

Holistic Self-Identity Model of Malaysian Gifted Students

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Abstract

The success of an educational program lies in the quality of the students produced. Successful gifted and talented (GT) students can be observed through a well-balanced characteristic. The purpose of this study was to explore the indicators of the holistic self-identity components of GT students. Using a qualitative design, data were collected using semi-structured interviews with 21 respondents consisted of two GT experts, six educational counsellors, seven GT teachers, three Human Development Faculty lecturers, and three industrial leaders. The interview process was conducted through the preparation of recording and verbatim procedures based on the interview protocol questions. The interview protocol has gone through the process of face and content validity from experts in the related fields. Analysis of data from these interviews utilized the constant-comparative method. The findings produced eight emerging categories and 25 main themes that reflect the categories of a holistic self-identity of GT students namely Intellectual-identity, Emotional-identity, Social-identity, Physical-identity, Spirituality-identity, Leadership-identity, Citizenship-identity, and Adversity-identity. There was a similarity in the concepts of a wholesome individual development parallel to the Malaysia Philosophy of Education. This study also shows the importance of considering this multi-aspect of self-identity as the fundamental pillar for developing Holistic Identity Model for GT students.

Keywords: Character Building, Gifted and Talented Student, Gifted Education, Identity, Self-Development

1. Introduction

GT students are known as students with high cognitive ability as compared to their peers. They are also known for having various psychological issues such as perfectionism, anxiety, low self-esteem, socialisation, social justice, high sensitivity, underachievement, communication, over-excitability, and others. These issues are caused by uneven psychological development known as asynchronous development (Cathcart, 2005), whereas comprehensive self-identity

development is very important to balance the intellectual intelligence and other psychological potentials of gifted students, therefore, it must be embedded in GT education programs. In a Malaysian education context, students' personality development needs to be paralleled with the National Education Philosophy that aims to produce a balanced individual which includes the aspects of physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being (KPM, 2015). Besides that, they are also seen as individuals who are

sensitive towards people's conflict, facing degrees of exclusion as well as facing higher risks and pressures compared to common students (Versteynen, 2001). This situation contributes to problems such as low self-esteem, lack of motivation, and anxiety that affect the self-identity of GTs. Past research on gifted and talented (GT) population mostly focused on the cognitive ability and tended to ignore the self-development aspects including character building, identity development as well as social and emotional needs (Tapper & Abbiss, 2015). GT students' (GTs) self-development aspects are often related to personal characteristics, especially in leading themselves and others (Karnes & Bean, 1990). The current tendency on GT focuses on the development of GT students by accentuating on students' ability in handling risks and solving personal as well as social problems (Sternberg, 1984).

Therefore, the aspect of holistic self-identity development must be meticulously planned, and organizational implementation must be embedded in the GT educational curriculum. The purpose is to nurture the identified GTs to achieve success in the highest level that is paralleled with their intellectual capabilities, as well as to develop a well-balanced individual who will contribute their expertise to the nation in the future. Based on the psychological issues faced by GTs, this study aims to explore the main components of self-identity in the context of forming holistic GT students. This research focuses to identify the main components in building a holistic self-identity of Gifted and Talented students from the perspective of various experts namely gifted education experts, GT students' teachers, counsellors, lecturers of human capital development course and industrial leaders, as well as the main-themes and sub-themes that form the holistic self-identity of Gifted and Talented students

2. Literature Review

2.1 Self-Identity Concept

Self-identity in general means an individual's unique and special traits from the aspects of value, tradition, language, culture, religion, and others. The traits must be original that are the core formation of character, morale as well as an individual's personal representation (Mohd. Yusof et al., 2012).

Additionally, according to the finding, the constituents of self-identity can be seen through knowledge, behaviour, emotion, value, and belief. Teo (2015) explained that self-identity refers to an individual's principle and internal strength of heart as well as soul in a matter. Self-identity is an important aspect that expedites and strengthens prosperity, unity, and harmony of a nation. He divided self-identity into two, personal self-identity and national self-identity. Personal self-identity involves self-traits, good characteristics that are original, pure, or lofty manifested through characteristics, ways of thinking, behaviour, and self-presentation (Teo, 2015). Whereas national identity involves an excellent work culture practices, law-abiding morale, helpful character, patriotism, unity, and diversity cultural respect. Thus, individuals with self-identity are known as individuals with integrity (Wan Muhammad, 2010). Development of self-identity is an important aspect that must be emphasised in the education system to produce young generations who are the backbone of national development.

2.2 Relationship of Self-identity with Personal, Social and Societal Aspects

Literature research in general relates self-identity with the aspects of language, tradition, culture, religion, patriotism, integrity, idealism, and institutional contributions (Mohd. Yusof et al., 2012), sociocultural, communication and social interaction, aspects of academic achievement, ethnic relationship, national identity (Brian & Bruce, 2006), moral development balanced with academic achievement (Nurzatil Ismah & Zulkifli, 2017), and leadership traits and high practices of moral values (Tajul Ariffin et al., 2007). Thus, the need to study students' self-identity is paralleled with the aspiration of the Ministry of Education and national vision.

