

# Competences of the 21st Century

## *Social-Emotional Competences of Gifted Accelerated Students in Indonesia*

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to examine social-emotional competences of gifted accelerated students from the perspectives of self, peer, and teacher. Social-emotional competences are related to self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management, and relationship management. This study involved 148 participants who were randomly chosen from senior high schools participating in accelerated program in Indonesia. The social-emotional inventory (self-perspective, peer-perspective, and teacher-perspective) were administered (75 items). The results show that there are no significant differences among the perspectives of self, peer, and teacher on social-emotional competences of gifted accelerated-students. This study also reveals that social-emotional competences of gifted accelerated-students are in the levels of competent and mastery. The implication of this study includes important questions and the need of guidance and counselling services especially for gifted accelerated-students.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Gifted children are considered a minority group and their number is not yet known. Theoretically, gifted learners in a population are ranged from 3-7% (Tannenbaum, 2000; Tapper, 2012; Marland, 1972; Beranek, 1993). The population of Indonesian high school students in the academic year 2016-2017 is 4,292,288 (BPS: 2016). Then, the number of gifted learners is estimated to be 300,406.

Various studies have been done derived from various aspects, levels, and dimensions of giftedness. One of the interesting aspects to be studied is the social-emotional competence of gifted learners. Many people are concerned about the socio-emotional competence of gifted learners, especially for those who follow accelerated education programs. Gifted children will learn and associate with senior people, it triggers a question of how they associate with their peers.

These concerns are corroborated by studies of gifted education experts indicating how vulnerable gifted children. For instance, a case study that was conducted by Witty & Lehman (1929) describes that gifted children are susceptible to emotional problems. Another well-known research was conducted by Terman (1961) who points out that

gifted children are problematic in their socio-emotional adjustment. A series of other studies reinforce the assumption that gifted children are socially disruptive (Hollingworth, 1942, Gross, 2004; Grace & Booth, 1958; Freeman, 1979; Ferguson & Maccoby, 1966; Dixon, 1998; Cross, 2007; Brody & Benbow, 1998; Janos & Robinson, 1985).

However, all the worries are caused by gifted children who are not facilitated. It makes gifted children to be known for a myriad of problems compared with their achievements. Gifted children who can actualize their giftedness tend to be more productive and become a pride for their alma mater. Recent studies indicate that gifted children who are achievers have no social or emotional problems (Gundersen, 2014; Han & Kemple, 2006; Hébert, 2011).

In the acceleration education setting, gifted children will experience accelerated learning beyond their peers. This makes gifted children have to interact with senior students. Nevertheless, this is not a problem. This issue has been examined by many experts in various levels of education, from basic, medium, to higher (Janos & Robinson, 1985; Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000).

This study tried to reveal the socio-emotional competence of gifted children who follow

acceleration program in Indonesia. This study is important, given the accelerated education initiated by the Indonesian government in regular schools put gifted students are in public schools. They have shorter study time that may affect their social interaction.

Moreover, since 2015, the Indonesian government has initiated inclusive education as a substitution for accelerated education program. Gifted children are in regular classes with peers to result its own dynamics. As an early reference, the socio-emotional competence of gifted students who follow acceleration education program in Indonesia needs to be described.

The terminology used in this paper is social-emotional competence. Briefly, socio-emotional competence is a set of individual abilities to interact with themselves and their environment (Boyatzis, 2008). Competence is a concept formed by performance theory (Boyatzis, 2008, p.6) because it refers to the ability that can be seen and can be measured quantitatively.

Emotional-social competence is very important because it helps an individual to obtain the fulfilment of individual development needs. Surya (2003) states that an individual who finds it difficult to deal with themselves, others, or both can experience a disruption of need fulfilment. If it is not considered, in the long run it can cause psychological disturbances, since the social-emotional competence becomes a stock that an individual has in facing the life challenges in the 21st century, because an incompetent person will have difficulty in living daily life.

## 2 METHODS

The approach of this study is quantitative with survey design. A survey research is a research method that focuses to get a picture of the characteristics of a population by using a relatively large number of samples (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993; Heppner, Wamol & Kivlinghan, 2008).

### 2.1 Participant

The participant in this study were 148 students aged 15 to 17 years ( $M = 15.8$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ). They were selected randomly from senior high schools participating in accelerated program in Indonesia. The sample was divided according to gender (males,  $n = 72$ , females,  $n = 76$ ) and grade (10th grade,  $n = 47$ , 11th grade = 110). The sample was taken

purposively from 8 (eight) schools of accelerated education program organizers in Indonesia in accordance with the aim of obtaining gifted students with criteria ( $IQ > 130$ , having high creativity and task commitment)

### 2.2 Data Analysis

Social-emotional competences were assessed with the social-emotional inventory (self-perspective, peer-perspective, and teacher- perspective). A self-report that consists of 75 items was taken from the social-emotional competences, proposed by Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee (2000). The answers were rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). In the study, the overall social-emotional competences scores only were used. To calculate the validity and the reliability of the scale in the Indonesian environment, the scale to a sample of 10th and 11th grade students ( $N = 517$ ) was performed. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of the scale reached 0.86.

The data analysis in this research is done with SPSS software ver.20. The descriptive statistics was used in the data, while in the hypothesis testing, non-parametric inferential statistics, such as Chi-Square test, Mann-Whitney U-Test and Kruskal-Wallis test, were employed.

