

**THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY TRAITS AND
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT ON EMOTIONAL
INTELLIGENCE OF RESIDENTIAL SECONDARY
SCHOOL IN MALAYSIA**

BY

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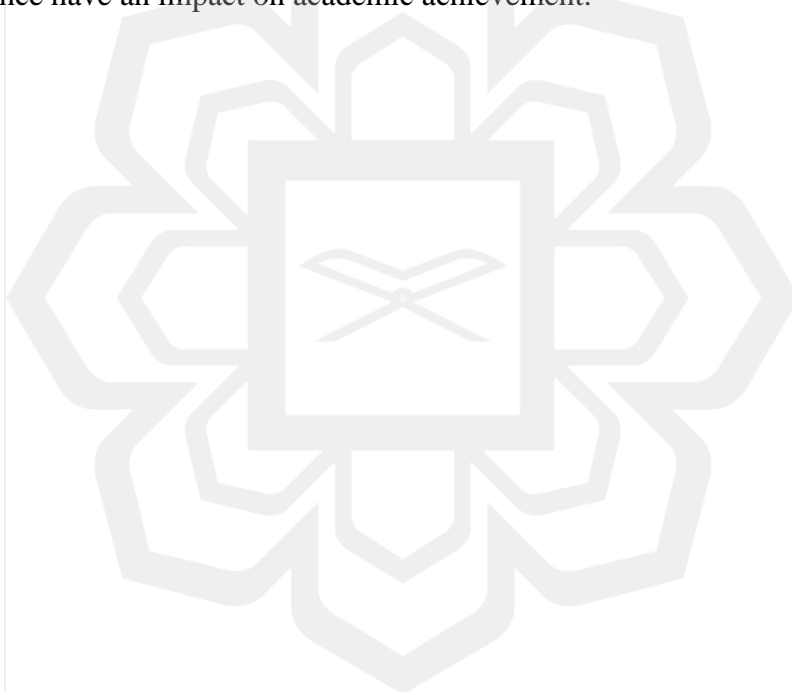
**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the
degree of Master of Education**

**Kulliyyah of Education
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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the relationships between personality traits, emotional intelligence and academic achievements among 127 students in a Residential Secondary School in Malaysia. Eysenck Personality Questionnaire – Revised (EPQ-R) was used to measure the three dimensions of personality traits – extraversion, neuroticism, psychoticism; Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) was used to measure emotional intelligence and students' academic achievement was measured by Grade Point Average (GPA) from their Trial Examination. Bivariate analysis using Pearson Correlation method indicated that extraversion ($r=.497$, $p<.05$) were positively and significantly correlated with academic achievement. Neuroticism ($r= -.61$, $p>.05$) and psychoticism ($r= -.61$, $p>.05$) was found negatively and significantly associated with academic achievement. Future researches are recommended to employ Structural Equation Modelling analysis to determine how both personality traits and emotional intelligence have an impact on academic achievement.



خلاصة البحث

تبحث هذه الدراسة عن العلاقات بين السمات الشخصية، والذكاء العاطفي، والتحصيل الدراسي لدى 127 طالبًا في المدرسة الثانوية مظفر شاه للعلوم ولاية ملقا. استخدمت الباحثة استبيان شخصية Eysenck المنقح (EPQ-R) لقياس الأبعاد الثلاثة للسمات الشخصية - الانبساطية، والعصابية، والذهانية؛ بينما تم استخدام مقياس الذكاء العاطفي (EIS) لقياس الذكاء العاطفي أما التحصيل الأكاديمي للطلاب تم القياس عليه خلال حساب المعدل التراكمي للامتحان التجريبي. أشار تحليل الثنائي المتغير باستخدام معامل بيرسون للارتباط إلى أن الانبساط ($r=.497, p<.05$) وجد مرتبطًا إيجابيًا ومعنويًا بالتحصيل الدراسي. وأشارت العصابية ($r=-.61, p>.05$) والذهانية ($r=-.61, p>.05$) ارتباطًا سلبيًا ومعنويًا بالتحصيل الدراسي. توصى هذه الدراسة بالبحوث المستقبلية لتوظيف تحليل نمذجة المعادلة الهيكلية لتحديد تأثير كل من السمات الشخصية والذكاء العاطفي على التحصيل الدراسي.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Education.