2.3 Gifted and Talented Students' Self-identity

Comprehensive or holistic self-identity development covers the aspects of thoughts, emotion, social, physical, and spiritual which are the catalyst in producing quality leadership traits (Rorlinda et al., 2015 & Kane, 2019). From the psychological development perspective, teenagers with self-identity are individuals who know themselves. They are

said to be aware of the changes and development within oneself from the aspects of cognitive, emotion and feelings, as well as social and physical (Brinthaupt & Lipka, 2002). This awareness is in line with the main goal of the National Education Philosophy (NEP) which aspires to produce national human capital with strong holistic self-identity, covering aspects of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor to achieve a well-balanced student who will contribute to the prosperity and harmony of family, society, and country.

Besides, Gross (2011) highlighted that GT individuals are said to often be masked and have alternating self-identity, and GT individuals are found to require assistance in determining their self-identity. In relation to that, self-identity development by Sternberg (1984) has listed six psychosocial aspects in building GT students' self-identity development which include (1) efforts to feel and accept self-personality, (2) autonomous growth, (3) process of building independence and ability to show self-determination, (4) formation of social relationship based on trust, openness and similarity in values, and (5) management of self-sexuality development, and (6) needs to form and achieve goals as well as recognize the achievement. All of these are interactional and giving strong influence on one another.

3. Research Methodology and Data Collection

This study involves a qualitative approach to the case study design, which is intensive research on experts of gifted and talented students. This research employs a single case multi-side exploratory case study (Yin, 1994) referring to a research on one basic unit which is GT student and more than one research settings which involved various field experts from different places. 21 respondents were interviewed structurally based on the in-depth interview protocol. Respondents consisted of two GT education field experts, six GT educational counsellors, seven teachers of GT students, three industrial leaders, and three Humanity Development course lecturers (Table 1.0). The interview sessions were recorded with the consent from the interviewees. The Interview protocol questions have gone through the process of face validation and content validation from experts in related fields. Interview data analysis was conducted through processes of transcription, data reduction, data coding, validation, member checking and conclusion upon completion of the data collection process. Subsequently, the process of extracting the main themes and sub-themes were done using atlas i.e., analysis to form categories or main components of GT students' holistic self-identity.

Table 1. Participants' Profile

Interviewed Participants (21)	Code
Gifted Experts	GExp 01, 02 (2)
Educational Counsellors	CLR01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06 (6)
Gifted and Talented Teachers	GTt 01,02,03,04,05,06,07 (7)
Industrial Leaders	IL01, IL02, IL03 (3)
Human Development Lecturers	HDL 01, 02, 03 (3)

3.1 Participants

A total of 21 individuals took part in this study. The participants' demographic characteristics are summarized in Table 2.

The inclusion criteria for participation required that the participants be:

- a) two gifted experts (GExp), six educational schools' counsellors (CLR), seven GT teachers (GTt); three Human Development course university

lecturers (HDL) and three industrial leaders or head of department of alumni gifted students at work force (IL),

- b) experts must be between the ages of 30-65 and
- c) experts must have academic background on education, gifted education, or gifted students for at least three years.

This specific group was chosen because they have direct or indirect contact with gifted individuals; witnessed GT students' academic and psychological growth, involved in the

human development programs of normal and GT students, practitioners school counsellors, and observed gifted alumni at their workplace.

Table 2. Participants' Socio-demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Number of Participants (21)
Age (year)	
30 – 40 (6 counsellors & 7 gifted & talented teachers)	13
41 – 50 Industrial leaders (managers of alumnus' workplace)	3
51 – 63 (2 gifted experts & 3 HD lecturers)	5
Education Level	
First Degree	3
Master's Degree	14
PhD	4

3.2 Method

Using qualitative design, data were collected by face-to-face interviews conducted with respondents including Malaysian gifted experts, school counsellors, teachers of gifted education, and corporate leaders. These are the people who witness the students' growth and have direct or indirect involvement with gifted students and are responsible for human and character development. The experts were asked to elaborate on the concept of self-identity of gifted and talented students.

3.3 Measures

Participants were given a consent form to be completed prior to data collection session. The form consisted of consent for recording, information on confidentiality and an explanation of the proposed study. For the interview, a semi-structured interview protocol was developed comprising of general questions about participants' views on self-identity, holistic self-identity, and examples of behaviour/act of a holistic identity student. Finally, a brief questionnaire on demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, marital status, and educational level) was also completed by the participants.

3.4 Procedure

Participants were recruited after ethical approval was gained. Data were collected from January to May 2019. Data collection

procedures involved face-to-face interviews which were conducted in Malay language. Interviewees were asked to reflect on their experience of working with gifted and talented students. A semi-structured interview using interview protocols was utilized throughout the research process to the data and analysis process. The interview continued until the point of saturation was reached. The interview session lasted for 60 to 120 minutes and were recorded and transcribed verbatim. An assistant researcher was also appointed to assist the interview sessions, the research assistant took down notes from the interview session. Examples of questions from the interview protocol were:

- i. *What is your understanding on the concept of identity development?*
- ii. *What is your perception on the concept of holistic self-identity among Malaysian students?*
- iii. *From your point of view, what are the important aspects of self-identity that need to be developed within our Malaysian gifted and talented students?*
- iv. *What are the examples of real behaviour or action that can be seen in each of the aspect?*

