

PERFECTIONISM AND OVEREXCITABILITY: UNIQUENESS OR LACK OF SOCIOEMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS?

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ABSTRACT

Socio emotional issues among gifted and talented students are often debated in gifted and talented education. Nevertheless, these components are not being highlighted in the domain of local educational psychology. This study was administered to identify the profile of students as well as the relationship between perfectionism and over excitability among gifted and talented students. This research was a descriptive and inferential quantitative study conducted in order to see the profile and correlation between the two variables. The study sample consisted of 40 students from a gifted and talented school established in Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. This study employed two instruments; the Frost Multidimensional Scale (FMPS) to measure perfectionism and the Questionnaire-II (OEQ II) to measure over excitability. The findings of this survey demonstrated that gifted and talented students have a unique personality, and there is a significant relationship at a high level between the perfectionism and over excitability. The result of this investigation could help to explain the interaction between over excitability and perfectionism and be able to understand the positive and negative elements that exist in students. Therefore, awareness must be cultivated to enhance self-development and the skills for socio emotional adaptation in the daily life of these students.

Keywords: Gifted and Talented Students, Socio emotional, Perfectionism, Over excitability

INTRODUCTION

The general public often gives the impression that Gifted and Talented Students (GTS) are thinkers and not involved in conflict problems. Nevertheless, this view does not reflect the actual socio emotional culmination experienced by gifted and talented students (Amnah, Nik Salida & Amirah 2015; Bakar & Alias, 2009). According to Noriah, et al., (2017), in order to produce a balanced gifted and talented individual, the characteristics of gifted and talented students must embrace components like intellectual intelligence, emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence. Ritchotte, et al., (2016) claimed that most studies of gifted and talented students place more emphasis on the cognitive aspects of gifted students while socio emotional issues are ignored in the education of gifted and talented students. In fact, gifted students need fitting specialised services to meet the criteria of the needs of talented and gifted students. Karpinski, et al., (2018) established that gifted and talented students were shown to be at risk of facing various socio emotional issues. Therefore, they need guidance.

Such empirical studies are imperative to help evaluate relationships and explain the socio emotional strengths and weaknesses of these gifted students. This research was based on the integration of two theories, particularly the Multidimensional Personality Theory and Positive Disintegration Theory. Dabrowski's concept explained the interaction between intensity, sensitivity and its relationship with perfectionism through Positive Disintegration Theory (Mofield & Peters, 2015). Both gifted and talented criteria, particularly perfectionism and over excitability, contribute a lot to the socio emotional adaptation of these gifted and talented

students. In this case, the help that could be given is to provide an understanding of the socio emotional issues endured by students, identify dominant and non-dominant levels or dimensions and present awareness and strive to make the best innovations for their development. This subject of perfectionism must be recognised, and strategies on how to support students understand and adapt are quintessential.

Research Background

Gifted and talented students do own a high value of common sense and often hold positive abilities, including excellence in education and future careers. Nonetheless, following this perception, gifted and talented students tends and risks experiencing socio emotional issues such as over excitability and perfectionism (Mofield & Peters, 2015). This issue of socio emotional development should be considered, starting from early childhood (Campbell et al., 2016; Peyre et al., 2016). Schools are the primary platform to name the problems confronted by students and channel information on what these students need to parent so that teachers and parents can play a role in the educational efforts of these bright children.

Socio emotional issues related to the domain of gifted and talented students are increasingly popular among scholars in the sector of education (Karpinski et al., 2018). Many current studies highlight the need to emphasise the socio emotional issues of these talented, gifted students. According to Sternberg (2017), talented, gifted students are not only evaluated in terms of cognitive abilities but also socio emotional elements such as creative, practical and have ethical skills are among the essential conditions in the assessment of gifted and talented students today. The higher the level of intelligence of gifted and talented students, then they will be more vulnerable to the issue of socio emotional adjustment (Turkish Jihad & Lama Majed 2012, Rosadah 2014).

According to Rorlinda (2017), socio emotional refers to one's capability to adapt to others in social processes and emotional control. In the context of gifted and talented students, these students always struggle to adjust (Versteijnen, 2013) in terms of peer acceptance, environment, self-interest and motivation. It is a weight of the conflict of cognitive maturity they hold. According to Neihard, et al., (2002), the term socio emotional consists of the ability to show empathy, be able to control feelings easily, have self-confidence and be able to foster friendships easily. Nevertheless, in addressing issues or failures in socio emotional adjustment, it implies that the individual is not able to control feelings or thoughts that will lead to negative emotions, weak adaptation in socialising, lack of self-confidence, has weaknesses when in the organisation and not skilled in collaborating (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2012). Socio emotional issues that happen can interfere with the level of mental health of a gifted and talented student if it is failed to be overcome.

