

Identifying Levels and Stress Symptoms among Gifted and Talented Children

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Abstract: This study aims to identify the level of stress and symptoms shown by gifted and talented children. This study is conducted through intrinsic Case Design. A respondent was selected based on 164 points IQ test by MENSA, who achieved 5As' result in UPSR and from the Teacher Check List. Data collected was based on interview, document reference and onsite observation. The results showed that the respondents experienced stress at 213 points based on the Holmes and Rahe Stress Measurement scale. The identified stress symptoms showed a drop in academic performance, underachievement and reject co-academic activity. The findings of this study showed that stress may results negative effects to the gifted and talented student.

Keywords: Gifted and talented children, Underachievement, Stress

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I. BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Lately, issues related to gifted and talented children have become a phenomenon in Malaysia. They are described as popular icons and highlighted by the mass media. These groups of students are expected to achieve excellent results. Intelligent and Gifted Smart refers to children who have a natural ability or talent that stands out. Intelligent and Talented Children refers to the achievement of the Intelligence Quotient (IQ) levels beyond 120, and have a broad and high-level thinking capacity (Seeley, 1998), (Altintas and Ilgun, 2016), (Fernández, García, Gundín, Vázquez, and Rodríguez, (2017). According to Forno, Bahia, and Veiga (2015), the best way to identify gifted and talented students are based on high achievement in a given field through teacher references, parents, and data support from IQ tests (Bildiren, 2018).

The perceptions that are usually associated with this group are, they belong to privileged people who are always successful in accordance with their will and do not face any challenges in life. Based on these stereotypical beliefs, they are 'shaped' and 'forced' to be brilliant. But history has proven that many talented children experience difficulties and failures in their lives (Ozcan and Kotek, 2014). According to Keasey (1998), many gifted and talented children fail to fulfill their dreams and ambitions. Gardner (1999), states that there are many 'smart' children who are 'developing' in the education system. He added that half of the intelligent student population did not match between their abilities and achievements at school. History has proven that many talented children fail in their lives (Ng Sen Fa, 2006), (Ozcan and Kotek, 2014). For example, William Sidis, a lecturer at Harvard University at the age of 11, refused to continue intellectual activity (Galbraith and Delisle, 1996). Sufiah, a Harvard University student became a prostitute (Dolan, 2008), and Adi Putra was bored with the public school system (KOSMO, 2008). Their failures are a reflection of our collective failure to understand and assist these groups. Their failures are a loss to all parties. So, a proactive and concrete mechanism should be undertaken to protect and assist the development of the potential of these special children.

Statement of problem

This study aims to see if talented children experience stress in fulfilling all claims against them. Excessive claims faced by the children may result in stress. According to Hatta Sidi and Mohamed Hatta Shahrom (2002), (Lovallo, 2005), when stress cannot be reduced, one becomes tense, it is difficult to make decisions and think, and easily offensive when accepting criticism. The situation is also in accordance with Melgosa (2001), Hales and Hales (2018), views that stress effects that exist in the form of easy boredom, or vacuuming during daily life, may eventually end up as a disease of depression. There is a past study that shows the effects of stress experience with physical health. The prominent effects of the problem are changes in behavior, negative mood and somatic symptoms. The change is a sign of health problems (Lazarus, Folkman and DeLongis, 1988). Cheek's study (2009), also found that children were not spared from stress. He reminded that the signs of stress experienced by the child should be taken seriously. This is because stress can cause

discipline and behavioral problems in school, and affect the social and cognitive development of children. This study is important to know whether gifted children are experiencing stress and what are the indicators shown when dealing with stress

Research Objective

The objective of this study is to find out the level of stress that a gifted child faces. The study also aims to identify the stress symptoms shown by the child.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, some research questions were raised. a. What is the level of stress faced by gifted child? b. What are the symptoms shown?

Data Collection Instrument

Data collection instruments used in this study are in-depth interviews, document analysis, and observations conducted directly to the location of the study. In this study researchers used semi-structural interview methods whose scope was predefined. Researchers have provided an interview format that guides them not to run away from the scope of the question as well as the objective of the study. Researchers also make document analysis, and ensure the documents obtained are accurate, no author bias. Documents that have been identified and used will be encoded. Researchers use observation methods where natural events are chosen, recorded, coded into meaningful units based on needs and locations by shadowing each activity performed without raising any element of pressure on participants.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative as it coincides with the objectives and questions of the study. The objectives and questions of the study are to find out the level of stress faced by a talented child, and the symptoms shown and their effects. According to Chua Yan Piau (2006), qualitative research can see phenomena from different angles and perspectives, where each perspective is detected using different methods. While Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), Braun and Clarke (2013), refer to qualitative studies to understand in detail the cause of a phenomenon.

The sampling used is a purposive sampling method, where researchers specifically select individuals or locations specifically identified for understanding a phenomenon (Clarke and Creswell, 2015). Sample selection factor is based on Critical Case sampling. Critical Case Sampling is used to understand in depth the serious problems faced by a gifted child. According to Chua Yan Piau (2006), Critical Case sampling is suitable to use when research is conducted on specific cases involving unique individuals or groups.

In this study, the respondent selected was based on the purposive sampling, the investigator specifically selects individuals or locations specifically identified for understanding a phenomenon (Creswell, 2005). The samplings of this study only leads to one (1) UPSR's (Primary School Achievement Test), best student who is studying in Form 2A1 at Methodist School, Sitiawan, Perak, Malaysia who is identified as a talented child based on Smart Intelligence Checklist. The respondent also achieved IQ 164 (IQ164- Ravens Advanced Progressive Matrices Scale) through a test by MENSA, Malaysia, compared to IQ120 levels for talented children on a scale based on the Stanford-Binet scale (Galbraith and Delisle, 1996). In addition, the respondent also achieved excellent academic achievement by acquiring 5A's in the UPSR examination, and was officially crowned as the nation's best UPSR student in 2016.