3.5 Data Analysis

The notes from the interview were later transcribed, the transcriptions were sent to the same subjects for the purpose of member checking to assure of its internal validity. Follow-up questions were asked by telephone/email when clarification was necessary. First, the transcriptions were read to obtain the overall flavour of the responses. Later, common themes were identified and coded by using method of comparison and analysis. It is a continuous iterative process. The constant-comparative method was chosen to gain knowledge about participants' understanding of holistic self-identity for gifted and talented students. This method organized data into units of meaning, categories, and themes. During the process of selecting a new unit of meaning for analysis, the new meaning was compared to all other units of meaning and eventually grouped (categorized) with similar units of meaning. The researcher was looking for frequently occurring expressions and unexpected themes that emerged from the interview. The emergent design helped the researchers to identify important leads in the early phases of data analysis which were then pursued through asking additional questions. Relationships and patterns were then analysed across the prepositional statements and identified salient themes related to the aim of the study. The findings from the interview were

later triangulated with other sources such as gifted and talented theories, these procedures determined the validity of the result (Yin, 1994). This back-and-forth process, moving between the interview data, theory and literature led to the development of the self-identity concept of gifted students. The methods adopted in this study were to establish maximum content validity for the definition of the concept of holistic self-identity of gifted and talented students.

4. Results

After exhaustive analysis of the transcripts from all research participants and self-identity of gifted and talented students' theories, a holistic and interlocking diagram of holistic self-identity and themes was constructed based on the participants' statements. Figure 1.0 shows the emerging categories from the participants' perceptions of holistic identity. Based on the description of Figure 1.0, the results showed that the holistic identity of gifted and talented students at Pusat GENIUS@Pintar Negara, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia comprises of eight components namely (1) Intellectual-identity, (2) Emotional-identity, (3) Social-identity, (4) Physical-identity, (5) Spiritual-identity, (6) Leadership-identity, (7) Citizenship-identity, and (8) Adversity-identity.

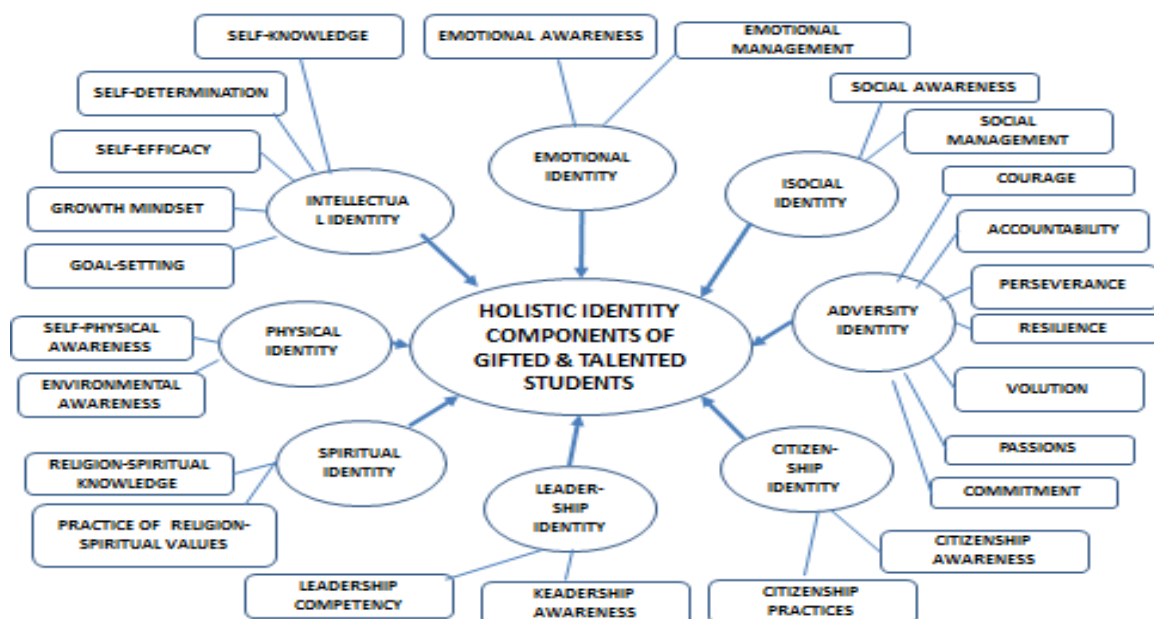


Fig. 1 Emerging categories of holistic self-identity components and themes for gifted and talented students

The understanding that emerged from the responses of the participants as a whole was 'holistic identity' concept is maintaining a well-balanced inner-self quality. It was reflected on a comprehensive concept of self-identity. All participants described components of holistic identity encompasses (1) intellectual-identity which comprises self-knowledge, self-determination, self-efficacy, growth mindset, and goal setting; (2) emotional- identity which relates to emotional awareness and emotional management; (3) social-identity which consists social awareness and social management; (4) physical-identity which relates to self-physical awareness and environmental; (5) spiritual- identity which consists religion/ spiritual knowledge and practice of spiritual values; (6) leadership-identity which consists leadership awareness and leadership competency; (7) citizenship-identity related to citizenship awareness and citizenship practice; and finally (8) adversity-identity that encompasses psychological inner strength which are courage, accountability, perseverance, volition, passion and commitment. Basically, all participants described that the dimension of holistic self-identity for gifted and talented students must be parallel with the values in the National Education Philosophy. On top of that, the gifted expert participants strengthened that the development of GT students must take into consideration their internal psychological strength (adversity identity) in helping them to handle challenges or adverse situations in the future regardless in academic pathway or career environment. This holistic concept was highlighted in the following excerpts from the interview:

