Indicators of Social Competencies in Gifted Students

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Previous studies have found that gifted students have problems in assigning appropriate behaviour for social contexts. They have greater development and tend to be more active (over excitable) than normal students, in terms of their physique, intellect, imagination and emotion. Their excessive energy, in the psychosocial context is manifested through various behaviours such as cursing, grumbling and complaining, being uncaring of other people's feelings, bullying or rebelling. These behaviours are related to social competencies. In this study, gifted students' social competencies are examined through the development of their social competency indicators. The study respondents are 105 gifted students in Semarang, consisting of 58 (55.2%) male and 47 (44.8%) female students. Based on psychometric testing through internal consistency and validity tests, the Gifted Students' Social Competency scale was valid and reliable. The scale consisted of six indicators, including competency to understand and manage one's emotions, competency to understand others' emotions, empathy, social performance and social skills. Since the psychometric tests showed a result in the 'Good' category, the KSSCI scale is suitable for implementation.

Key words: *Gifted Students' Social Competency Scale, Gifted Students, Social Competencies.*

Introduction

Individuals grow and develop according to their age and developmental phase, in accordance with their biological, cognitive, psychological and social development, through the , infant, adolescent, adult, and elder stages (Santrock, 2005). Development consists of a series of progressive changes that occurs due to the maturity process and experiences and consists of a series of qualitative and quantitative changes that continue during one's lifetime. Development is also defined as a series of progressive changes that occurs as a result of interactions between an individual and his or her environment (Santrock, 2007).

Every aspect of development is interrelated and affects each other. One of the most difficult development tasks that an individual has to master to achieve the goals of the adult socialisation pattern is to behave effectively in various social situations (Hurlock, 1990; Papalia, et al, 2001; Santrock, 2005).

Studies have found that gifted students had problems in assigning appropriate behaviour for social contexts. Gifted students are more developed and tend to be more active (over excitable) than normal students, in terms of their physique, intellect, imagination and emotion. Their excessive energy within the psychosocial context is manifested through various behaviours such as complaining, being unaware of other people's feelings, bullying, or rebelling; which is consistent with the theory proposed by Dabrowski (Jackson et. al, 2009).

There are around 1.3 million gifted students in Indonesia. The 2010-2014 Strategic Plan of the Directorate General of Middle Education showed that, based on Wechsler IQ classification, the number of gifted/excelling students with an IQ of 130 or more in Indonesia was about 2.2% of the total population of students. In 2010, it was recorded that there were 9,112,792 middle school students, 2.2% or around 4,188 of whom were gifted students. Out of that number, only 0.43 percent were educated in accelerated classes (Decree of Minister for Women's Empowerment and Children's Protection Year 2011 No. 10).

There are many gifted students in Semarang. Observations between December 2018 and 2019 in Junior High Schools in Semarang showed that gifted students tended to display exclusivity by forming their own group, apart from other students. There were certain situations in which parents and teachers focused gifted students' education on their intellectual potential and competencies, rather than their psychosocial development (Bailey, 2011; Cochran, 2009). This condition was particularly apparent in accelerated classes in which teachers acted as subjects and students as objects of education. Students barely had time to rest from learning in these classes, or to undertake other activities (2013 Strategic Plans of the Directorate General of Middle Education).

The facts in the field and various research findings indicate that students with exceptional intellectual competencies (gifted students) showed an imbalance in their intellectual and psychosocial optimisation, which is apparent in their social competencies. Fornia and Frame (2001) as well as Goleman (2006) noted that optimisation of intellectual prowess should ideally be followed by development in other facets, including emotional, personality, and social aspects. Non-intellectual aspects are equally as important as intellectual ones (academic competencies) as future success is determined by not only intellectual capacity but also other aspects such as emotion and personality (Goleman, 2006). Considering the great potential possessed by gifted students, their chance to achieve success and a better future

should be relatively higher than that of normal students. Moreover, social competencies as part of developmental tasks, are   important aspects for gifted students because they can improve the quality of their participation in social life (Zwaans, et. al., 2008).

