

# Emotional Intelligence and Personality Among Gifted and Talented, Sport School and Mainstream School Student

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## ABSTRACT

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Emotional intelligence, also known as EQ, and personality aspects are essential elements in shaping a student's identity. EQ refers to an individual's ability to identify, use, understand, and manage emotions positively to alleviate stress, communicate effectively, empathize, share feelings, overcome challenges, and resolve conflicts. Meanwhile, personality aspects are seen as contributors to individual differences. This study has significant implications in the field of education, especially in the realm of gifted and talented education, which is considered alongside a combination of sports school students (athletes) and mainstream school students. The aim of this study is to identify the level and differences in EQ and personality among students. A total of 419 students, comprising gifted and talented students, sports school students, and mainstream school students, participated in this study. A questionnaire containing 94 items using Likert scale measurement was used as the research instrument. The instrument's reliability value was  $\alpha=0.97$ . The research data were analyzed inferentially using T-test and Pearson Correlation test. The findings of the study indicate a significant relationship between EQ and Personality ( $r=0.414$ ,  $\text{sig}=0.000$ ), with a moderately positive correlation. Meanwhile, PERMATA Program students showed higher levels of EQ and personality compared to Sports School and Mainstream School students. This study implies that EQ has a clear association with the personality aspects of gifted and talented students directly, indicating that EQ is aligned with personality aspects in shaping students' identities.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, EQ, personality, Big Five, Gifted and Talented Students, Sports Athletes, Mainstream Students

## INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence, also known as EQ, and personality aspects are essential elements in shaping students' identity. The combination of these two aspects can differentiate the level of ability and character of students. High EQ and personality are important factors in producing outstanding students.

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is part of social intelligence that involves an individual's ability to understand their own feelings and emotions, as well as those of others, and to distinguish between the two, using this information as a guide for their thoughts and behaviors [47]. High EQ ability can overcome challenges and resolve conflicts, help improve work quality [12] & [19], lead to more effective communication [12], and impact job satisfaction [36]. This ability shows that emotions can control thinking and determine a person's physiology [28]. This indicates that EQ is important in life and good EQ management leads to excellence in any field.

Meanwhile, personality aspects are seen as contributors to individual differences [38]. Understanding personality helps an individual enhance and identify ways to develop their potential and recognize their weaknesses [38]. These traits reflect relatively stable patterns of behavior, motivation, emotions, and cognition [41] and [51] that are not bound to a specific socio-cultural context but can be observed in various contexts (e.g., argumentativeness). This does not mean all traits are visible in every situation, but rather any trait can be observed through some situations in any culture.

This study has significant implications in the field of education, particularly in the area of gifted and talented education, seen alongside the integration of sports school students (athletes) and mainstream school students. Such studies are the latest in Malaysia and will continue to expand in ongoing research. The findings are expected to assist educators in creating programs that can shape the nation's students based on their potential.

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is increasingly needed in this pandemic era. Current issues, largely revolving around online education, have significantly impacted the emotions of teenagers, parents, and society in general. However, society today pays more attention to intellectual intelligence (IQ) because more individuals are receiving higher education, better nutrition, and easier access to knowledge through direct or indirect education such as print and electronic media. Moreover, the current situation dealing with the pandemic exacerbates this focus. This situation leads to the neglect of individuals' emotional intelligence. Symptoms indicating a decline in emotional intelligence (EQ) include violence, crime, drug abuse, depression among children and teenagers, baby dumping, bullying in schools, school dropouts, eating disorders, alienation, and so on [1]. Meanwhile, personality aspects are also emphasized in shaping students' character. Excellent students need to have good personality aspects to navigate the increasingly challenging life in the workforce. According to [54], personality is shaped by family, friends, cultural influences, heredity, body shape, intelligence, and emotions. Thus, different personalities are influenced by their personality development. The development of students' personalities and generic skills in schools may vary in many ways, contributing to different individual personalities. According to a study by [35], it was found that students' personalities are at a moderate level. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the level of personality among gifted and talented students, sports school students, and mainstream school students.

Gifted and Talented Students (GTS) experience different feelings at certain times, especially when they try to be like others to be accepted in social relationships, particularly with peers at school [17]. Studies by [23] and [24] reported that some GTS face anxiety in building peer relationships and struggle to be accepted in groups or environments. This creates very high stress among GTS in schools. An unsupportive environment, coupled with low self-concept, can hinder the process of developing GTS potential to its maximum [27]; [46]; [3]; [4]; [48]; [53]. Therefore, it can be concluded that GTS are also ordinary humans who undoubtedly face problems. Hence, they also experience stress like other people, though their ways of handling stress may differ from normal students. Personality aspects are also emphasized because each individual's personality is different. These differences are influenced by factors such as gender and the type or environment of the school. [30], in his study titled "Sex, Race, Class, and Other Demographics as Explanations for Children's' Ability and Adjustment," reported that the above demographic characteristics vary in terms of cognitive ability, academic achievement, and social adjustment of a student. [33], concluded that personality is an entity that includes elements of thought, perception, values, attitudes, character, ability, beliefs, intelligence, motivation, and habitual routines. A person's character can be assessed through their personality because character means personality that can be described through one's behavior [18]. Behavior, in turn, can be assessed through personality [26].