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DECLARATION

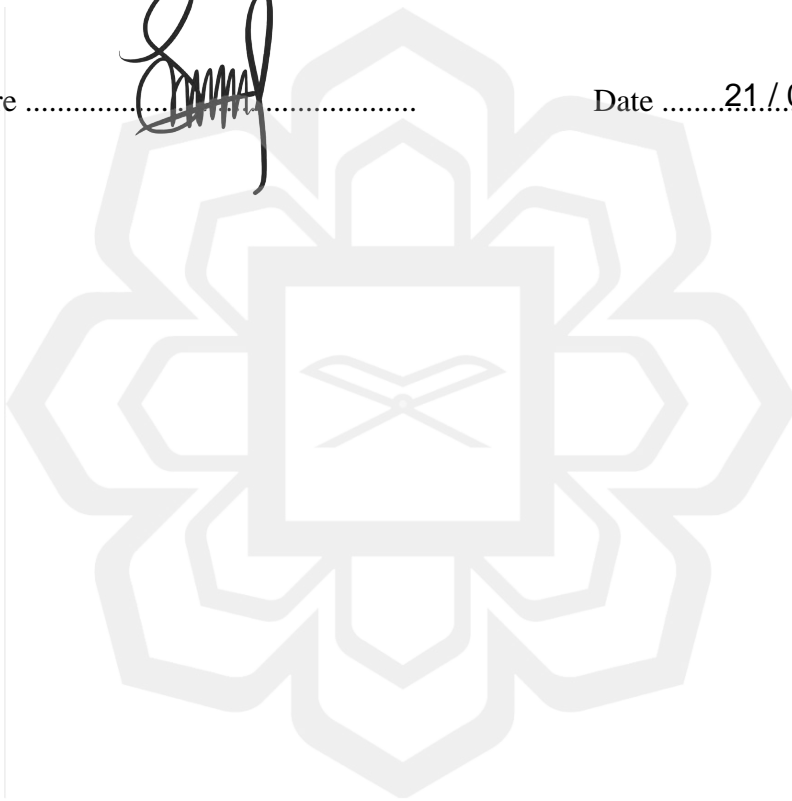
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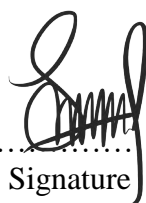
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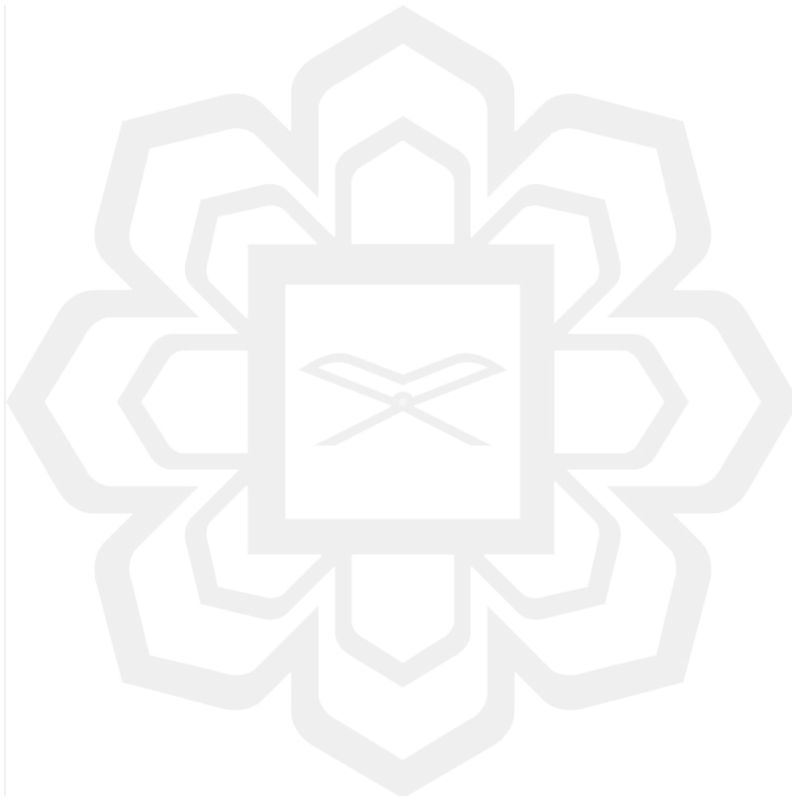
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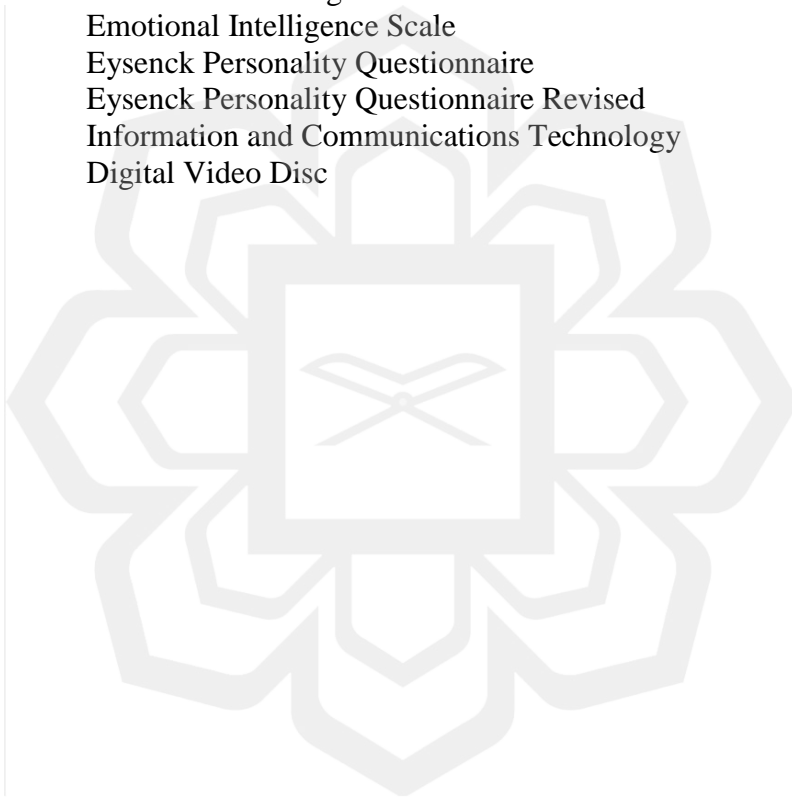
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

