

SOCIAL SKILLS AMONG GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

This research is to explore the social skills among gifted and talented students in Malaysia. This study is to identify whether the social skills among the gifted and talented students in Malaysia is equal to other gifted and talented students. This research involved 220 samples (87 male, 133 female) from Pusat PERMATApintar™ Negara, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia encompasses students in Education Program and ASASIpintar Program. The instrument used to measure the social skills is Malaysian Emotional Quotient Inventory (MEQI) which examined the social skills level in eight factors. The finding showed, gifted and talented students in Malaysia have social skills in themselves. The implication of the study will also discuss in this research.

Keywords: Gifted and Talented, Social Skills, Malaysian Emotional Quotient Inventory

Introduction

Malaysia is a development country which moving towards the modern country. To achieve this mission, the 4th Prime Minister of Malaysia Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad has introduced Dasar Wawasan 2020. This is the continuing effort by the government to ensure Malaysia is on the right track of Dasar Wawasan 2020. Dasar Wawasan 2020 is introduced for the development in Malaysia. Now Malaysia has five more years to achieve this target.

The 6th Prime minister of Malaysia is Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Seri Haji Mohd Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak has. He stress on various aspects so that Malaysian won't left by in various fields. The implementation of Dasar Transformasi Negara is to ensure the all walk of life will get the positive effects in achieving the high income country.

The Improvement by the government also focusing on the gifted and talented population. This is refer to the Malaysian Education blue print 2013 to 2025, in chapter four which is explain on the education for gifted and talented student. According to Noriah dan Abu Yazid (2010), the gifted and talented students are the asset for country and we need to mole and care for the nation development. A long with to achieve the modern country by 2020, Malaysia is focusing on human capital development. Gifted and talented also contributed in the development of Malaysia to be modern country.

In research (Gabbard 2000; Tomlinson & Callahan 1992; Holahan 1998) says that the gifted and talented in their field may contribute to economy in which country they stayed. Renzuli (1978), stated that one gifted over 10,000 people and one extremely gifted over 100,000 people. For 2007, based on department statistical of Malaysia, Malaysia has 890 kids ages between nine to 15 years old.

The existing of gifted and talented students has inspired the government to provide the institution that give better education to this population. The outcome from the discussion and detail out from government and other agencies, Pusat PERMATApintar™ Negara has been develop in The National University of Malaysia to implemented four roles are identify, enrichment program, high school program and pre university program for gifted and talented education.

The gifted and talented in Malaysia has been identify through UKM 1, UKM 2 and UKM 3 test to measure their intellectual capacity and other component. Gifted and talented students also have quite similar characteristic with normal students. In similarity they have some other characteristics are difference. Neihart, Reis, Robinson dan Moon (2002), says gifted and talented students exhibit that they are having initiative, genuine, flexibility in design thinking, ability to solve a problem in multi perspective and mature in communication with adult.

Background of the study

This study is to study the level of social skills among gifted and talented in Malaysia and the differences level of social skill between difference gender and social economic status. The social skills can also contribute to helping other people surrounding in community. They will be appreciated with this kind of attitude. People has high level social skills, they can maintain relationship with other consistently. This is also can mole harmony life in society. With earning the social skills in life, an individual can have effective interaction with community. For example if they become a leader in community, they will always try to understand the emotion need for their follower.

The gifted and talented students facing with difficulties in social skills. These students have a high incuriosity and always have many question in classroom. Their questions are the high level of higher order thinking and sometimes the teacher feel uncomfortable with this question (Smutny 2000). Some of the teacher also feel gifted and talented students want attention from them. This situation will “stuck” relationship between teacher and students if they are feel annoying.

Moreover, the gifted and talented students sometimes have problem with their peers. This is because a normal student feel that gifted and talented students like to show of themselves in classroom and other activities (Gross 2004; Neihart 1999; Silverman

1993). This conflict need to overcome to ovoid the serious issues raise among these students.