The above descriptions indicates that there is a gap between expectations and reality. Gifted students were found to show an imbalance between their social competencies and above average intellectual capacity (Bailey, 2011; Cochran, 2009; Cross, 2005; Jackson, et. al., 2009; Lee, et. al., 2012; Sugiarti and Herbyanti, 2015) even though ideally, gifted students should possess balanced intellectual and psychosocial development. Furthermore, an individual is considered relatively successful in his or her psychosocial development if she or he is able to behave in accordance with social requirements, known as social competencies (Papalia, et. al., 2001).

As a result, the present study aims to find an estimation of parameters and a fit model for gifted students' social competency indicators.

Literature Review

Definition of Gifted Students

Each student develops rows at a different pace with different models of behaviour (Borland, 2005). These differences imply that gifted students are different from time to time (Borland, 2005; Roedell, 1984). These terms have been coined based on society's ideas (Cikleman, 2007; Sternberg, 2011) so that they alter from time to time (Borland, 2005; Roedell, 1984) and have no absolute criteria (Kaufman and Sternberg, 2008).

Research on gifted students began to appear at the end of the nineteenth century (Borland, 2005; Robinson and Clinkenbeard, 1998; Stoeger, 2009). According to Spearman (1904; Stoeger, 2009), the first sign of attention to exceptional intelligence (giftedness) began in 1883, when Galton found that there were genetic factors that could affect difference in abilities (Hurts, 1932; Stoeger, 2009).

When scientists measure talents and understand them as the foundation of gifted students (Feldhusen, 2005; Hurts, 1932; Stoger, 2009), the concept of exceptional intelligence, in its relation to intelligence was developed when Lewis M. Terman introduced the concept of mental testing to American schools in the early 19th century (Keating, 1975; Stoeger, 2009). Quantified intelligence was believed to be able to differentiate intellectual capacity between individuals   (Spearman, 1904; Stoeger, 2009), at a point of similarity   regarding understanding about talents (Gordon and Bridglall, 2005; Stoeger, 2009).

A gifted student was defined as a student with a high IQ (Feldhusen, 2005; Gordon and Bridglall, 2005; Sword, 2001) and high academic achievement in Mathematics and reading (Borland, 2005; Cochran, 2009). Yet another definition had an IQ limit of 180 for gifted students (Roedell, 1984). Renzulli (1978) defined gifted (students) through the threering concept, which meant that gifted students had above average ability, task commitment and creativity. The addition of 'creative' and 'talented' in the definition of gifted indicated that there were other performances besides the traditional measures of intelligence (Hardman, et. al., 2002; Villegas and Tomasini, 2012). Students who were not gifted might become so due to their high creativity and task commitment (Borland, 2005).

In line with these definitions, the present study defined gifted students as those with above average intellectual capability, advanced ability to absorb information, , and high analysis and synthesis ability.

Definition of Gifted Students' Social Competency

Definition of Competency

Suhariadi (2013) argued that the definition of competency is still varied.   In general, competency is deemed as an individual's capability to behave effectively in relation to him or herself and others, including peers and close friends, in various distressing and normal situations and through various stages of life (L'Abate, et. al., 2010).Competency is also defined as the capacity to successfully satisfy complex requirements in certain contexts through mobilisation of psychosocial prerequisites, which include cognitive and non-cognitive aspects (McClelland, 1973; Kim, et. al., 2007). Suhariadi (2013) defined competency as behaviour, knowledge, skill and motivation that plays a significant role in the successful performance of a certain task, or role. Spencer and Spencer (1993) illustrated that competency was a primary characteristic of an individual that was related to certain criteria that affected positive results in certain tasks or situations.

Based on the above definitions of competency, the researcher constructed a definition of competency for this study, which included cognitive (knowledge) and noncognitive (attitude) capabilities and skills that could predict behavioural tendencies in various situations and tasks and could be measured using certain specific or standard criteria.

Definition of Social Competency

Individuals grow and develop according to their age and developmental phase, in terms of their biological, cognitive, psychological and social characteristics, through the infant, adolescent, adult and elderly stages (Santrock, 2005; 2007). Each aspect of development is

interrelated and affects each other (Seifert and Hoffnung, 1991). An individual's psychosocial development will progress based on certain steps established through the socialisation process (L' Abate, et al, 2010). Success or failure in the next step will be determined by the previous steps (Nurihsan and Agustin, 2011; Seifert and Hoffnung, 2011). Social competency development enables students to achieve their social objectives effectively and in accordance with their social value and expectations (Guralnick, 2008; Taborsky, et. al., 2012). Students with social competency will be able to assign meaning to social interactions in their life, and minimise the occurrence of behavioural problems (Griffin, et. al., 2001).