...Self-identity of gifted and talented students can be viewed from their intellectual aspect, physical aspect, emotional aspect, social aspect, and spiritual aspect just as stated in our National Educational Philosophy (GEx_01)

...our role is to nurture a comprehensive identity, not only the intellectual components, but also the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects...as Malaysian, our responsibility is to practice the first pillar in the Rukun Negara principles i.e., believing in God (HDL_01)

...Most of them prefer to be a loner...in their own world, so we have to shape them with social skills to interact and communicate with others. Therefore, the formation of self-identity at this centre must be balanced (CLR_02)

Based on the statements given by these three participants, it clearly describes or confirms that intellect should not be the only component in shaping the holistic development of GT students as there are other matters such as physical, emotional, social, and spiritual helping or guiding them to achieve holism. The components of holistic self-identity are portrayed through the main themes and sub-themes that are extracted from the in-depth interview data. The total numbers of main themes that reflect each component are different. Similarly, the total numbers of sub-themes that reflect the main themes are also different.

4.1 Intellectual Identity

The Intellectual Self-identity component comprises five main themes including (i) self-knowledge, (ii) self-determination, (iii) self-efficacy, (iv) growth mind-set, and (v) goal setting. The sub-themes for **self-knowledge** include knowledge about self-personality, interest, and potential. GT students must know themselves to have better understanding and utmost effort in doing things according to their interest, talent, and ability. This later will ensure their success and achievement as they are aware of their own potential. Respondent emphasised that *they must also identify their strength, weaknesses, and personality; either introverted or extroverted. They make the effort to understand themselves through personality tests, to recognize their strength and shortfalls so that they can celebrate the strength and fix any shortfalls.*

Besides that, **self-determination** is important in building intellectual identity so that they will value and believe their decision as the best when others have opposing ideas as stated by the counsellor, *if there are any contradicting views from parents, teachers, friends, or other people in general, they must be firm with their stand.* **Self-efficacy** is defined as one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task will

helps them to complete their work or jobs effectively. *They must also have a mind-set that makes them believe in their capability to carry out tasks successfully. They have a strong belief in their personal ability and always say "Yes, I can do it".*

GT students are also said to have growth **mind-set** which in a way shapes them to always have a positive aura, be optimistic and determined in realising all their plans and goals. As mentioned by the counsellor, *they need to have a positive outlook and always have a positive aura. They also have to always be optimistic to keep persevering in doing what they have planned.* It is also mentioned by the educators that GT students must have clear goal setting in which they must know what their aims and intentions are. *For example, they will establish clear goals in forming their academic pathways and consecutively, their career pathways, with the aim of achieving their ultimate goal. They could see themselves in their desired field, in the next ten or twenty years.*

4.2 Emotional Identity

The next component of holistic identity is **emotional self-identity**, also known as intrapersonal competency. This component is illustrated through two main themes which are **awareness of self-emotion** and **management of self-emotion**. Respondents mentioned that *emotional self-identity involves emotional endurance. Gifted and talented students need to have an internal skill which involves their ability to connect and see within themselves introspectively...this skill is very important for them to manage their emotion.* There are four emerging sub-themes related to the ability to emotional awareness, including the **ability to sense the emotion, feeling the emotion, name/label the emotion** and **identify the effects of emotion** occurring in themselves. Respondent stated that *the students must first know their emotions and know what they are feeling based on the experience that they went through so that they do not deny the presence of the emotion. After they admitted that they are stressed, they start to cry, get angry and portray many other reactions. When asked about their feelings, they will clearly express their sadness, anger, hurt feelings and many others. After expressing that feeling, they look relieved and calm.* Only then, they could identify the effects

of their emotion towards them or their surroundings. This was followed by following statements *...I listened carefully and guide them to see how the feelings affect them. I use their shared experience to analyse their present condition.* As experienced by counsellors through counselling sessions with them, GT students can examine and identify their own feelings and thoughts if they were properly approached. This later will guide them to handle their emotion better.

Further interview portrayed the importance of **emotional management skills** that GT students must acquire by their ability to **evaluate** self-emotion, **accept, control,** and **use** the meaning of emotion or feelings obtained to lead their actions or behaviours, as highlighted in the response, *helping students to manage their emotions require time since it involves deep feelings. After going through all these processes, they will usually use the information about their emotions to act on whether they will hold on or let go off the feeling. Most deeply emotional students tend to acquire a longer time to let go, but once they sense it, they can be by themselves and calm. Usually, their performance becomes better.* By doing so, GT students can evaluate their emotion and deciding what will be their next actions which eventually will improve their performances as they now know how to handle their emotion. On the other hand, they also must have interpersonal competencies as emphasised by the respondent *we want to see a gifted versatile student. They need to be able to manage their emotions and have great social skills in which they become more aware of their environment and are able to socialize with other people.* If GT students have the ability to recognise and manage their emotions well, they can be more aware of their environment, and this will lead them to improve their social and communication skills.

