





MONASH University

Views of Giftedness: The Perceptions of Teachers and  
Parents Regarding the Traits of Gifted Children in Saudi  
Arabia

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis aims to investigate the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the characteristics of gifted children in primary public schools in Saudi Arabia. To achieve these aims, three separate studies were conducted.

The first study aims to elicit information and knowledge regarding the perceptions of giftedness held by the Saudis in order to gain a general understanding of participants' perceptions about giftedness within Saudi socio-political and religious context and to specific traits that participants considered are necessary for being a gifted child in Saudi Arabia. A series of focus groups were conducted with four groups of participants including experts in the field of giftedness, male teachers of gifted children, female teachers of gifted children, mothers of gifted children, together with one individual interview with a father of a gifted child. Based on the information received in the interviews, a list of characteristics of giftedness was comprised which was later used to develop the scale. It was also found that some traits that are commonly associated with gifted children were considered not important in gifted children (e.g., musical and artistic abilities). In Study 2, all extracted traits from Study 1 were incorporated into a draft semantic differential scale which was then administered as a pilot to teachers of gifted/non-gifted children and parents of gifted/non-gifted children at selected schools. A total of 148 participants responded in this pilot study. The results of reliability analysis suggested that the scale had adequate reliability for Saudi Arabian sample. Factor analysis suggested that the scale consisted of four factors: identified four factors here labeled: Factor One "cognitive traits of gifted children"; Factor Two "personal traits of gifted children"; Factor Three "social and leadership traits of gifted children"; Factor Four "traits perceived within religious and cultural context".

In Study 3, the revised scale was used to gather information about participants' perceptions about giftedness. A total of 542 participants

responded. The group consisted of 249 teachers of gifted and non-gifted children, and 293 parents of gifted and non-gifted children. In addition to this, 12 teachers of gifted/non-gifted and parents of gifted/non gifted were interviewed. The findings of the study revealed that the participants perceived most traits of cognitive, personal, social and leadership from a perspective similar to that found in the literature. In addition, the results showed that most participants, for religious and cultural reasons, did not appreciate traits such as talkativeness, persistence, rejecting rules, performing music, drawing animate objects. The impact of religious factor was also found when discussing leadership. It was found that most male participants perceived leadership only in males, while female participants perceived it in both genders.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated with all my love to the soul of my father, Mateesh Alamer, and my mother, Salma Alamer, for all of her love, patience and encouragement throughout the years.

This study is also dedicated to my loving wife, Monirah Alamer and to my four lovely children, Fatmah, Manar, Amer and Judi, for their devotion and support of my accomplishment.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH**

“We often hear that gifted children are a national resource that needs to be cultivated, and that they represent the best hope for the nation’s future” (Siegle, 2008, p. 3). This notion has been acknowledged early in the West. For example, according to the National Association for Gifted Children [NAGC] (2009), approximately three million children have been identified as gifted in the United States. Currently, in Saudi Arabia, the interest in caring for gifted children has witnessed a significant development, although the priority of gifted education was mentioned long ago in the educational system. According to the Ministry of Education (1980), the Educational Policy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabian included three principal rules for caring for gifted:

1. “The State gives special care to gifted individuals in order to develop their talents, direct them properly and open opportunities for their talents.
2. Concerned authorities shall determine the means of discovering talents, the special program for educating talented students and privileges given to them for encouragement.
3. Means of scientific research are made available to talented individuals to benefit from their capacities, without forgetting to offer them Islamic guidance” (p. 35).

Later, in 1989, acknowledgment of the importance of gifted education refocused attention towards gifted students. Al-Wezrah (2005) summarized the development of gifted education in Saudi Arabia. He classified this development under four steps:

Step One (1989-1995): The Ministry of Education and the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology worked together to establish a national project for gifted education. This project aimed to define and identify gifted children in order to meet their needs and challenges. The contribution of this cooperation resulted in psychometric instruments for testing intelligence and creativity.

Step Two (1996): The National Program for the Identification and Education of the Gifted was established on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> January, 1997. The team of the national project was asked to use a design scale in order to identify gifted children in public schools.