RSS	Residential Secondary School
UPSR	Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah (Primary School Achievement Test)
SPM	Sijil Peperiksaan Malaysia (Malaysian Certificate of Education)
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
EQ	Emotional Quotient
PEN	Psychoticism, Extraversion, Neuroticism
NEP	National Education Policy
GPA	Grade Point Average
EIS	Emotional Intelligence Scale
EPQ	Eysenck Personality Questionnaire
EPQR	Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
DVD	Digital Video Disc



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Apparently, academic achievement is a crucial issue among students, teachers, parents, school administrators, and the community at large and it is a never-ending issue in most of the schools or any leaning institution. To obtain a very good grade in school is a dream of every student. School teachers and parents always have been concerned about children's academic success and emotional adaptation both in and out of the classroom. Efforts have been made by researchers to explore the entanglement and complexities pertaining academic achievement. Psychologists and school counselors have put forward a lot of possibility why these incongruity in achievement exist. Plenty of attentions have been paid to external factors such as type of school, teaching procedures or pedagogies, school location, instructional materials, teachers experience and qualification, and so on. Numerous psychologists have constantly attempted to identify the major predictors of individual academic achievement. Predictors such as intelligence, gender, study style, maturation, home background, socioeconomic status amongst others, just to mention a few, have been extensively explored as being responsible for academic achievement, especially among secondary school students.

Normally, the prediction of success or failure in learning institution is quite often based on cognitive abilities. However, recent research has revealed that the cognitive ability is not the only predictor of performance rather affective development of noncognitive is an equally important predictor of success. Goleman (1998) has explained that the old standard of judgement, that is intellectual quotient, has been

substituted by the new standard that judges how well we handle ourselves and how well we handle others. The main rules of life focus on personal qualities such as empathy, initiative, adaptability and persuasiveness. An alternative way of taking noncognitive variables into account is to use personality traits or emotional intelligence to predict performance, either alone or in cooperatively with cognitive abilities.

To sustain healthy mind is a crucial aspect in life especially to a student since high school students in their young adolescents often experience an undue amount of stress, which can lead to adverse consequences on academic achievement, emotional wellbeing, physical and mental health (Marshal et al., 2008) which result in their quality of life. Moreover, based on the research conducted on high school students, the top stressors were related to academic requirements such as test and examinations (Yusoff et al., 2011).

In any learning sector, issues pertaining students becomes the most topics for educators to hear those in education talking about helping students to develop their personality and emotional intelligence. The question is, how to help them effectively and how should teachers support wide-ranging development in their students?