4.3 Social Identity

Social identity is another theme that is certainly an essential component in building holistic GT students. Social identity can be explained by social awareness and social management. The need for social awareness can be described by empathy, building others and social concern (caring), and are mentioned in these responses:

They mentioned to me that they have the desire to attend a programme that offers help to the homeless.

They were passionately discussing how difficult it is for those people (CLR_03)

Permatapintar strives to create that environment so that students can work with people, build, and help each other out, and create a zero-indifference culture that can nurture uplifting nature among peers (CLR_04)

Then, social management skills can be portrayed by possessing interpersonal skills, conflict management, effective communication, and flexible attitude as in the responses given below:

...they need to manage social relationship and be guided to build their social skills. They need to have a mindset of working towards building interpersonal relationships or interconnection with society from various background... this requires the art of lofty or flexibility in dealing with others. (CLR_03):

...How do we communicate effectively and not aggressively? They need to be guided in their communication skills because most of them are originally quiet and have introverted personality, which makes it difficult for them to communicate confidently. (GExp_02)

...They need to learn how to tolerate among each other in which they respect the differences in background such as the difference in age, religion, and family. They also need the skill to manage conflicts. They need to know how to solve the occurring conflicts in a win-win manner. (CLR_04)

Social awareness and social management skills will help to enrich the self-identity of GT students.

4.4 Physical Identity

Besides social-identity, another important theme that has emerged is physical-identity. This component can be illustrated by self-physical awareness and environmental awareness. Students with self-physical awareness are portrayed as possessing healthy body, fit and quick in action, displaying neatness and having crafty self-image/self-presentation. These traits are displayed in the responses from several respondents:

...holistic self-identity involves physical maintenance in which the students are aware

that their identity is not only represented by their way of thinking, but also their physical self-representation...How they took care of their health, food intake and exercises routine (CLR_04).

...the aspect of hygiene and self-presentation must be normalised or cultured within them as they may work in a huge organisation or be brought straight to meetings involving top leadership in the future. (GTch_03)

Besides physical self-awareness, GT students must also be developed from the aspect of environmental awareness. Furthermore, environmental awareness must be built within GT students specifically in the aspect of the cleanliness of their residence as stated in the response by CLR_04:

...Gifted and talented students must be indoctrinated in the aspect of their environmental awareness such as their residential or classroom hygiene state ...a first-class thinking whereby preferences are given towards hygiene and tidiness must be embedded in the students' way of thinking. Thus, when they study at a higher level in or outside the country, they will be used to it and be independent in keeping their places clean and tidy... (CLR_04)

Self-physical awareness and environmental awareness are important to nurture the self-identity of GT students.

4.5 Spiritual Identity

Based on Figure 1.0, the results showed that another important component of a holistic gifted student is reflected on their spiritual-identity, namely **religious knowledge** and **spiritual or values practices**. The **religiosity knowledge** consists of belief in God, which is in line with the first pillar of Malaysia National Principles and Malaysia Education Philosophy. It is said that *gifted students need to be grateful and appreciate their talents. By understanding of how fortunate they are to be endowed with such giftedness and talent, it is hope will make them a humble person*. The **practice of spiritual values** is emphasised on embracing humanitarian values in daily activities such as during human-to-human interaction as well as connecting with the environment. In fact, respondent among gifted teachers agreed that it is important to encourage students to practise their religious knowledge rather than memorise

or just understand the values as a knowledge without implementing religious knowledge into action.

According to the counsellors, *in reality the gifted students enjoyed community services activities such as conducting fund-raising and do community services for instance at the orphanage home or old folk home. In fact, the spirits of teamwork among them are clearly displayed while doing such activities.* Therefore, these values should be instilled and developed for gifted students to naturally appreciate humanitarian values throughout their lives. In addition, to harness deep thinking ability, gifted students also need to be trained to make critical self-reflection. The practice of self-reflection is an exercise to reflect on oneself for the purpose of building self-awareness for continuous improvement. As stated by counsellors and gifted experts, *a continuous reflection will help strengthen their maturity level.*

Therefore, as stated by the school counsellor, *activities like journal reflection and self-evaluation essay have been part of my education processes in character building course with them, as it can help boost my students to reflect more.* In short, from Malaysia educational context, gifted and talented students need to embrace the spiritual identity to reflect as a good citizen with holistic characteristics. In essence, gifted students tend to think beyond their existence, searching for something meaningful to their understanding. Which in turn made them seem to ask lots of transcendental related questions that sometime exceed the limits because of the excessive interest of curiosity. Therefore, a proper guidance is needed in the process of developing holistic gifted students' identity.

4.6 Leadership Identity

Another component of self-identity required in the construction of holistic GT students is **Leadership Self-Identity**. This construct consists of two main themes: **leadership awareness** and **leadership competencies**. Leadership awareness is illustrated through four traits which are awareness of responsibility as a leader, leadership paradigm, leadership motivation and leadership efficacy. An example of leadership awareness statements as mentioned

by a respondent is “...*they need to be aware of their responsibilities as they will be the leaders in their chosen fields, in the future...*”

Leadership awareness also consists of awareness of having leadership paradigm or vision; the aspect that will allow them to be more proactive, relevant, and respected especially when they are able to get out of their comfort zone and to project themselves as well as their surrounding or environment years ahead. The holistic development of GT students can also be realised through leadership motivation and leadership efficacy. Known to have great ideas and to be brave in taking challenges, GT students are leaders and therefore leadership attributes should be cultivated within themselves since young. Teachers and counsellors working in GT education field should always be ready to extract these leadership qualities.