## 3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The survey of the socio-emotional competence on the 148 gifted students result self- perception ( $N = 148$ ), peer perceptions ( $N = 326$ ), and teacher perceptions ( $N = 48$ ). The chi-square test obtained  $\chi^2 = 1,125$ ,  $p = 0,0554 > 0,05$ . Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected, which means that there is no difference in perceptions of emotional social competence of gifted children, whether viewed from the perspectives of self, peers, and teacher.

The results of this study show consistent achievement of socio-emotional competence of gifted learners. It means there is conducive and mutually supportive environment especially for the development of gifted children's potentials. The results mean that gifted children do not have problems of social-emotional aspects with their peers or teachers. This is very beneficial for learners itself or for the school because the potential of giftedness can be actualized into achievement.

It is in line with the opinion of Gundersen (2014) that the process of emotional maturity in adolescents will be influenced by the socio-emotional condition

of the environment, especially family and peer groups. If the environment is conducive, such as a harmonious environment, mutual trust, mutual respect, and full responsibility, then adolescents tend to achieve emotional maturity. In addition, it can be realized that teenagers start entering the stage where peer groups have high appeal. Davis & Leslie (2015) mentions in a friendly relationship, teenagers will choose a friend who has a psychological quality that is relatively similar to them regarding values, personality, and interest. For gifted learners, there are typical characteristics that tend to like friendship with older people. Therefore, it is not surprising that gifted children have more insight and knowledge compared to their peers (Dixon, 1998, Cross, 2007).

The following is the distribution of the socio-emotional competence frequency of gifted learners.

Table 1: Social-emotional competencies.

Criterion	Categorization	Frequency	%
$x \geq 141$	Mastery	20	13,51
$110 \leq x < 141$	Competent	115	77,70
$x < 110$	Develop	13	8,78
	Threshold		
TOTAL		148	100

Based on the table 1, it is known that the general picture of emotional-social competence of gifted learners based on the perceptions of self, peers, and teachers reach 20 respondents (13.51%) in the mastery category and 115 (77.70%) in the competent category. The results indicate that the socio-emotional competence of gifted children is not problematic. It shows a very positive trend in line with the research (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000) mentioning nothing to worry about from the social skills of gifted children.

The aspects measured in this social- emotional competence include self-understanding, self-control, achievement-oriented, positive thinking, adaptability, empathy, organizational awareness, ability to influence, ability to mentor, conflict resolution skills, and ability to work together in a team. Achievement of every aspect in social-emotional competence is shown in the following Figure 1.

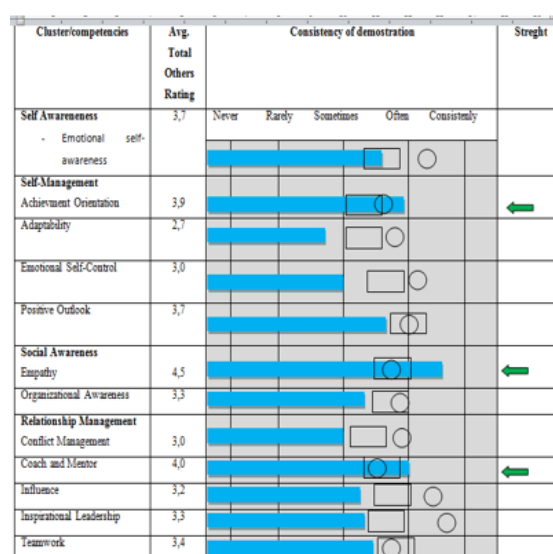


Figure 1: Achievement of socio-emotional competence of gifted learners.

Based on Figure 1 above, there are three most powerful aspects of gifted learners: achievement orientation, empathy, and ability to be a coach or mentor. These three strengths become a separate consideration for educators in providing educational services for gifted children. Teachers can utilize gifted learners to become assistants and engage them in activities that demand high achievement e.g. chemistry/physics Olympics etc.

The strength of the achievement orientation aspect of gifted learners has been formulated by Davis & Leslie (2015), in their research entitled A Comparison of Emotional Intelligence Levels between Students in Experiential and Didactic College Programs. It demonstrates that the achievement motivation of gifted learners is like two sides of a coin that are inherent and cannot be separated.

The empathetic aspect of gifted learners is a distinctive force that makes it unique: gifted learners have high sensitivity to the environment. This can be both advantages and disadvantages because, as Borland (2005) recalls, their high empathy make gifted learners failed to be detected as gifted learners, especially by using a classical test system.

Regardless of how teachers and friends treat gifted learners, they are empirically able to lead and more actively participate in social life. This makes gifted learners sometimes known as significant other (Ferguson & Maccoby, 1966). Gifted learners that are open and active are able to assess themselves realistically and can take into account the interests and will of friends around him. Although

hierarchically gifted learners rarely become formal leaders, their influence is greatly felt by peers.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The superior ability of gifted learners tends to be feared to make them experiencing social- emotional problems, especially when interacting with peers. However, the concern was refuted by the existence of various studies that show anomalous conditions. The achievement of gifted learners' social-emotional competence is generally at the competent and mastery levels. A prominent aspect of social-emotional competence is achievement orientation, empathy, and the ability to be a coach or mentor. With this power, teachers should optimize their giftedness to develop as expected and ultimately result achievements. Some roles that may be given to gifted learners are to be teacher assistants in delivering lessons and to be involved in competitions and contests at both local and national levels.

Perceptions of teachers and peers to gifted learners of the emotional-social competence of gifted learners can influence the perception of gifted learners of their emotional-social competence. Expectations of the surrounding environment to gifted learners can be a challenge for gifted learners, to face all the challenges faced, gifted learners need self-awareness to always develop themselves and increase emotional-social competence as a social capital with the surrounding environment.

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