issues among gifted and talented students at PERMATApintar National Gifted Centre UKM.

5. Research Hypothesis

Ho_1: There is no significant correlation between personal identity and socio-emotional issues among the gifted and talented students at PERMATApintar National Gifted Centre UKM.

6. Research Methods

6.1. Research Design

This descriptive study employed the quantitative research design using surveys to evaluate the level of personal identity and socio-emotional issues among gifted and talented students (GTS). Data was gathered using two instruments: personal identity for students and socio-emotional issues among GTS, which were developed based on literature. The instruments use 5-point Likert scale with Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

6.2. Sample

Surveys were distributed to 194 gifted and talented students enrolled at PERMATApintar National Gifted Center, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, based on random sampling. 80 (41.2%) were Level 2 students (15 to 17 years), 80 (41.2%) were Level 1 students (14 to 15 years), and 34 (17.5%) were foundation 2 students (12 to 14 years). 106 (54.64%) were female, while 88 (45.36%) were male. Based on ethnic composition, 165 (85.05%) were Malay, 15 (7.7%) Chinese, 4 (2.1%) Indians, and 10 (5.2%) belonged to other ethnic groups like Sikh and those from Sabah and Sarawak.

6.3. Research Instruments

The Personal identity instrument consisted of six (6) constructs that reflect the Personal identity characteristics intended in this study. The constructs for Personal identity included Thinking Identity, Emotional Identity, Spiritual Identity, Physical Identity, Leadership Identity, and Nationalism Identity. Each construct had twelve (12) items with a total of seventy-two (72) items. The instruments used a 5-point Likert scale with 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Not Sure, 4 – Agree and 5 – Strongly Agree. The Cronbach Alpha value for the instrument was ɑ 0.962, which was suitable for use. The instrument was also considered highly reliable to obtain stable scores among respondents.

The other instrument was Socio-emotional Issues for GTS Students. This instrument was used to identify the types and levels of socio-emotional issues faced by the GTS. It consisted of ten (10) constructs/components that reflected socio-emotional issues including issues on emotion, motivation, self-concept, anxiety, perfectionism, procrastination, underachievement, social relationship, social justice, and family relationship. Each component consisted of six items, with a total of sixty (60) items. Response was based on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3 – Not Sure, 4 – Agree and 5 – Strongly Agree. The reliability value was ɑ 0.920. Based on this value, the instrument was suitable to be used in order to obtain stable responses from the respondents.

6.4. Data Collection Methodology

Data was collected via distribution of both instruments during the Self-Development and Personal Identity Development class. Both subjects are compulsory for the high school students at PERMATApintar National Gifted Center. Respondents answered the two surveys consecutively, beginning with the Personal Identity Instrument, followed by Socio-emotional Issues for Students.

6.5. Data Analysis

Data was analysed using SPSS 19.0. Descriptive analysis was conducted to determine the overall profile and level of Personal identity. Inferential statistics analysis was conducted to determine the overall correlation between two variables according to the components.

7. Findings

(i) *What is the mean score of personal identity and socio-emotional issues for the gifted and talented students at PERMATApintar National Gifted Centre?*

The findings showed that the mean score for personal identity of gifted and talented students was 3.86 (sd value of 6.41), and 2.71 (sd value: 7:39) for socio-emotional issues (Table 1). Based on the determination of the scale of the low level (1.00 - 2.33), moderate (2.34 - 3.66), and high (3.67 - 5.00), the mean score indicates a high level of personal identity and a moderate level of socio-emotional issues among GTS. In more detail, the mean score for personal identity showed 27.80% respondents fell into the average level (mean 2.34-3.66), while 72.20% respondents fell into the high level of personal identity (mean 3.67-5.00).

Meanwhile, 9.28% respondents were found to have a high level of socio-emotional issues (mean 3.67-5.00), 67.01% respondents showed an average level (mean 2.34-3.66), and 23.71% respondents showed a low level (mean 1.00-2.33). Overall, the findings indicate the level of personal identity of GTS students is in the range of medium to high. From the socio-emotional aspect, most GTS appear to have socio-emotional issues at a moderate to high level but with only a small number in this level.