Step Three (2000): Due to the necessity of bringing into existence a professional department for gifted children, the General Department for Gifted Children was established according to Ministerial Decree No 58054 on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2000. The general objectives of the General Department for Gifted Children can be summarized as follows:

- promoting loyalty to Islamic law;
- enforcing the educational policy in relation to gifted education;
- preparing an appropriate environment for gifted children which allows them to demonstrate and develop their abilities; and
- training teachers and supervisors to be qualified and capable of recognizing the characteristics of gifted children (the Ministry of Education, 1980).

In addition to these efforts, another institution for gifted children, which is called The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity, was established in 1999. According to the Website of this institution (2009), it aims to attain the following goals:

- to care for gifted and creative individuals ( males/females);
- to support national efforts for generating creative ideas;
- to find talented and creative individuals in technology and science. (the Website of The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity, 2009)

The ultimate goal of the Ministry of Education and The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity is to identify gifted children in order to provide them with all knowledge that can meet their needs. This meant that first it was necessary to define giftedness in Saudi Arabia. AlNafi et al. (2000) conducted a study in order to design a psychometrical instrument to identify

gifted children in Saudi. According to the findings of their study, gifted children were defined as those students who display high academic abilities. This definition paid much attention to children who were high achievers and neglected other areas of giftedness, such as creativity and special talents. Therefore, the Ministry of Education felt that the field needed to be provided with new theories and instruments (AlFahaid, 2002). In order to provide the field with these requirements, the Ministry of Education adapted a number of Western theories and criteria. For example, adapted versions of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-R) and the Torrance test for creativity were included in the identification processes. In addition, the Scales for Rating the Behavioural Characteristics of Superior Students (SRBCSS, Renzulli, 1978) was adapted for use by teachers to nominate students for gifted programs.

The availability of instruments for identification is meaningless, unless they are used by skilled and qualified persons. Thus, the Saudi Ministry of Education designed a program for training and preparing teachers to be qualified to recognize the gifted. At this stage, parents were included in this plan. However, the director of the gifted students unit in the Saudi Ministry of Education pointed out that although parents' nominations of their gifted children is recommended in processes for the nomination of gifted students, they have not yet been involved in the process (M. AlKanhah, personal communication, February 4, 2006).

Many researchers believe that teachers and parents, as the first observers of the development of their children, have useful information regarding the potential of gifted children (Chan, 2000; Davis & Rimm, 2004). It was found that best practice in understanding the potential of gifted children "should be conducted with multiple informants, including teachers and parents" (Huijun, Lee, Pfeiffer, & Petscher, 2008, p.660). The combination of teachers' and parents' views regarding who might be gifted can provide us with several advantages. Huijun, Lee, Pfeiffer and Petscher (2008) stated that teachers can provide good information related to the progress of identified gifted children in class and their achievement test scores. Parents can provide us with a unique perception regarding the behaviours and the abilities of their children, which may not be observable in a school environment. The

perceptions of parents can serve to complement and validate the perceptions of teachers.

### **Statement of the problem**

Since the field of giftedness is still new in Saudi Arabia, most theories and views have been adapted from Western culture. Whether these adapted perspectives would work properly in conservative contexts including Saudi Arabia has recently been the topic of much debate. For example, Sternberg (2007) argued that ignoring culture could result in the misleading identification of gifted children. He maintains that “in assessing giftedness, we must take cultural origins and contexts into account” (p. 160). A number of Saudi researchers have acknowledged that the Saudis are very religious and extremely attached to their culture (AlFahaid, 2002; Al-Asmari, 2008). Burkhart and Goodman (1998), from an outsider perspective, state that, “the Saudi society remains one of the world’s most conservative.” (p. 22). The uniqueness of Saudi culture, which is considered from these insider and outsider perspectives as a religious and conservative culture, may influence the perceptions of teachers and parents toward gifted education and gifted children.

Teachers and parents, as part of society, articulate their perceptions toward gifted children based on the values and beliefs of their culture. The inseparability of religion and culture and their impact upon teachers’ and parents’ perceptions toward gifted children have not been studied, though religion can be considered to act as a crucial influence how individuals construe the meaning of life. For example, Tarakeshwar, Stanton, and Pargament (2003) stated that religion is considered an essential source that provides interpretations and meaning to persons' lives.