Emotional intelligence can be said to cover four main areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. Apparently, these area in emotional intelligence are important to upgrade good communication with others and is therefore a gateway to better learning, friendships, academic success and employment. Such skills that developed in students' valuable years at school potentially provide the foundation for future habits later on in life.

The term emotional intelligence was familiarized in the mid-90s by journalist Daniel Goleman's book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*.

The book's asserts that emotional intelligence is more important than intelligence quotient is a starting point of debate among psychologists, but it does look as if emotional intelligence could be a factor or influence that contribute in academic achievement.

A notable study discovered high intellectual quotient students from childhood to late adulthood and found that those who achieved outstanding and remarkable adult career success showed greater “will power, resilience, perseverance and desire to excel”. Meanwhile, result from the seminal marshmallow conducted by Goleman (1995) test which gave children the option to have more treats if they could wait before eating them suggested delayed gratification and self-control are important, with these characteristics being linked to better school grades, incomes or finances and job fulfilment in the future.

The role of a school is to make each student reach their maximum academic potential by offering the required strive. High Performance schools including boarding schools in Malaysia always persevering towards making students solution-seekers and expert problem solvers. They generate skills that come handy in every walk of life, be it personal or professional. Such skills encourage the teachers and students to keep trying even after failing the latest science test. The academic success of a student depends on various factors including the skills mentioned above. Now the boarding school students starts which is 13-17 years. For most of the young adolescents it is an exciting time of positive growth and development. In this period young adolescents pass through cognitive changes, as well as changes in the social surroundings where they daily live.

Viewpoint fluctuate as to why some students excel academically while others appear to be underachievers in most examination. Many psychologists have regularly

attempted to point out the major predictors of individual academic achievement. Factors such as intelligence, self-concept, gender, study style, maturation, home background, amongst others, just to mention a few, have been broadly explored as being accountable for academic achievement, especially in secondary school students. Other factors that have been researched into in previous study include: child nurturing patterns, peer group influence, socio-economic background and learning environment. Another major factor that is believed to having a proven capacity for academic achievement in students is their personality traits. Traits Theorists have tried to discover the major traits that distinguish personality. Leading light among these are Sigmund Freud in the early 1900's, Gordon All port (1961), Cattell (1967), Hans Eysenck (1985) Feldman (1994), McCrae and Costa (1987) and a host of others.

Schooling plays a significant role in the development of personality, be it on daily school or boarding school. It is a time of declining motivation and mental health among students and there is a necessity of the involvement of schools to organized necessary programs. Apparently, the school is the finest place to having the required qualities in order to help students with self-grooming and to identify their hidden abilities and skills. The student who encounters with challenging tasks in academics confidently, will result in confident personality later in life.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Become conscious of one's emotional intelligence is a crucial step in understanding how to manage one's behaviour in the world where there are full of pressure and demands. As far as boarding school students are concerned how to control their behaviour in relation to environment changes can pursue them to be positive future leader and can accomplish their academic achievement better.

To date, few studies have been reported on emotional intelligence associated to psychological health among high school students or young adolescents specifically during stressful periods (Romanelli, Cain & Smith, 2006) in other countries. However, no study was conducted to see this relationship among high school students especially boarding school in Malaysia.

Emotional intelligence may be delineated as ability to acknowledge, express, control, and regulate emotion as cited by Yusoff et al., (2013) from the book 'Emotional Intelligence' (1995) popularized by Goleman (Saiful Bahri (2013); Emotionally intelligent people emphatically are conscious, competent to manage their emotions well from overwhelming stress, depression, anxiety, or anger and detain their enjoyment and gratification in pursuit of semi-permanent benefits, instead of being overhauled by immediate needs and desires (Yusoff et al., 2011). They will face changes of the surroundings while not harming their daily life.

Additionally, Eysenck's personality theory is regarded a real paradigm and also the most solid theory that psychology or any scientific discipline has offered. The idea best explains why each person has their own personality. The idea states that there are three major traits within the human being known as extraversion, psychoticism, and neuroticism. People that score high on neuroticism are characterized by negative emotions and feel easily overwhelmed by nerve-racking experiences whereas open people may facilitate adjustment to novel situations and thus stimulate cognitive, emotional, and physical well-being (Lockenhoff, 2011).

Over the last decades, the sphere of Educational Psychology has provided proof suggesting that personality traits are related with academic achievement (Poropat, 2009). Study by Ebrahimi (2013) reported a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement. Van, Thijs and Schakel

(2002) rumored that personality variations can form emotional intelligence, and there was a significant association between emotional intelligence and personality traits.