Socio emotional issues are due to asynchronized development and underachievement (Kregel, 2017). For asynchronized development, gifted and talented students have a high level of mental ability compared to their chronological age (Rorlinda et al., 2015). Asynchronized development can affect emotions, motivational sensitivity, lead to a lack of friends and isolation and does not show achievement below the level that should be accomplished by gifted and talented students (Kregel, 2015).

Thus, this research examined the importance of the contribution of the characteristics of perfectionism and over excitability in helping the socio emotional adaptation of today's talented, gifted students. Gifted and talented students hold great potential to excel, but they require guidance. Teachers, counsellors and support staff need to appreciate the uniqueness of gifted and talented students before they could help the process of socio emotional adjustment of students, which is in line with Noriah's opinion (2016) which clarified that environmental influences could sustain and facilitate gifted and talented students' development. The main objectives of this research were to:

- a. Identify the profile of the students' perfectionism and overexcitability.

- b. Identify the relationship between the perfectionism towards overexcitability among gifted and talented students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Model

The study is quantitative approach descriptive survey design. It examined the relationship between perfectionism and over excitability among gifted and talented students.

Participants

Participants in this study were chosen using objective sampling. A sum of 40 samples was selected from lower secondary gifted and talented students (consisting of 20 male students and 20 female students) from a Kolej GENIUS Insan in Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia.

Instruments

These instruments were selected to evaluate the variables of perfectionism and overexcitability:

- a. Frost Multidimensional Scale (FMPS) by Frost, et al., (1990) to measure the perfectionism. This instrument consists of 35 items. This selection was made since most current studies used FMPS in selecting instruments to measure perfectionism, this study employed Multidimensional Scale instruments compared to other instruments. This instrument was also chosen because of the six sub constructs developed, namely organization, personal standards, personal criticism, parental expectations, concern over mistakes and fear in making mistakes.
- b. Over excitability Questionnaire-II (OEQ II) by Falk et al. (1999) used to measure over excitability: Falk et al. (1999) adopted it to produce suitable instruments for quantitative studies. In this OEQ II, there were five sub constructs, particularly; psychomotor, emotional, sensory, intellectual and imagination. Next, for each construct, it had ten items which made the total number of questions was 50 items. This OEQ II was said to be able to provide a consistent measurement value compared to previous instruments. Even according to (Piiro, 2010), this instrument is easy to administer and analyze.

Based on the pilot tests administered, both instruments had high-reliability values. The Frost Multidimensional Scale (FMPS) instrument had a reliability value of 0.913 Alpha Cronbach for 35 items while the Over excitability Questionnaire-II (OEQ II) instrument had a reliability value of 0.936 Alpha Cronbach based on 50 items of questions. According to Pallant (2011) and Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun (2013), a value of 0.7 and above indicates the item has a high-reliability value. This Cronbach's Alpha value proved that these two instruments had a high-reliability value and were suitable for use as a questionnaire instrument in this study.

RESULTS

The outcomes of the study included descriptive findings, the profile of perfectionism, profile of over excitability, as well as reviewing the relationship between perfectionism and over excitability. Based on Table 1, the sample of this study consisted of 40 students comprising of 20 male students, and another 20 were female students. The mean score of this study revealed that the mean score for perfectionism (mean=3.412) and for the value of over excitability (mean=3.463). The completion of these findings indicated that perfectionism and overexcitability were at a moderate level.

Table 1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF PERFECTIONISM AND OVEREXCITABILITY			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Perfectionism	3.4121	0.51728	40
Overexcitability	3.463	0.5584	40

The profile of perfectionism was assessed based on six domains representing perfectionism based on the Multidimensional Personality Theory of Frost et al. (1990). Based on Table 2, the highest mean values were from the domain of parental criticism (mean=3.815), followed by domains of fear in making mistakes (mean=3.770), personal standards domains (mean=3.528), organization domain (mean=3.361), concern over mistakes domain (mean=3.156) and the last one was parental expectations (mean=2.537).