Han and Kemple (2006) argued that to be a successful member of society, an individual needs to be a high achiever. Students who are able to perform social functions will be able to behave assertively by demonstrating their competencies in knowing their place without disturbing or harming others. Furthermore, Papalia (2001) stated that in line with their psychosocial development tasks, students had to adjust to a wider and relatively new environment, not only in their families but also in wider social circles. In general, students who develop socially are those who can behave in accordance with the social situation (Hartinah, 2011).

An individual's ability to participate in society is apparent in his or her social competencies. Social competencies involve behaviours that are affected by the ability to understand others' feelings, provide appropriate responses and understand consequences (Berns, 2004). Social competency involves a social situation that enables individuals to choose various behaviours that fit the expected context and maintain positive relationship with others (Hutchby and Ellis, 2005; Schulte and Barrera, 2010). Social competency refers to the mental ability to understand other individuals' thoughts, feelings and desire to create successful social interaction, which includes maintaining a comfortable level of social interaction (Mallinckrodt, 2005; Walker, 2005).Social competency is a term that highlights an individual's ability to interact in various social situations, to be engaged in mutual give and take so that meaningful social interaction is created (Bloom, in Gullota, et. al., 2009; Hutchby and Ellis, 2005) based on flexibility of behaviour relating to other individuals (Taborsky and Oliveira, 2012). Social competency can also be defined as an individual's ability to put him or herself in another person's shoes in certain situations, to learn from the experience of interacting and to implement social learning results in other situations and circumstances (Clikeman, 2007).

Based on the above definitions, social competency is an individual's ability to use cognitive (knowledge) and non-cognitive (attitude) capabilities and skills which can predict behavioural tendencies through effective ways in relation to the social context, which is measurable through certain specific or standard criteria.

Gifted Students' Social Competency

In general, gifted students are socially more mature than their peers, and more respected by them. They also tend to have a wide social network. In addition, they have a deeper understanding of certain topics than their peers (Clikeman, 2007).However, as analytical thinkers, gifted students tend to think critically about themselves and view things in complicated ways. Their contrasting intellectual complexity might cause social tension between them and their peers (Silverman, 1993). Terman (1925) found that at school, gifted students demonstrated optimal achievement. However, when they grew up, they were not necessarily more successful than other students. Therefore, being gifted does not guarantee success and quality of life (Clikeman, 2007).

Dabrowsky termed   excessive energy as psychomotor over excitability, actualised through actions. The term over excitability indicates the general personal energy of an individual who tends to investigate (Jackson, 2009). Roedell (1984) noted that gifted students had a characteristic of susceptible and difficult development in certain areas, including uncommon development, being a perfectionist, high sensitivity, high sense of self, high expectation, feeling isolated, inability to adjust to the surrounding environment and role conflict. Their desire to see something accurately and their precise way of thinking and expressing themselves can make gifted students argumentative with an increased tendency to experience social conflicts (Swords, 2001).

In fact, their creativity is often considered to be an opposing force (Ackerman, 1997). An individual's ability to participate in society is apparent in the social competency he or she demonstrates. Social competencies involve behaviours that are affected by abilities to understand other individuals' feelings, provide appropriate responses and understand consequences. (Berns, 2004).

In the present study, gifted students' social competency is defined as students' capability to use cognitive (knowledge) and non-cognitive (attitude) competencies and skills which can predict behavioural tendencies in various situations and tasks and could be measured using certain specific or standard criteria in students with above average intellectual capability, high ability to absorb information, and high analysis and synthesis ability.

Indicators of Gifted Students' Social Competency

Social competency (Clikeman, 2007) is demonstrated by awareness of emotional condition and motivation, the ability to understand other people's emotions through non-verbal signs, the ability to use the language of emotion, empathy, understanding that internal and external expressions may not occur simultaneously, ability to cope with emotional distress,

understanding that a good relationship will not develop without the ability to communicate one's emotional state and the ability to express emotion appropriately.