Previous researchers who had dispensed studies on the connection between personality traits and emotional intelligence found sturdy link existed between personality traits and emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence was found to be negatively related to neuroticism. Extraversion was found to own the highest significant correlation with emotional intelligence compared to the opposite dimensions of personality traits.

Meanwhile, several past studies had conjointly established significant and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement. However, some newer studies found positive but insignificant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievements of high school students.

As noted earlier, emotional intelligence and personality traits are all relate to every different and necessary factor throughout young adolescent development specifically in academic achievement. However, it is uncertain if school type would build a distinction among these variables, since day schools and boarding schools offer totally different learning and socializing environments for students (Xi, 2011). Day schools focus on providing regular academic instruction to students, and, because the name implies, students usually go to school throughout the day and return home at the end of the school day. Even though day schools represent the main form of schooling, boarding schools are also getting down to become a well-established sector of schooling type around the world (Martin et al., 2015).

In summary, a range of affirmation has perpetually supported the favourable relationships between emotional intelligence and personality with varied areas of

individual performance, that embody job performance, psychological well-being, academic success, career success and positive personal qualities.

According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (2005), boarding schools provide a novel socialization experience and setting for students. Students use most of their time within the same developmental process and that they have a lot of opportunities to form personal relationships with teachers, school staff, and peers. This type of reciprocity is also more regular, stable, and secured (Martin et al., 2014).

In addition, boarding school students have additional rules and tight scheduling to follow. Their level of school activity involvement is higher than day school students, and they tend to form additional of a collective identity (Martin et al., 2014).

In Malaysia, there are 69 fully residential schools across the country. Starting 2017, Residential Secondary School or well-known as Sekolah Berasrama Penuh (SBP) has introduced a new entrance examination based on individual aptitude, aside from academic strength in Primary School Achievement Test (UPSR) results as to appoint the only qualified students. The Residential Secondary Schools' entrance examination which is held at the end of the year will determine whether the applicants fulfill the criteria for entry into the 69 Residential Secondary Schools' nationwide. The exam, comprising five constructs, will test the applicants' intellect and adaptability. Fully Residential and Excellent Schools Management Division Director, Aidie Jantan (2019) stated that there are several important criteria to be fulfilled by the candidates of boarding school students, as evidenced in the following excerpt;

“These constructs will be the indicators whether a student of 12-year-old is independent enough to live in a boarding school community, how he reacts to shared space, and how he interacts with those around him and others. The exam is in line with the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013- 2025), which aims to produce students who are knowledgeable, ethical, spiritual and have leadership skills.”

In addition, Goleman (1995) delineated genetic philosophical theory of intelligence as a mere view. However, at its end he acknowledged that it is an incontrovertible fact, and he used that fact to argue that education ought to concentrate on developing emotional intelligence. In the New York Times, 1986, Goleman wrote a piece of writing, that was written on the front page of the Science Section (Section C) with the title “Major Personality Study Finds That Traits are Mostly Inherited.” Its first words were,

“The genetic makeup of a child is a stronger influence on personality than child rearing.”

Goleman was reporting in depth study by Thomas Bouchard Jr. and his team at the University of American State, which found that identical twins who are raised from infancy by totally different families in different social settings develop a similar personality and the same emotional strengths and weaknesses.

The fact that personality traits are genetically decisive and establish has profound importance for the role and nature of education. Nobody is born with a knowledge of history, science, literature, arithmetic, or other any educational subject. Cognitive intelligence, as measured by intellectual quotient, is, as Goleman discovered within the passage quoted above, “intellectual potential” to learn these subjects. Nearly all student can learn them to a rudimentary level; some can learn them to an advanced level. However, genetic inheritance regulates the personality

traits that students develop, not simply their potential to develop them, which puts narrow limits on the degree to which education can make changes to them.

Emotional intelligence has been shown to elevate academic outcomes, reduce negative behavior and promote higher psychological state among students. There are no studies have explored the doable associations between personality traits and academic achievement poignant their emotional intelligence. This analysis can assist in understanding the impact of emotional intelligence on boarding school students, and suggesting ways in which to ameliorate connectedness within a boarding school context.

By exploring personality traits as a variable when learning the factors that contribute the emotional intelligence of student specifically in boarding school, this thesis can raise to the limited literature specifically addressing the problem of impact of academic achievement on emotional intelligence within the boarding school context. Additionally, this study seeks to find if parents and teachers witness the impact on their children's development either socially or virtuously as a result of them attending boarding school.