Table 1. Mean Personal identity and Socio-Emotional Issues among Gifted and Talented Students

Variables	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
Personal-identity	194	3.86	6.41
Social-emotional Issues	194	2.71	6.39

(ii) *What is the personal identity and socio-emotional issues profile among gifted and talented students at PERMATApintar National Gifted Centre?*

Table 2 shows the result for the Personal identity profile. An analysis of the six components shows the highest mean is for Spirituality Identity (4.13), followed by Nationalism Identity (mean= 3.91), Emotional Identity (mean=3.86), Thinking Identity (mean= 3.85), Physical (mean=3.82), and Leadership Identity (mean=3.63).

Table 2. Personal identity among Gifted and Talented Students at PERMATApintar National Gifted Centre, UKM

No.	Leadership	Mean	Standard deviation
1	Thinking Identity	3.85	0.496
2	Emotional Identity	3.86	0.505
3	Spiritual Identity	4.13	0.453
4	Physical Identity	3.82	0.557
5	Leadership Identity	3.63	0.511
6	Nationalism Identity	3.91	0.492

Table 3 shows the result for socio-emotional issues profile among the gifted and talented students. Based on the results of the ten components, social justice scale shows the highest mean (4.13) followed by perfectionist (mean= 3.12), anxiety (mean= 2.79), procrastination (mean= 2.78), motivation (mean = 2.71), emotional (mean= 2.68), independence (mean= 2.57), social (mean= 2.14), underachievement (mean= 2.11), and family relationship (mean= 2.09).

Table 3. Socio-emotional Issues Profile among the Gifted and Talented Students at PERMATApintar National Gifted Centre, UKM

No.	Socio-emotional Issues	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Emotional	2.68	0.769
2	Motivational	2.71	0.835
3	Self-concept	2.57	0.805
4	Anxiety	2.79	0.897
5	Perfectionist	3.12	0.704
6	Procrastination	2.78	0.898
7	Underachiever	2.11	0.724
8	Social	2.14	0.849
9	Social Justice	4.13	0.574
10	Family issues	2.09	0.797

(iii) *What is the comparison of means between personal identity and socio-emotional issues according to gender and ethnic group?*

Table 4. A Comparison of Means between Personal identity and Socio-emotional Issues among the Gifted and Talented Students at PERMATApintar National Gifted Centre UKM

Profile	Gender		Ethnic			
	M n 88	F n 106	M n 165	C n 15	I n 4	Others n 10
Personal identity	3.83	3.90	3.90	3.72	3.94	2.62
Standard deviation	.36	.46	.367	.528	.722	.296
Socio-emotional Issues	2.77	2.67	2.83	2.833	2.29	2.62
	.582	.548	.527	.582	.656	2.96

Table 4 shows the comparison between means for personal identity and socio-emotional issues. The analysis on personal identity reveals higher mean scores for females (n=106, mean=3.90) than males (n=88, mean=3.83) while mean score for Malays is higher (n=165, mean=3.90) than Chinese students (n=15, mean=3.72). Nevertheless, the mean score

for Indians was the highest among the three ethnic groups (n=4, mean = 3.94). For socio-emotional issues, the mean score for male students was higher (n=88, mean=2.77) compared to female students (n=106, mean=2.67). Among the ethnic groups, the mean score for both Malays (n=165) and Chinese (n=15) was similar (mean=2.83), while Indians had the lowest mean score (n=4, min=2.29).