Social competency is displayed in a three-tiered model, which includes social adjustment, social performance and social competency (Cavell, et. al., 2003; Schulte and Barrera, 2010). This is shown in students' way of interacting and their ability to choose an effective style of interaction in their social life. Social competency is demonstrated in students' ability to choose appropriate responses towards social situations (Cavell, et. al., 2003).Social competency is also demonstrated by problem solving ability and effective communication (Kazemi, et. al. 2010).Ten Dam and Volman (2007) illustrated dimensions of social competency as attitude, knowledge, reflection, and skills regarding one's self (intrapersonal),other people (interpersonal), and society in general (social).Social competency also includes basic skills and knowledge required for future performances and personal development and growth in all cycles of life (Weissberg and Elias, 1993).

Consequently, it was concluded that indicators of social competency included:

a. Competency to understand one's emotions
b. Competency to understand others' emotions
c. Competency to manage one's emotions
d. Empathy
e. Social performance
f. Social skills

Research Method

Operational Definition of Gifted Students' Social Competency

The operational definition of *Gifted Students' Social Competency* is students' capacity to use cognitive (knowledge) and non-cognitive (attitude) competencies and skills which can predict behavioural tendency in various situations which can be measured using certain specific or standard criteria in students with above average intellectual capability, advanced ability to absorb information, and advanced analysis and synthesis ability.

The *Gifted Students' Social Competency* Scale was developed based on its constructs, which included: (a) competency to understand one's emotions, (b) competency to understand others' emotions, (c) competency to manage one's emotions, (d) empathy, (e) social performance and (f) social skills.

Research Subject

The study sample was taken using a non-probability sampling technique which is a selective method (Cohen, 2007). The sample was selected using purposive sampling, in which the subjects were selected based on certain criteria (Cohen, 2007).

The aim of this study was to develop a Gifted Students' Social Competency Scale that would be empirically tested. Since the present study examined gifted students' social competency, the subjects needed to include gifted students.

In this study, 105 gifted students formed the study subject. Gifted students were indicated by the following criteria:

a. Junior High School Students
b. Quantitatively above average intellectual capacity was defined by an IQ score of 120 and above, high ability to absorb information, and high analysis and synthesis ability.
c. Junior high school students with similar background in terms of the school they attended, i.e. a school that utilised individual assessment data to categorise students' ability.

Research Instruments

Data collection as a variable measurement technique in this study undertaken using a scale, which measured Gifted Students' Social Competency Scale. In the present study, qualitative evaluation was completed in advance through rationale analysis by five competent experts in an expert judgement process.   The five experts consisted of an instrument expert (psychometric expert), two experts in development psychology and two experts in educational practice. These experts tested the suitability and relevance of items in the scale compared to research variables. The result of expert judgement for the items' quality became a strong basis to test content validity, especially its logical validity (Azwar, 2012; Azwar, 2015).Validity evaluation in expert judgement provided results in terms of meaning, word, and sentence efficiency to ensure that they were unambiguous and easily understood by respondents.

Research Instruments Validity

The method implemented to test the validity of *Gifted Students' Social Competency* Scale was internally consistency through Alpha Cronbach coefficient. The accuracy and precision of the measurement result were apparent in the score of >0.3 (Azwar, 2012; Azwar 2015; Cohen, et. al., 2007).Furthermore, construct validity test and factor analysis of *Gifted Students' Social Competency* Scale were conducted using Confirmatory Factor Analysis

(CFA) test, which was performed by modelling the correlation between the latent and manifested variables in congeneric way, in which a manifested variable only measures a latent variable (Wijanto, 2008). Another term for this, as proposed by Hair, et. al. (2010: 689), was discriminant validity. It was utilised to ensure that one construct was different from another in a model. In the present study, an index of suitability with standard value was developed to evaluate the model's suitability in a CFA test (Wijanto, 2008).

In addition, to find construct reliability (CR) and variance extracted (VE) scores of CR ≥0.7 and VE ≥0.5 (Wijanto, 2008: 189), the following equation was used:

$$CR = \frac{(\sum SLF)^2}{(\sum SLF)^2+(\sum e)} \qquad VE = \frac{\sum SLF^2}{\sum SLF^2+(\sum e)}$$

Note:

CR (Construct Reliability) : Consistency of measurement

VE (Variance Extracted) : Number of total variants in manifested variable that could be explained by the latent variable.