Metin (1999) stated that gifted and talented students have problems in social relationship because they are outstanding in the class. If they are working in group and lead by normal student, it can create conflict between them because the gifted and talented student always have a query on the decision made by leader.

The gifted and talented students are lack of social skills. (Rimm 2003;Nethart et. Al 2002; wood 2010) stated that the gifted and talented have problems in classroom compare to the normal students. Adams (2008) stated that gifted and talented students have difficulties in acceptance in social who attended camping academy in United States. Moreover gifted and talented students always connected with problem in social skill in the classroom rather than normal students (Rimm 2003; Neithart et. al 2002; Wood 2010).

The social skill is refer to the ability to interact with other people and other feel comfortable with conversation. Slomowsji & Dan (1996), social skills is the individual process to understand other people behaviour and they can adapt with them during the conversation. Social skills is an important element in life. Social skills can be an individual interact with effective with other people. Social skills has been develop which help mastery other skills among autism students (Rao, Beidel & Murray, 2008; White, Keonig & Scahill 2007).

The research show practising on social skills have significant with increasing social development, value, resilience, adjustment and appropriate behaviour like aggressive (Parsh & Gorjian 2010; Vahedi 2008; Vahedi & at el. 2007). Lacking in social skill can contribute individual to mental psychology disorder like schizophrenia Patterson, Moscona & McKibbin (2001), over anxiety and phobia Wenzel, Graff Dolezal, Macho & Brendel (2005).

Methodology

This study involved 220 gifted and talented student (87 male, 133 female) in Pusat PERMATApintar™ Negara which represent all gifted and talented students in Malaysia. The research is using Malaysian Emotional Quotient Inventory (MEQI) to measure the social skills among participants.

Finding

Table 1- Level of Social Skills Based on Gender

Gender	N	Min	Sd	df	t
Male	87	82.85	8.32	218	0.86
Female	133	82.81	9.08		

Based on table 1, T test show that there are no differences level of social skills based on gender among gifted and talented students. It is how by min differences 0.04.

Table 2: Level of Social Skill Based on Social Economic Status

Family Income	N	Min	Sd	df	Sig.
Lower	74	80.55	10.1	2	.127

Middle	42	82.67	7.7
High	104	83.22	8.0

Based on table 2, ANOVA show no differences level of social skills among economy social status. It shows that the min lower income group 80.55, middle income group 82.67 and high income group 83.22.

Discussion

Level of social skills

Based on finding, the level of social skills among gifted and talented students in Malaysia is in the middle between 85 to 133 (min score 82.83). This finding is contradict with (Gross, 2004; Neihart, 1999; Siverman, 1993) says that gifted and talented students are isolated from their peers because they have been teased and others assumed gifted and talented studentts are nerd.

Differences level of social skill based on gender and social economic status

The finding shows that there are no differences level of social skills among gifted and talented students in Malaysia based on gender and social economic status. It is show that, based on the education system in Malaysia, Malaysia give equal right to female and they get the education from kindergarden. This can give the impact to society to develop their own social skill in school and other activities. It can help people with freedom to get benefit from equal right to develop themselves.

Implication

Guidance and Counseling Unit in School

The Level of social skills among the gifted and taented students is in middle in Malaysia. It is shows that, students need more activities to increase their level social skills. Social skill can be develop by doing activities among peers together. With that, Guidance and Counseling Unit need to plan more activities involving with interaction among peers. This kind of activities can contribute to help gifted and talented students develop their social skill and be better in the future. Besides that, Guindance and Counseling Unit also can plan an activities involve with orphanage house and other community center to help the students grow their social skills.

Parents

Parents are the important role to help heir children to develop the social skill. Based on the finding, level of skills among gifted and talented students at middle level. Parents can send their children to the program involve with interaction among them. There are so many acitivies provides by school, , government sectors and other during the school holiday. These activities can help kids to develop social skills in their life.

Ministry of Education

Ministry of education can take part from this research finding. The Ministry of Education can consult all education institution and stress about social skills development in every activities they organized. This is the way ministry of education can play their role to help students develop their social skills doing by activities and program through Educational institutions.

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