Table 2 PROFILE OF PERFECTIONISM DOMAINS				
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Organization	1.78	4.67	3.361	0.748
2. Personal standards	2.14	5	3.528	0.648
3. Parental criticism	2.6	5	3.815	0.672
4. Parental expectations	1.25	3.75	2.537	0.663
5. Concern over mistakes	1.5	4.75	3.156	0.661
6. Fear in making mistakes	2.17	5	3.77	0.772

Based on Table 3, five sub-domains of over excitability are showed for gifted and talented students. The highest domain in over excitability was intellectual (mean=3.545), followed by emotional (mean=3.515), sensory (mean=3.442), imagination (mean=3.4050) and psychomotor domains (mean=3,400).

Table 3 PROFILE OF OVEREXCITABILITY DOMAINS				
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Psychomotor	2.1	4.8	3.4	0.804
2. Emotional	1.7	4.7	3.515	0.676
3. Sensory	1.9	5	3.442	0.786
4. Intellectual	2	4.9	3.545	0.688
5. Imagination	2	4.5	3.405	0.691

The relationship between perfectionism (measured using the Frost Multidimensional Scale instrument) and over excitability (measured using the Over excitability Questionnaire-II instrument) was tested using Pearson correlation analysis. The findings (refer Table 4) indicated that there was a strong, positive linear correlation between the two variables ($r=0.693$, $n=40$, $p < 0.0005$). According to Pallent (2011), the high correlation value in the scale occurs when ($r=0.5$ to 1.0). Hence, the value of 0.693 was on the correlation scale at a high level between the issue of perfectionism and the over excitability of gifted and talented students.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The discovery from the student profile would provide a summary of the dominant characteristics of the students for the criteria of perfectionism and over excitability. Through this profile, students would identify whether they have a positive perfectionism to be adaptive or negative or maladaptive to students. Positive over excitability and perfectionism would drive student development while negative over excitability and perfectionism would restrict student potential and contribute to socio emotional issues that call for help (Corson, Loveless, Mochrie & Whited, 2018). Therefore, the scholarship acquired is serviceable and indispensable for students to know themselves better and for teachers and those who are immediately involved with students to jointly celebrate the uniqueness of these characteristics in gifted and talented students.

The relationship between perfectionism and over excitability was studied by researchers abroad. Among them were the investigations by Mofield & Peters (2015); Perrone-McGovern, Simon-Dack, Beduna, Williams & Esche, (2015); White (2007). These subjects by recent researchers reinforce the finding that there is a positive relationship between the characteristics of perfectionism and over excitability. The verdicts of this study are in line with the findings of previous researchers that gifted and talented students at Kolej GENIUS Insan, have a robust relationship between perfectionism and over excitability. There are, however, still few studies managed by former researchers in looking at the relationship of socio emotional issues between gifted and talented students in the country.

According to Beaulieu (2015) based on a study led, it was found that the age of students in secondary school is the best time to educate students with socio emotional to have adaptive feelings, thoughts and behaviours and avoid maladaptive feelings, thoughts and behaviours. The reality is, the higher the level of intelligence of gifted and talented students, the more vulnerable they will be to the issue of socio emotional adjustment (Jihad Turkey & Old Majeed Al Qaisy, 2012; Zainon Basirion, 2014).

Tieso (2007) clarified that emotional and intellectual intensity contributes to perfectionism, unrealistic expectations, and asynchronous development between students' social and intellectual development. Among other factors that also cause socio emotional issues of perfectionism and over excitability is the pattern of parental education. Parenting styles among parents of gifted and talented students was studied by Yazdani & Daryei (2016) on the adaptation of psychosocial issues among gifted and talented students. The completion of the study uncovered that the pattern of parenting education among parents leans towards the authoritative form of education compared to the authoritarian pattern practised in the pattern for parenting education that is practised. Parents must adopt the best parenting method to secure the well-being of adolescents (Ahmad & Yusoff, 2014). It also adds to the science of perfectionism and over excitability among talented, gifted students. If this issue is not controlled from the beginning, it can affect the mental well-being of students.

In a nutshell, this study would grow the familiarity related to the uniqueness of gifted and talented students by looking at the relationship between perfectionism and over excitability. According to TPD theory, high sensitivity, anxiety, and perfectionism are among the standards of gifted and talented students who own the potential for excellent self-development (Tiller, 2006). TPD theory founder Dabrowski also demonstrated that if individuals hold high OEs values, then they own the opportunity to develop their potential for the better. According to him, the three domains of OEs, namely emotional, intellectual, and imagination, are the needs for

personality and creativity. Hence, it could be concluded that the recognition process for the issues of perfectionism and over excitability needs to be identified from the beginning to help gifted and talented students.

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