1.3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Secondary school can be regarded as a stressful environment to students, particularly boarding school. Each boarding school has different sets of criteria for student selection. However, in most top boarding schools, excellent academic achievement is usually required for student admission and also becomes the prime objective of the school. Multiple factors may lead to stress for students staying in boarding schools, including feeling of homesickness (Fisher et al., 1986; Thurber and Walton, 2007), academic pressure and lack of parental support. Stress significantly contributes to the

development of mental health issues. It was estimated that approximately 20% of children around the world have mental health problems (World Health Organization, 2003) and several studies have shown increase in the prevalence of depression, anxiety and stress over the years (Center for Epidemiology and Research, NSW, 2004; Newman et al., 1998). Anxiety is also one of the most common disorders noted in school children and adolescents (Costello et al., 2003). If undetected, it may cause negative outcomes in social and emotional aspects of the adolescent and academic performance (Essau et al., 2000). This problem is anticipated more in the secondary school years, as this is the time when the adolescents have to sit important exams that will determine their future undertakings. The academic burden added to the high expectations of parents may worsen the problem. Anxiety disorders may run a chronic course if untreated (Yonkers et al., 2003) and increase the risk of psychiatric disorders in adults (Pine et al., 1998).

Keeping the above facts in mind, the present study was planned to determine the psychological needs among students in a selected boarding school by focusing on their personality and emotional intelligence. Researcher presume that the outcome of the study may help the school in handling these symptoms among the students and serve as a model for the future.

From the review of literature, it is found that very few investigations were conducted on boarding school students using all these three variables of personality traits, emotional intelligence and academic achievement. Moreover, most of the previous researches were conducted on university students, workers and teachers rather than on secondary students especially in boarding schools.

Although boarding school has been a prominent feature of Malaysian education systems for decades, surprisingly only few quantitative data have been

collected to examine its links to student personality traits and academic achievement with regards to their emotional intelligence or alternative psychological well-being outcomes.

Furthermore, the programs in boarding school are exclusively academic, and specialized in the curriculum. Boarding school's students in Malaysia, on average, devote more time to academic programs, homework, and academic exercises. Students, for example, are expected to attend preparation classes and tuition, particularly in mathematics and science subjects. As a result, this type of school consistently achieves high academic performance. However, issues of underachievement have assumed a worrisome dimension in the Malaysian educational system. Desirous to achieve the best result in examination make it anyhow, students have devised numerous unlawful and dirty means to succeed in examinations, even when they do not seem to be academically competent. And sadly, the system has hooked under the pressure. Examination malpractice defined as any deliberate act of wrong doing, contrary to the rules of examinations designed to give a candidate an undue advantage has appeared to become an apparently dangerous virus and, in some cases, it might be harmful towards some students. It is progressively turning into difficult to equate and identify the real competence of people with supposed academic performance as represented in their official certificates. Many candidates are unable to defend the result they supposedly acquired honorably in accordance with accepted standards of conduct. And in fact, this has consistently cause to inability to compete effectively with integrity in the job market which has become a serious issue which results in unemployment and problematic workplace. Several factors have been researched into in the past as to the cause of this social distress, but there appear to be indications that some hidden factors are also

accountable which needs unraveling. The need to curb this problem, gave rise to the current study and therefore the researchers' aim is to envision if there is some way in which the big three personality traits and emotional intelligence can facilitate, particularly from the perspective of the analytical and scientific approach of measurement and analysis that may support any efforts to curb this social distress.

Baumeister (1994) has concluded that many problems students face in the world today mainly arise from character failure contributing to their low achievement in schools. This shows that, much research work still needed to be conducted on character, particularly, on the issue of temperance as a strong strength in the field of positive psychology.

More often than not, there are news reports of acts of a multitude of anti-social behaviors showing up in schools around the world. The question arises that: does this behavior have anything to do with the apparent lack of character or personality and its positive effect on engagement and academic success by many students in school or not?

In an attempt to change the scenario, this study proposes that personality and emotional intelligence could be the key element to the situation. The study suggests that if students are well equipped with good character, it will help them with their academic engagement as well as with their psychological well-being.

This study does so by investigating the extent academic achievement in boarding status predicts psychological well-being of the students, controlling for sociodemographic, academic achievement, personality traits, and emotional intelligence and teachers' perception on students' psychological well-being. In additional analyses with a pilot study, the study investigates gains or declines in personality traits and emotional intelligence across the batch/year of boarding