$\sum SLF$: Total loading factor standard of each item

$\sum e$: Total error of each item

(Hair, et. al., 2010: 710; Wijanto, 2008: 147)

Findings and Discussion

The items in *Gifted Students' Social Competency* Scale consisted of 50 statements. The preliminary test was administered to 106 respondents of gifted students, consisting of 58 (55/2%) male and 47 (44.8%) female students.

In completing the *Gifted Students' Social Competency* Scale, subjects were asked to grade how much each statement described them, using the Likert scale of 1-4 scores (Very Unsuitable to Very Suitable). Based on the preliminary test, a mean score of 103.95 and standard of deviation of 11.50, and alpha-Cronbach reliability score of α=0.886 were found. Consequently, 88.6% of variants were of true score variants and 11.4% were error variants from content sampling and content heterogeneity errors. In other words, items in the *Gifted Students' Social Competency* Scale resulting from the preliminary test could measure the same construct. Items with a correlation score, corrected item total of under 0.3 were eliminated as they were considered unsuitable items. After eliminating 14 unsuitable items, the researcher selected suitable items with the best correlation score (above 0.3), resulting in a *Gifted Students' Social Competency* Scale ready for field-testing, which consisted of 36 items with Alpha-Cronbach coefficient of α=0.886.

Estimation of Model Fit SEM – Structural Equation Model Analysis with Path Diagram Construct
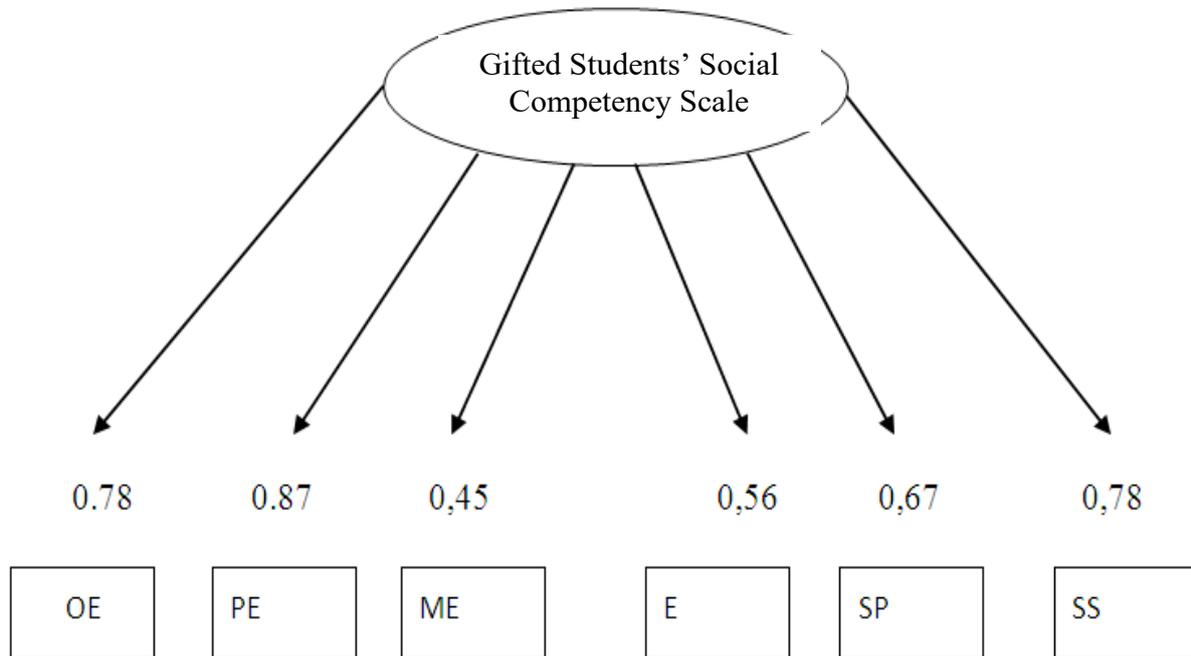
Note
OE   : Competency to Understand One's Emotions
PE   : Competency to Understand Other People's
            Emotions
ME   : Competency to Manage One's Emotions
E   : Empathy
SP   : Social Performance
SS   : Social Skills

Evaluation of Outer Model

Validity test using Smart PLS software indicated an individual reflective measure, which was considered valid if its loading (λ) score together with the measured latent variable was ≥ 0.5. If an indicator had a loading (λ) score of <0.5, the indicator would be dropped as the score indicated that the indicator was not adequate to accurately measure the latent variable.

