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## ***Personality Traits as Predictors of the Academic Achievement of Gifted Students***

### **Extended summary**

Though gifted students' school achievement is an area of empirical exploration, the review of relevant literature shows that this problem area has not been sufficiently explored in terms of at least two aspects. First, given that the awareness of the optimal models for predicting gifted children's school achievement amounts to rather generalised recommendations about the necessity of combining cognitive and non-cognitive factors, the issue of a more precise description of optimal prediction models, especially its personal segment, still remains unresolved. Second, it has been observed that the contemporary research of the gifted children's achievement is primarily oriented towards identifying the universal elements of this variable, which means that their specificities related to the domain of manifesting giftedness are neglected. For this reason, the paper focuses on providing a better and more detailed insight into the gifted children's school achievement in the two neglected aspects.

The aim of the paper is to look at the percentage of variance in the school achievement of these children that can be explained by the predictive model of individual personal characteristics, and to determine the constellation of the analysed variables which are best at predicting the school achievement of the children gifted in different domains. In specifying the personal characteristics the selection came down to the basic dimensions of personality – “the Big Five” (neuroticism, extraversion, openness, cooperation, conscientiousness), a tendency towards originality and creativity, the motive of achievement (competing with others, perseverance in achieving goals, orientation towards planning), moral properties (integrity, responsibility, compassion, forgiveness) and emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-control, social awareness, managing relationships). When it comes to school achievement, its operation-

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alisation was carried out using two types of indicators: an average grade and participation and awards obtained at competitions. The research was conducted on a sample of 473 respondents (123 gifted for mathematics, 152 gifted for sports, 102 gifted for music, and 96 gifted for arts) attending specialised schools for gifted students from Novi Sad, Belgrade, and Kraljevo. The following instruments were used: “The Big Five” inventory, the pre-conscious activity scale, MOP 2002, moral competence inventory, and emotional competence inventory.

Despite the fact that the obtained results indicate that the analysed personality characteristics explain only about 7% of the variance of the gifted children’s school achievement, the authors of the paper conclude that the contribution of these dimensions is significant because it confirms that gifted children’s achievement is not solely related to their abilities and suggests that the academic success of these students cannot be fully described without considering the non-cognitive aspects of personality. Based on the research results, the achievement of the gifted students in school can be predicted on the basis of the traits linked to a sort of resilience to internal and external activity distractors, the traits also linked to readiness and a tendency to act in line with the rules set in advance. Our conclusion is that the excellence in the academic achievement of gifted students who possess a strong integrity, a low level of social awareness, self-control, and neuroticism, as well as a high level of openness can be predicted with a reasonable amount of certainty. The findings indicate that different personality variables predict school achievement in different domains of giftedness. Accordingly, competing with oneself plays a key role in predicting the achievement of musically gifted children; school achievement in the domain of arts is mostly determined by a low capacity to control oneself and one’s own emotions. The school achievement of the students gifted for sports did not show any significant correlation with the analysed traits, whereas the traits such as responsibility and conscientiousness are the best predictors of the school success of the students gifted for mathematics. These results provide an opportunity for further research in the domain of the non-intellectual sphere of the gifted and indicate some new dimensions that should be taken into account when teaching this type of students.

**Keywords:** basic personality dimensions, originality/creativity, motive of achievement, moral properties, emotional intelligence

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