(iv)   *Is there a significant relationship between personal identity and socio-emotional issues among the gifted and talented students at PERMATApintar National Gifted Centre UKM?*

Table 5. A Correlation between Personal identity and Socio-emotional Issues among the Gifted and Talented Students at PERMATApintar National Gifted Centre UKM

Variable		Socio-emotional Issues
	Pearson Correlation r	-.317(**)
self-identity	Significant value	.002
	n	194

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above depicts a significant negative correlation between personal identity and socio-emotional issues with r [194] = -0.317, p = 0.02 (p<0.01). The correlation value [- 0.317] shows an average   negative correlation between personal identity and socio-emotional variables among the gifted and talented students in this study. This means that the higher the level of personal identity the lower the level of socio-emotional issues. In other words, when personal identity is low, socio-emotional issues increase. So, the null hypothesis H_o is rejected.

8. Discussion and Implications

Overall, the results of this study indicate that GTS have a high level of self-identity. The findings give the impression that the GTS have strong personality traits that are translated through the holding of values, beliefs, character, culture and strong spirit of patriotism. These strong personality traits are proven by the findings of this study that demonstrate PERMATApintar gifted and talented students who studied within the university environment obtained high self-identity scores in the spiritual component, followed by national identity, emotion, thinking and leadership identity. It shows that although the GTS are adolescents studying in a high school education program, the university intellectual environment and culture has enabled them to develop a strong spirit of personal and national identity. This finding is consistent with studies by Mohd. Yusof et al. (2012) who found that students

studying at public institutions of higher education have a high degree of identity. The finding appears to contradict a study by Mohamad Khairi, Asmawati, Abdullah, and Samsilah (2011) that found mainstream secondary school students obtained an average level of identity.

The result of a high self-identity among GTS at PERMATApintar University Kebangsaan Malaysia may be caused by the intensive exposure to the Self and National Identity Development course, a compulsory subject in the Gifted and Talented Education Program curriculum at this education centre. The learning process of the course focuses on holistic student personality development that includes the components of physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, leadership and citizenship identity. However, based on the present findings, the construction of GTS leadership identity needs to be given a greater emphasis due to its average score. These findings match the results of a study by Rorlinda (2015) which showed GTS leadership was at a moderate level. Studies have suggested that GTS be given intervention programs to build or enhance leadership skills, from their early involvement in the gifted and talented program. This is because GTS are seen as a potentially great leaders as they have been found to have leadership quality and are able to motivate others in their surroundings (Karnes & Stephens, 1996; Roberts, 2013). Next, the description of identity by ethnic group shows some concern where the Malay students, who are the majority, have a lower self-identity than Indian students while Chinese students showed the lowest. This finding is consistent with a study by Tan (2000) and Teo (1996) who found the phenomenon of mixed usage of Malay language among Malay community. According to Teo, the Malay community tend to use informal language and code switching (mixing of Malay and English language) in their conversation or communication. According to Siti Rahimah, Raja Masittah and Normahdiah (2014) this is associated with identity confusion, and was caused by the confusion in the self-identity of the speakers. The study was conducted to examine the Malay language used in social networking such as Facebook and to explore the impact of English on the identity of Malays. The findings showed that English is increasingly strong influence on the Malay language, which some researchers believe leads to a weakening of self-identity based on the premise that language is a marker of identity.

Similarly, for the identity of other races, especially the Chinese showed reluctance to support Malaysian identity (the use of Malay language) as the country's culture. According to Teo (2012) a Malay language expert, his personal view on this is the unwillingness of the Chinese education system to foster unity with the Malay language as the national language, as a marker of national identity. Malaysia practices a dual education system allowing vernacular schools to operate using the pupils' mother tongue (Mandarin and Tamil) as the medium of instruction.

The implications of these findings point to the importance of applying the elements of 1Malaysia in the subject of National Identity and across the curriculum (embedded in all subjects). This effort is important as the GTS will become the leaders as well as thinkers and scientists of the future. The steady appreciation of a national identity among GTS is a must, so that the development, sovereignty and prosperity of the nation can be sustained and further strengthened.