Meanwhile, the leadership efficacy displayed by GT students during competitions, programs and others will assist them in carrying out any tasks as well as in their future life. In terms of “leadership efficacy”, a respondent stated ...*they are confident that they can win in the competition they participate...they have confidence and trust in their ability...they are highly committed especially when they are carrying out a task that is truly of their interest... they are willing to sacrifice and work hard to think of ideas to get the job done.* (CLR_04)

Leadership-identity also looks at the aspect of **communication skills**; focusing on GT students' ability to communicate effectively with friends, teachers, elders, outsiders, and community. Having confidence and good communication skills will let them be top-notch small ambassadors who do not only represent the country but also the country's image and reputation. Being exposed to several programs or events and after being encouraged and guided at this centre, GT students show interest and passion in pursuing for more. For example, research work has always been a corner stone the program at this centre and GT students are becoming more and more interested and passionate to commit in their research especially when they have the opportunity to present the centre at any research conference.

In addition, GT students are also good in **problem solving** regardless of the situations or conditions they are in. As claimed by GTch_07, GT students can still hold great events even though they are busy with examinations or other events.... *they are willing to do anything to solve the problems they started. Despite their busyness, they can still be reliable with any tasks given or any events that need to be handled. They can still organize a great event although the week before the event was an exam week. (GTch_07)*

4.7 Citizenship Identity

Next, for Citizenship-identity, the two main themes representing this component are citizenship awareness (CA) and citizenship practices (CP). This component is important in shaping GTs self-identity since they are exposed to the opportunity to pursue their studies overseas or work with international organisations. CA is displayed through traits such as awareness about responsibility as a citizen, building self-honour, respecting diversity, and willingness to sacrifice. The need to shape Citizenship-identity is mentioned in the quote: *...means preparedness and willingness to be ready to accept the existence of our birth and our place and be proud of it to the extent that we will defend it to the end of our life. For example, if we are born as a Malay and a Muslim, we will be proud of it until the end of our life and strive to defend the parochialism-primordial for eternity. (GExp_02)*

CP can also be displayed through various citizenship practices, portrayal of good image of the country as well as high tolerance and manners amongst multiracial friends. These can be proven from the following response by a respondent's statement *"Knowledge about citizenship responsibility must be translated through practices. There are four Citizenship Practices mentioned, namely maintaining unity, appreciating the constitution, practicing National Language and build the country's reputation"*.

In addition, apart from having citizenship awareness, it is also important for GT students to show citizenship practices as mentioned by a respondent. GTs must be fluent in national language, show politeness and

respect while interacting with other people, never tarnish the country's name and image, do, or produce something that can be the pride of the country, and maintain unity to harmonise the people of the country.

4.8 Adversity Identity

The final emerging component of holistic identity among gifted students is related to psychological well-being. Gifted students need to instil **inner strength** namely **adversity identity**. Studies on gifted characteristics showed that gifted students like challenges and easily exposed to psychological issues due to the asynchronous development. Adversity identity focuses more on the internal psychological strength that empowered self during facing unexpected challenges. In general, the traits reflected on a gifted student with internal psychological strength are related to six components, namely having the characteristic of (1) courage, (2) perseverance, (3) resilience (4) having volition, (5) commitment, and (6) passionate. Respondents among counsellors and gifted educators emphasised on *the importance to build internal psychological strength within the gifted students through developing courage in trying new things, perseverance in coping with challenges and never give up, having resilience in completing a difficult task. Besides that, gifted with an adversity identity has the volition with a strong internal motivation that drives them to continue moving further.* It is said that *they do not see difficult things as an obstacle, they look it as a challenge that makes them persistent.* This was revealed by the counsellors in the following statement *"Gifted students portrayed the quality of having high creativity especially in the things that they are passionate about. They will do it full-hearted and committedly, willing to sacrifice their time, energy, or even money. They really put their soul in the task."* From the answers it appears that gifted students internalise the traits of GRIT that make a person possess deep commitment and loyalty in any work responsibilities.

This is in line with Bashant (2014) who relates the need for psychological strength for GT students with a desirable trait named GRIT. GRIT is related to perseverance, passion, resilience, self-discipline, and some other traits that make a person possess deep commitment

and loyalty in any work responsibilities that they may have, although it takes years (Subotnik, 2019). Many researchers posit the importance of inculcating GRIT in GT students. GT students are the national assets who will lead the country's economic growth. Therefore, GT intellectual development must be parallel with their internal psychological development to ensure their ability in coping and facing challenging or adverse situations in their future life. In a nutshell, the concept of holistic or well-rounded gifted individual does not meant to have a complete excellent score in all identified components, it will be good enough to have an average set of the whole eight identity.