In conclusion, the aspects of EQ and student personality comparing Gifted and Talented students, sports school students, and mainstream school students are crucial for educators and researchers in measuring the differences in their EQ and personality based on learning environments, teaching and learning techniques, and student time management. Indirectly, these findings provide different perspectives on their patterns in managing daily routines in different situations.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine the relationship between personality traits and EQ and the influence of personality traits on the EQ of Gifted and Talented students (GTS), sports school students (SS), and mainstream school students (MS).

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is an important aspect within individuals and is closely related to the stress experienced by teenagers. EQ can influence the stress faced by teenagers throughout their lives. During adolescence, individuals undergo a transition from childhood to adulthood, experiencing changes such as biological, physical, mental, and emotional transformations. Moreover, teenagers face stress throughout their lives due to changes in roles and responsibilities at home, with friends, at school, or when pursuing higher education.

Emotional intelligence increases life productivity and makes individuals more positive in their daily lives. [49] also stated that emotional intelligence influences how individuals manage their internal stress levels when performing tasks, especially fieldwork. This ability can provide job satisfaction [36]. Job satisfaction, in turn, affects an individual's health, both physically and emotionally, and helps them focus better on their tasks [52]. [34], noted that emotional intelligence is the ability to curb negative emotions such as anger and doubt and focus on positive feelings like self-confidence. Individuals who can control their anger and eliminate negative emotions can make more rational decisions and lead more orderly lives. [15], proposed five dimensions of emotional intelligence in his Emotional Intelligence Theory: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, motivation, and empathy.

The Big Five personality traits outlined in [31] Five Factor Personality Theory are described as follows: Extraversion measures the comfort level of individuals in social interactions [42] and their tendency to be sociable [29]. Conscientiousness refers to the carefulness individual's exhibit when making decisions, acting with mindfulness. Agreeableness is the tendency to be friendly and behave appropriately in social interactions [29]. These individuals easily reach agreements within groups and value their relationships. Neuroticism measures emotional stability and personal adjustment to the environment, focusing on resilience in handling stress [42]. Openness indicates an individual's willingness to embrace new ideas, opinions, or experiences. The Big Five traits are relatively consistent over time [43], across cultures [31], and can broadly predict outcomes, including job performance [5], academic achievement [45], minor law violations or societal non-acceptance [22] and personality disorders [10].

This study uses the Big Five Personality Theory as its foundation, widely applied but still underutilized in Malaysian research [11], as cited in [55]. This study examines EQ and personality aspects among students from different schools, including Gifted and Talented students (PERMATA Program), students from Sports School, and mainstream school students (SMK). The different education systems, environments, and teaching and learning routines are analyzed by researchers for reference purposes.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Therefore, this study is conducted to examine the relationship between EQ and personality traits of students in three type different educational institutions. This study also considers the influence of EQ and personality traits of students from different institutions while maintaining the same academic aspects.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To observe the relationship between EQ and personality of Gifted and Talented students (GT), Sports School students (SS), and Mainstream School students (MS).
2. To examine the influence of personality traits on EQ based on the type of educational institution.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study is quantitative and takes the form of a survey using of emotional intelligence questionnaires and Big Five personality questionnaires.

### **SAMPLE OF THE STUDY**

The study involves samples from the PERMATA student, sports school students, and mainstream secondary school students around Selangor aged 11 to 20 years. The sample determination refers to the [25] table and uses the convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling is used because it considers accessibility [20], geographical distance, availability at the set time, or willingness to participate [13]. It is inexpensive, easy, and the subjects are already available [21].

A total of 419 respondents were involved, covering three types of schools: PERMATA@Pintar Negara Center, Sports Schools, and Mainstream Schools around Selangor. The breakdown of respondents in this study is as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Respondents

Institution	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Gifted & Talented school	70	71	141
Sport School	67	60	127
Mainstream School	78	73	151
Total	215	204	419

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

This study employs a quantitative approach using data collection methods with the Emotional Intelligence Inventory (IKEM-MEQI), [15], [37] which consists of 50 items with the reliability test score 0.927. The Big Five Personality Questionnaire, [2], contains 44 items, reliability test score 0.743. Generally, the reliability test for these instruments is very good. This indicates that the instruments are reliable for measuring the relevant constructs [8].

## METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Data from both questionnaires were analyzed by considering the mean and tested using Pearson correlation tests. The interpretation of the strength of relationships used refers to Cohen (1988), as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Interpretation of the Strength of Relationships [9].

Correlation value (r)	Strength
0.10 – 0.29	Weak
0.30 – 0.49	Medium
0.50 – 1.00	Strong

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Relationship Between Personality and EQ among Students.

**Table 3:** The Relationship Between Personality and EQ among Students

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Extraversion (1)	1				
Agreeableness (2)	.398**	1			
Conscientiousness (3)	.412**	.458**	1		
Neuroticism (4)	.324**	.461**	.473**	1	
Openness (5)	.443**	.287**	.447**	.117*	1
EQ (6)	.400**	.154**	.270**	.037	.531**

\*\*  $p < 0.001$  \*  $p < 0.05$

The findings indicate significant positive relationships between extraversion ( $r = 0.400$ ,  $p < .01$ ), agreeableness ( $r = .154$ ,  $p < .01$ ), conscientiousness ( $r = .270$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and openness ( $r = .531$ ,  $p < .01$ ), with EQ. These relationships show weak to strong positive relationship between personality dimensions and EQ. This suggests that an increase in EQ is associated with an increase in the various personality aspects of students (refer to Table 3).

### 2. The Contribution of Personality Traits to Student EQ Based on the Type of Educational

**Table 4:** The Contribution of Personality Traits to Student EQ Based on the Type of Educational Institution

Institution	Personality trait	Unstandardized coefficients		standardized coefficients	t	Sig	Contribution	r <sup>2</sup>
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
Gifted & Talented Centre	extraversion	1.945	.654	.219	2.973	.003	21.9%	.416
	openness	3.540	.453	.589	7.816	.000	58.9%	
Sport School	openness	2.834	.557	.472	5.090	.000	47.2%	.349
Mainstream school	Extraversion	3.307	.763	.404	4.335	.000	40.4%	.277
	Neurotic	-1.605	.741	-.199	-2.164	.032	19%	
	openness	1.151	.580	.171	1.983	.049	17.1%	

Table 4 shows the contribution of personality traits to the EQ of students based on the type of educational institution. For GT students, personality traits contribute 41.6% with a significance value of 0.000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05, where, extraversion and openness contribute 21.9% (Beta = 0.219,  $t = 2.973$ , sig = 0.03) and 58.9% (Beta = 0.589,  $t = 7.816$ , sig = 0.00), respectively. For Sports School students, personality traits contribute 34.9%, with openness contributing 47.2% (Beta = 0.472,  $t = 5.090$ , sig = 0.00). while, for Mainstream School students, personality traits contribute 27.7%, with extraversion, neuroticism, and openness contributing 40.4% (Beta = 0.404,  $t = 4.335$ , sig = 0.00), 19% (Beta = -0.199,  $t = -2.164$ , sig = 0.032), and 17.1% (Beta = 0.171,  $t = 1.983$ , sig = 0.049), respectively.

However, other percentages may be influenced by factors not accounted for in this study [40].

## DISCUSSION

In summary, there is strong evidence to conclude that personality aspects are related to EQ, and some personality traits are significant predictors of students' EQ among the three institutions in this study.

Specifically, the first objective was to examine the relationship between EQ and personality of students from three different educational institution, Gifted and Talented students, Sports School students, and Mainstream School students. The findings show a direct, moderate relationship. Personality is an aspect that reveals differences among individuals in terms of emotional response patterns, attitudes, and behaviors. According to [14], EQ is crucial in considering interpersonal interactions and adaptations of individual differences. This means that an individual's personality reflects their unique differences, which are related to their EQ. Previous studies supporting this include research by [6], [16], [7], and [50].

The second objective of the study was to examine the influence of personality traits on EQ based on the type of educational institution. The study shows that personality traits have varying influences on EQ across different types of institutions. GT students (PERMATA) show a 41.6% influence of personality on EQ, including traits of extraversion and openness. Sports School students record a 34.9% influence of personality on EQ, consisting solely of the trait of openness. Meanwhile, Mainstream School students show a 27.7% influence of personality on EQ, consisting of traits of extraversion, neuroticism, and openness. The trait of neuroticism provides a negative score, meaning that a higher level of EQ is associated with lower neuroticism, and vice versa. High scores in neuroticism are related to feelings of guilt, anxiety, low self-esteem, and insecurity in relationships with others [39].

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