The findings on the socio-emotional issues also show that most GTS have medium to low level of socio-emotional issues, but there is also an exception where a small group of GTS experience a high level of socio-emotional issues. Of the ten components of socio-emotional issues studied, the measurement by sequence or ranking shows GTS face considerable pressure in five issues which are social justice, perfectionism, anxiety, procrastination, motivation, followed by emotional issues, self-concept issues, social issues, underachiever issues, and family relationships issues. This finding is consistent with previous studies on GTS socio-emotional issues by Versteynen (2005), Rosadah (2009), Robinson (2006), Abu Yazid and Aliza (2009), and Aliza and Hamidah (2009). The results of previous studies suggest that the socio-emotional aspects of GTS should be given attention because of the inconsistency in the aspects of cognitive development with the development of other psychological components, especially emotional and social which may cause GTS to experience pressure in adapting to their environment or adjustments in social relationships (Clark, 1992; Silverman, 1994). This is because the higher the level of GTS' IQ (intellectual quotient), the higher the risk for social and emotional adjustment problems which is related to emotional intelligence (EQ) (Hollingworth, 1942; Jihad Turki & Lama Majed Al-Qaisy, 2012). Past researchers have emphasised the importance of emotional intelligence competency in developing gifted students (Schwean, Saklofske, Widdifield-Konkin, Parker, & Kloosterman (2006). A study on emotional intelligence among gifted students by Rorlinda, Noriah, Afifah, & Endang (2015) showed a strong positive correlation between self-regulation (ability to control emotion) with academic achievement among GTS students. Therefore, EQ competency should be taught through a formal and informal gifted curriculum to help the GTS manage their emotions, as it is a critical issue for them.

Another implication of these findings indicate GTS education programmes require strong psychological counselling support services with competent expertise to help GTS to cope with emotional and psychological issues. Counselling services could provide special support for psychological issues faced by the GTS. This could help in maximising the development of GTS growth potential. In fact, since the aspects of psychological well-being are critical in driving GTS excellence, the psychological counselling services programme

should take into account the aspects of holistic development that cover all aspects of personal and national identity.

This is proven by the findings of the study that showed the higher the level of GTS self-identity, the lower the socio-emotional issues experienced, and conversely, the lower the level of self-identity, the higher the socio-emotional issues. These findings illustrate the importance of the development of GTS personal and national-identity in helping them to manage the socio-emotional issues. The sturdiness of identity is a powerful catalyst in helping individuals stand up to stressful situations. This is supported by previous studies that link the identity or the identity of the self with psychological issues of socio-emotional among GTS (Versteynen, 2005; Silverman, 1987; Tannenbaum, 1983; Neihart, Reis, Robinson, & Moon, 2002; Grossberg & Cornell, 1988; Neihart, 1999; Roedell, 1986). The implication of this is that the pedagogical content knowledge of identity-development course needs to be strengthened and diversified. Good planning by enriching creative learning experiences outside the classroom can contribute to experiential and meaningful learning, in line with the development of deep and critical thinking skills as supported by the 21st Century Pedagogical approach. This approach should be followed by reflection practice exercises. The practice of reflection that involves the critical self-reflection process in clarifying real experiences are capable of creating opportunities for self-identity to mature, thereby building GTS' confidence in accepting their strengths and shortcomings.

9. Conclusion

The formation of personal and national identity is an ongoing process. Education and skills in developing students' self-identity is an important obligation of the national education system. This is due to the importance of developing a holistic self-identity among school students, specifically the GTS as future leaders. Therefore, the process of fostering personal and national identity formally and non-formally must be planned carefully and creatively to be able to fulfil GTS' learning styles, so that the spirit and appreciation of genuine identity will be nurtured naturally. In addition, this subject should also be embedded across the curriculum, by associating or instilling the importance of personal and national identity in each subject studied. These efforts will indirectly be able to trigger awareness and develop GTS' social responsibility in ensuring sustainable development and national identity to continue to be strengthened. The agenda of developing GTS' self-identity and psychological well-being needs to be aligned to the Guidance and Counselling Psychology unit. A model of psychological support services programme that is sustainable and in line with the

psychological needs of GTS should be designed, so the efforts to drive the potential of this valuable national asset are not blocked due to psychological issues suffered.

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