5. Discussion

The understanding that emerged from the responses of the participants as a whole was 'holistic identity' concept is maintaining a well-balanced inner-self quality. It was reflected on a comprehensive concept of self-identity. Participants described each component of holistic identity consisted of various sub-components/themes; (1) Intellectual-identity comprises of self-knowledge (SA), self-determination (SD), self-efficacy (SE), growth-mindset (GM), and goal setting (GS); (2) component of Emotional- identity consisted of emotional awareness (EA) and emotional management (EM); (3) component of Social-identity consisted of Social-awareness (SA) and social management (SM); (4) component of Physical-identity consisted of self-physical awareness (PA) and environmental awareness (EA); (5) Spiritual- identity component consisted religion/ spiritual knowledge (RSK) and Religion/ spiritual values practices (RSVP); (6) Leadership-identity component consisted of leadership awareness (LA) and leadership competency (LC); (7) Citizenship-identity component consisted of citizenship awareness (CA) and citizenship practice (CP); and finally (8) Adversity-identity component encompasses of psychological inner strength which are Courage (C), Accountability (ACT), Perseverance (PV), Volition (V), Passion (PSS) and Commitment (CMT). Basically, all participants described the dimension of holistic self-identity for gifted and talented students must be parallel to the values in the National Education Philosophy. Additionally, the gifted expert participants strengthened that

the development of GT students must take into consideration their inner psychological strength (adversity identity) in helping them to handle challenges or adverse situations in the future regardless of along the academic pathway or career environment.

All in all, the findings of this study reveal the need to develop a holistic personality of gifted children, in line with Malaysia Philosophy of Education which emphasises on physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual development. GT students need the component of intellectual identity; (i) self-knowledge, (ii) self-determination, (iii) self-efficacy, (iv) growth mind-set, and (v) goal setting to improve their intellectual competencies so that they will develop their self-potential. Besides, conducive learning environment and specific curriculum that fulfil their intellectual capacity are crucial in supporting their creativity and learning development. Thus, it is important that teachers to apply different learning technique according to the GT student's capability. GT students' necessity that is not appropriately fulfilled will result in their low achievement in academic.

On the other hand, low achievement could also be caused by students' emotional intelligence. Emotions that are not well acknowledged or well managed will eventually disrupt their learning process and curriculum mastery. These distractions will affect intellectual components such as growth mind-set and goal setting from being accomplished. A healthy emotional guidance is demanded from teachers and counsellors to lead GT students. Counsellors notably, should be prepared with specialized module and model of counselling approach for them. Researchers have shown that our success in life depends on 80% of Emotional Intelligence and only 20% of intellectual. While our intellect helps us to resolve problems or to process information, emotional intelligence (EQ) allows us to be more creative and use our emotions to resolve our problems. (Goleman, 2000).

The contribution of social identity explained by social awareness and social management to the development of holistic self-identity of GT students is unquestionable.

GT students value social justice highly and the occurrence of injustice in any situations is not something favourable to them. In relation to social awareness, the findings also show the need of GT students to have empathy, especially those people in need and such feeling are followed by the attitude of helping actions. Not only that, having empathy also gives them a clear view of how to make other people's life easier and how to contribute to society or community outside. Having high common sense or social concern is one significant aspect in ensuring the holistic development of GT students. Therefore, they must be concerned and caring towards others regardless of any situations that others are experiencing. Importantly, through social awareness or concern, GT students can improve their social management skills and relationship by brushing up their interpersonal skills with society and community of various background. One of the GT experts believed that there is a need for GT students to be guided in their communication skills since most of them are initially quiet and introverts. Such traits lead them to find communicating confidently as something burdening. In making GT students' holistic development a success, flexibility must play its part. This means GT students must know and learn to how tolerate with other people by considering the aspects of respecting differences, managing, and solving conflicts.

Intellectual, emotional, and social identities are not sufficient in ensuring GT students' holistic development. Thus, the component of physical identity must also be evident in GT students. According to the responses, physical appearance and representation are important in producing holistic GT students. Being intelligent must not be the only focus, which is why good self-management and representation should be practised. This follows the characteristics of GT students which is said to be comfortable living in their own world. However, they need to be provided with these skills or awareness because at one point, they will be leaders. Two GT teachers acknowledged the needs of hygiene, physical and self-representation within GT students. Significantly, by nurturing the practice of hygiene and tidiness among GT students especially those staying in residential colleges, these students will

eventually get used to managing themselves and their surrounding well, not only when they are in schools, but also elsewhere such as in other universities while pursuing their higher education programs and other countries too.

Another component of self-identity required in the construction of holistic GT students is Leadership Self-Identity. This construct consists of two main themes: leadership awareness and leadership competencies. Leadership awareness is illustrated through four traits which are awareness of responsibility as a leader, leadership paradigm, leadership motivation and leadership efficacy. Leadership awareness also consists of awareness of having leadership paradigm or vision; the aspect that will allow them to be more proactive, relevant, and respected especially when they are able to get out of their comfort zone and to project themselves as well as their surrounding or environment years ahead. The holistic development of GT students can also be realised through leadership motivation and leadership efficacy. Known to have great ideas and to be brave in taking challenges, GT students are leaders and therefore leadership attributes should be cultivated within themselves since young. Teachers and counsellors working in GT education field should always be ready to extract these leadership qualities. It also looks at the aspect of communication skills; focusing on GT students' ability to communicate effectively with friends, teachers, elders, outsiders, and community. Having confidence and good communication skills will let them be top-notch small ambassadors who do not only represent the country but also the country's image and reputation.