Data analysis

The findings were analyzed using the Nvivo analysis program. This software facilitates researchers to manage data and retrieval. The use of computer analysis programs facilitates the storage and compilation of data as well as labeling and coding (Creswell, 2005).

III. FINDINGS

Based on the measurements carried out, this study found that the gifted children experienced stress based on Holmes and Rahe Stress Measurement Scale. Assessment from Holmes and Rahe Stress Measurement Scale showed that he scored 213 points. This score shows that the respondent is at risk of disease (refer to Table 1.10). In relation to this, it is clear that the talented child is facing stress.

Table 1.0 Table Scores and Stress Risk Score

Score	Risk score
Score 150	Less risk to disease
Score 150-199	The risk of illness is moderate
Score 200-299	Risk against illness
Score 300 and above	It is very risky for the disease.

Based upon that, there are some stress symptoms that have been identified from gifted and talented child. The findings from the School Academic Reporting Records show a drastic drop in academic performance. Based on the comparative achievement of primary and secondary school achievement from 2012 to 2017, the respondent reached the best position (number one) in all examinations but experienced a sharp drop by achieving number 14 in the class during the mid-2017 examination, and as if he is 'crawling' to improve a better position in the next examination

Table 1.2 Academic Performance Record

Year	School	Mid-year exam	Final exam
2012	Sri Manjung primary school	no.1 / class	no.1 / class
2013	Sri Manjung primary school	no.1 / class	no. 1 / class
2014	Sri Manjung primary school	no. 1 / class	no.1 / class
2015	Sri Sitiawan primary school	no. 1 / class	UPSR: 5A
2016	MARA college	no. 2 / class	no. 1 / class
2017	Methodist secondary school	no. 14 / class	no.20/ class

Source: Academic Reporting Card

According to Kearney (2006), the drop in academic performance is one of the signals of stress-related psychological problems, which is to enable the problem of confusion and lack of focus. In addition, the underachievement problem is also a stressful symptom demonstrated by gifted child. According to Schultz (2004), underachievement is associated with failures of displaying outstanding performances in school, which is between actual potential and failure of achievement. This study found that the child failed to highlight the true ability. He experienced a fall in his overall academic performance in Form 1, but he also did not try to portray his real ability in co-academic activities. One of the underachievement aspects that has been identified was that the respondent failed to communicate well in English, whereas the findings showed that he had mastered the language well. This statement is acknowledged by his English Language teachers that the respondent has good English language proficiency.

Full, very-very good. Even the person who evaluate his exam time, for an essay, he will add a paper. He can write a long essay with bombastic words. (3E)

References from data and documents confirmed that respondent had been champions and runners-ups of the school and district level in various English Language competitions such as Public Speaking Competition, Composition Writing Competition thus achieving the Best English Language Award.

In addition, he was also found to be unprepared in the classical arts activities. This contrasts with his great talent who won the state-level painting competition (Petronas Street Smart Drawing Competition). He was selected as a member of a special private art class for three years, and the result of his quality paintings has been acknowledged by the Chief Inspector of Visual Arts Education Paper, for the Manjung District, Perak, Malaysia.

The boy is actually talented, he has talent, the idea is there. If we look, there is a situation and storytelling in his painting.

The findings also show that the respondent have rejected the interest in the activity of co-academic. His involvement in co-academic activities such as debates, quizzes and so on has led him to contest at district and state levels. But now the situation is absolutely different when he did not involve himself in any academic activities conducted by the school at all.

Table 1.3 Record of Co-Academic Activities

Year	School	Activity	Achievement
2014	Sri Manjung primary school	Public Speaking competition	state champ
2014	Sri Sitiawan primary school	Composition Writing Competition	state champ
2016	Sri Sitiawan primary school	Competition G-Math District	state champ
2015	Sri Sitiawan primary school	District Health Quiz	state champ
2015	Sri Sitiawan primary school	'Petronas Street Smart'	state champ
2016	MARA college	Too many activities of the co-academic	active Program and school co-curriculum
2017	Methodist secondary school	none	

Source: School records

He seems to have denied what he is interested in involving language skills. This is very contrary to the true nature of this group who loves language activities (Freeman, 2001). Kearney (2006), states that a person experiencing stress will lose interest and tend to reject or abandon an activity he has been passionate about.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results of this study found that the gifted and talented child was experiencing stress in a relatively critical condition. There are several symptoms shown such as underachievement, rejection of favorite activity and so on. The stress element should be immediately controlled so that negative effects do not apply to children in the future. This coincides with the views of Ng Sen Fa (2006), which stipulates between factors that can influence the success or fall of gifted and talented children over the course of his life is stressful. Hatta Sidi and Mohamed Hatta Shahrom (2002), also emphasize that stress factors will play a role as a driving force of success or otherwise. This is because the stress problem that is faced will affect the change in one's life involving all aspects such as physiology, psychology and behavior.

V. CONCLUSION

As a result of the research, there is an element of stress experienced by the gifted and talented child usually affects the development of physiology, psychology and behavior. Berczi (1997), states that a person who is experiencing stress at a certain level such as moderate or highest level will face the disease within a certain expectation period and it depends on the ability of the body to cope with the disease. Thus, a proactive effort to address the problem should be made immediately so that the development and potential of the gifted and talented children does not end up negatively. All parties should play a more active and positive role. Institutions and individuals such as schools, teachers, counselors and parents should be sensitive to any problems that the children are involved in, and take steps to overcome them (Tassel-Baska, 1988).

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