The identification of gifted children in Saudi Arabia relies very much on teachers’ nomination of gifted children to gifted programs. Teachers are requested to nominate children who show extraordinary traits in specific areas of giftedness such as creativity, leadership, motivation and learning. However, although teachers have been included in the identification process since the first initiatives in the identification of gifted children in Saudi, no study has been conducted to explore the perceptions of teachers toward the characteristics of gifted children. Whether the

perception of teachers toward giftedness and gifted education is shaped by religious and cultural factors and/or whether they have positive or negative perspectives of the gifted, motivates the current study to explore this area.

Finally, the utility of using Saudi parents' judgments regarding the abilities of their children has not been studied, although seeking parents' perceptions of their gifted children is recommended in the processes for the nomination of gifted students in Saudi Arabia. Parents have been found to have useful information regarding their children and they were considered in some studies to be much better identifiers than teachers (e.g., Ciha, Harris, Hoffman & Potter, 1974; Jacobs, 1971; Louis & Lewis, 1992). The ignorance of parents' opinions in relation to their gifted children raises a question regarding the accuracy of the reliance only on teachers' perceptions toward these children. There is evidence, for example, that the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding social competence are not similar (Fagan & Fantuzzo, 1999). In addition, Galloway and Porath (1997) have pointed out that even though teachers and parents show a level of agreement regarding the characteristics of gifted children, their interpretation of these traits would be different. Given this evidence it would seem that parents deserve to be heard and trusted as a unique resource with useful information regarding their children's abilities (Davis & Rimm, 2004).

### **Aim and contribution**

This study aims to investigate the perception of teachers and parents regarding the characteristics that might be associated with gifted children in Saudi Arabia. The current study uses a scale which is not adapted from another culture to investigate the perceptions of teachers and parents. The main advantage of this scale is that it is designed based on the Saudi context, which may allow the researcher to generalize the findings of this study. The current study contributes to the development of the conceptions of giftedness. It reveals how numerous perceptions of the characteristics of gifted children differ considerably across diverse cultures. Sternberg (2007) alerted the education community to the need to understand these differences, arguing that "in identifying children as gifted, we often use only our own conception,

ignoring the cultural context in which the children grew up. Such identification is inadequate and fails to do justice to the richness of the world's culture" (p. 160).

The diversity of perceptions toward gifted children is not only found between heterogeneous people who have different religions, customs or languages, but it is also found within homogeneous cultures. For example, Busse, Dahme, Wagner and Wiczerkowsk (1986) reported that "Although West Germany and the United States share in many ways a common cultural tradition, there are substantial differences in recognition of, and provision for, highly gifted students in the two countries." (p. 55). So, if people from a similar culture show a degree of discrepancy toward giftedness and perceptions of who might be gifted, it is anticipated that the notions of gifted children from conservative cultural perspectives such as those in Saudi Arabia would be different. Thus, much attention is given to the interplay between religion and culture on one hand and their influence upon the perceptions of Saudi Arabians regarding the gifted on the other. The results of this study can contribute to the world literature new perceptions of giftedness drawn from a conservative culture, and expand understandings of the perception of Saudis toward giftedness and gifted children.

In addition, since this study examines the views of teachers and parents to illustrate their perceptions of gifted children, the scope of the study also covers the use of them to identify gifted children. This includes their accuracy in identifying gifted children and common traits of gifted children as identified by them. As a specialist in the field of giftedness who had a master degree in gifted education and worked in the field for five years, I met a number of teachers and parents and felt that they were not satisfied with the process used to identify gifted students for gifted programs. Some teachers, for example, mentioned that some nominated children for gifted programs were found as normal children. In addition, some parents argued that their child was not chosen for gifted programs, though they believe that their child has exceptional ability which deserves to be supported and developed. Whether this problem is attributed to the risk of Type I error (identifying a child as gifted when he/she is not), or Type II error (not identifying a child when he/she is highly gifted), is beyond the scope of the study. However, talking to teachers and parents, who are

considered as the first observers of their children developments, motivates my interest to explore their views toward the gifted.