Next, for Citizenship self-identity, the two main themes representing this component are citizenship awareness (CA) and citizenship practices (CP). This component is important in shaping GTs self-identity since they are exposed to the opportunity to pursue their studies overseas or work with international organisations. CA is displayed through traits such as awareness about responsibility as a citizen, building self-honour, respecting diversity, and willingness to sacrifice. CP can also be displayed through various citizenship practices, portrayal of good image of the

country as well as high tolerance and manners amongst multiracial friends. In addition, apart from having citizenship awareness, it is also important for GT students to show citizenship practices as mentioned by respondents. A respondent emphasised that since they live in the hostel with multiracial friends, they need to always be reminded about the responsibility to preserve unity and respect national constitution by embracing the principles of Rukun Negara. The findings also indicate that there is a strong need for gifted students to have inner strength such as courage, resilience, perseverance, volition, passion, and commitment, namely as adversity self-identity. This is crucial for GT students for them to better function in dealing with future challenges of fourth industrial revolution.

The need of psychological strength for GT students are related to a desirable trait called GRIT (Bashant 2014). GRIT is related to perseverance, passion, resilience, self-discipline, and some other traits that make a person possess deep commitment and loyalty in any work responsibilities that they may have, although it takes years. According to Duckworth et al. (2007), ability alone cannot ensure success in any field. Successful high achievers also possess courage and capacity for working hard. The importance of inculcating GRIT in GT students is also supported by current gifted children's researchers (Worrell, 2019). GT students are the national assets who will lead the country's economic growth. Therefore, their intellectual development must be parallel with their psychological development to ensure their ability in coping and facing challenging situations in their future life.

In overall, the holistic GT students' self-identity needs to be highlighted through the development of eight identity components: Physical, Emotional, Spiritual, Intellectual, Social, Leadership, Citizenship, and Adversity identity. The intellectual-identity displays GT students' need to have self-knowledge about their principles, determination, self-efficacy, goal setting, and growth mindset. This awareness regarding self-knowledge about their reality is linked to the concept of mindfulness in giving full attention to one's thoughts and feelings and accept them unconditionally (Sisk, 2019). Self-acceptance

through such awareness will build individual's inner strength, specifically those who face many psychological issues due to the issues on asynchronous development (Subotnik, 2015 & Shenfield, 2019) which will hinder GT students from achieving their full potential. The finding highlighted Spiritual-identity as an important element in defining holistic gifted students. It focuses on not just the spiritual knowledge aspect, also on the internalization of the religious and spiritual values. Therefore, gifted students need to translate the value knowledge in their religious upbringing into daily behavioural practices. This is in line to past research on the importance of the realization of value-based educational goals from primary class grade and subject teaching as well as to determine the pedagogical assumptions for the development of students' values orientations (Panev & Barakoska, 2019) and the need to inculcate value Based Spiritual Knowledge to this new generation and make them value-oriented-powerful future leaders (Patil, 2013).

On the other hand, the discovery on Leadership and Citizenship identity is also in line with the roles of GT students that are leaders in their chosen fields (Karnes & Bean, 1990). GT students must contribute their skills and expertise to the society, country, and to the world. Therefore, the injection of awareness and spirit of responsibility as honest leaders and loyal citizen must be embedded and nurtured from the early stage of their school life. The purpose is to instil in the students to be prepared in becoming the front runner in a new field and the change catalyst or translator of new thoughts.

6. Implication

The findings from this study give a huge implication to the gifted and talented education program specifically in the aspect of students' personal development. The need to develop a well-balanced gifted student requires a collective effort from various parties including the administrators, academicians, student affairs management, guidance and counselling support services, moral and spirituality management, as well as students' leadership development management. The implementation of holistic self-identity development must be continuously conducted across all fields of education. Application of

any holistic self-identity characteristics may occur during learning sessions, co-curriculum activities, residential hall daily activities, outreach activities (research, mobility, students' exchange, industrial engagement) and others. A students' Individual Development Plan (IDP) needs to be developed by Guidance and Counselling Unit through Students' Personal Mentoring Program. The IDP must keep the data on students' growth in all aspects of holistic self-development, beginning from their first year of entering GT Education program until they graduate. The information on self-development growth must be included in the students' personal portfolio that is assessed continuously under the self-development course, a compulsory subject for all students. To ensure the concept of holistic self-identity development is understood and appreciated, the leaders of GT institution are responsible to inform the concept of holistic GT development along with the methods of implementation to all GT teachers through Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training. CPD is a systematic and continuous planning, implementation, and monitoring in the process of developing holistic GT students' identity by all parties. This will help to create the emergence of high-quality GT students who are the human capital assets that will be leaders in various fields in the country's future development.

7. Conclusion

There is a need to develop the personality and character of gifted and talented students, and this is a responsibility for educators and administrators of a GT education program. It is also intended that the development of a national human capital involving GT students can be enhanced with strong support from various parties. The development of holistic self-identity in GTs should continuously progress from primary to middle and high school as they are the human capital of the nation who will one day lead the country's development and economic growth. Hence, GT education programs need to have a well-planned and structured approach to build GTs with holistic identity for the country to leverage quality gifted individuals. This aim is paralleled with the aspiration of Malaysia Ministry of Education which is to generate a world-class human capital who contributes to the country and the world.

8. Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme: FRGS/1/2018/SS05/UKM/02/4.

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