The output of path-diagram structural equation model using Smart PLS software showed that the ability to understand one's emotions (0.78), to understand other people's emotions (0.87), empathy (0.45), social performance (0.56), and social competency (0.78) had a loading (λ) score with Gifted Students' Social Competency of ≥ 0.5.   This indicated that the five indicators were effective in accurately measuring Gifted Students' Social Competency. The following table displays the loading (λ) score of each indicator:

Table 1. Loading Score of Indicator Factors

loading (λ) score	Estimate
E1 $\leq$ SS	.780
E2 $\leq$ SP	.670
E3 $\leq$ E	.560
E4 $\leq$ ME1	.450
E5 $\leq$ PE	.870
E6 $\leq$ OE	.780

Note
OE   : Competency to Understand One's Emotions
PE   : Competency to Understand Other People's Emotions
ME   : Competency to Manage One's Emotions
E   : Empathy
SP   : Social Performance
SS   : Social Skills

Reliability of each indicator based on the calculation of CR and VE had the following. result:

Construct	CR	Remark
OE	.76	Acceptable
PE	.68	Acceptable
ME	.66	Acceptable
E	.89	Good
SP	.67	Acceptable
SS	.87	Good

Note

OE   : Competency to Understand One's Emotions
PE   :Competency to Understand Other People's Emotions
ME   : Competency to Manage One's Emotions
E   : Empathy
SP   : Social Performance
SS   : Social Skills

Based on the statistical calculation, all constructs in this study were reliable to be used due on each indicator, there was no construct reliability with a score under 0.60. The study constructs can be seen in the following table.

Table 2: Table of Indicators and Items in
Gifted Students' Social Competency **Scale**

Indicators	Items
1. Competency to Understand One's Emotions	1. I am able to adjust my emotions in various situations. 2. I turn my melancholy to useful things or activities. 3. I am irritated by inputs and suggestions from my peers, even though they are constructive suggestions. 4. I am able to control my burst of joy, and cherish the feelings of friends around me. 5. I am moved when I hear a friend receives the best result in a competition. 6. My friends know when I want to be left alone from my facial expression.
2. Competency to Understand Others' Emotions	7. I attempt to calm a friend who is feeling down because he or she failed in a competition. 8. I shout in joy when I receive a good score, indifferent to the feelings of my friends who have to do a remedial exam. 9. I ignore my friend who is upset because he or she has to do a remedial exam. 10. What my friends are going through has nothing to do with me. 11. I am grateful that I am the only one who passed a subject. 12. I am not affected by my friends' conditions. 13. I ignore a friend who is telling me his or her problems. 14. Even though he or she appears to be happy, I know my friend is actually sad. 15. I can feel what my friend is feeling.

3. Competency to Manage One's Emotions	16. To express joy with my success, I just smile. 17. I can make a speech calmly and fluently in front of the class. 18. I want to curse a friend who mocks me. 19. I curse when something doesn't happen the way I want it to. 20. I accept criticisms from my friends. 21. I consider difficult tasks from school as challenges. 22. I only need to take a walk to unwind 23. I am confident that I can handle my problems. 24. I try to get rid of my anger by doing useful activities.
4. Empathy	25. I am sad when my friend fails in a competition. 26. I am proud when my friend wins in a competition. 27. I am not aware of my friends' suffering.. 28. I am confused when I see a friend cry.
5. Social Performance	29. Teachers are examples for me. 30. I can build good relationship. 31. I can lead a discussion during a lesson.
6. Social Skills	32. I don't care when a friend needs my help. 33. I listen when my friend is talking. 34. I ask for the teacher's permission when I am called to the school administration office. 35. I pretend to be busy when a teacher passes by. 36. I sneak away before I come face to face with a teacher.

Conclusion

The Gifted Students' Social Competency Scale developed in this study had an adequate psychometric standard. Based on the findings, it is clear that the Scale has sufficient validity and sound internal consistency.

The *Competency* Scale's items developed by the researcher also measured a construct consistently and were valid enough to measure the construct of *Gifted Students' Social Competency* through six indicators including competency to understand one's emotions, competency to understand others' emotions, competency to manage one's emotions, empathy, social performance and social skills.

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