The results of the study would provide the Ministry of Education and other responsible institutions for gifted children in Saudi Arabia with a clear understanding of teachers' and parents' perceptions toward gifted children. The involvement of parents in this study allows us to hear and investigate their otherwise silenced knowledge regarding gifted children. This would allow us to understand whether Saudi teachers and parents share a similar perception with others elsewhere or whether they have their own perceptions which may be influenced by the context of Saudi Arabia. Understanding the elements that may shape the perceptions of teachers and parents toward the gifted would assist decision-makers in providing appropriate information to help them to recognize the characteristics of gifted children in Saudi Arabia's public schools and homes. The results of the current study would assist decision-makers to understand the areas of giftedness that are more appreciated based on the perceptions of Saudis and to include these areas in the plans of the Ministry of Education for gifted children's programs.

### **Definition of terms**

To ensure that the aim and the findings of the current study are interpreted as intended, the main terms used in this thesis are defined as follows:

Perceptions: in the Oxford dictionary (2009) the perception is defined as "a way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something".

Buxton(2000) examined the perceptions of teachers toward gifted children. She stated that "Perceptions are formed and applied to everyday situations based on the meaning associated with those perceptions" (p. 46).

In the current study perceptions refer to the understanding and the views of giftedness held by Saudi teachers and parents. These views can be shaped by common perceptions of the characteristics of gifted children found in the literature or by the meaning of the giftedness within the Saudi context.

Teachers of gifted children: The teachers who are qualified for teaching gifted children in Saudi public primary schools.

Teachers of non-gifted children: This refers to teachers who have not attended workshops in gifted education and are not qualified for teaching gifted students in Saudi public primary schools.

Parents of gifted children: These parents have one child or more who is/are identified as gifted and enrolled in Saudi public primary school.

Parents of non-gifted children: they have one child or more who is/are not identified as gifted and enrolled in Saudi public primary school.

### **Overview of the thesis**

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapters, Two and Three, present a review of literature related to the study. In Chapter Two, the development and the expansion of the conceptions of giftedness as well as the characteristics of gifted children as found in dominant culture (i.e. the West) are discussed. In addition, the perceptions of giftedness found in indigenous cultures including Arab culture are presented. This includes discussing the perceptions of Islam regarding the legitimacy of considering music and visual arts as well as leadership in girls as part of the characteristics of gifted children in Saudi Arabia. Chapter Three presents literature related to the identification of gifted children by teachers and parents. This includes common perceptions of teachers and parents of the characteristics of gifted children as well as the relationship between the background of the participants and their perceptions toward the gifted.

Chapters Four and Five describe and justify the procedures and methods used to investigate the perceptions of the participants. Chapter Four focuses on using a focus group approach to identify the traits of gifted children as perceived by Saudis. This involved analyzing, discussing and extracting items for the study scale. Chapter Five focuses on the steps used to develop the scale, including calculating the reliability and factorizing the scale. Chapter Six focuses on answering the study

research questions. This includes using quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the perceptions of the participants.

Chapter Seven focuses on discussing the main findings found across all the three studies conducted. In addition, this chapter contains the conclusion and suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CONCEPTION OF GIFTEDNESS ACROSS CULTURES**

#### **Introduction**

This review focuses on the development of the conception of gifted children. It includes the progression from defining gifted children based on their performance on intelligence tests to the inclusion of other performance areas of giftedness. Next, the characteristics of gifted children are presented as they have been identified in the West through the expansion of the conception of giftedness. The perceptions of indigenous cultures, including those of Saudi Arabia, toward gifted children are discussed. This includes religious and cultural views of giftedness within the Saudi context.

#### **Change in the Meaning of Giftedness over Time**

An extensive review of the related literature shows that since the term gifted began to be used in the early part of the last century, there has been no universal agreement on the definition of giftedness. Nevertheless, both conservative and liberal views have been prevalent throughout the evolution of the concept of giftedness (Renzulli, 2002). The conservative perception restricts the concept of exceptional individuals by establishing extreme cut-off points on intelligence tests. The liberal perspective expands the concept of giftedness to include other criteria for recognizing superior human potential. The aim of this section is to trace the development of the conception of gifted children from conventional to liberal perspectives.

#### **Historical Development**

Historically, giftedness has been equated with a high IQ score (Brown, et al., 2005; Davis & Rimm, 2004; Gordon & Bridglall, 2005; Renzulli, 1978). This view emerged after Terman (1916, 1925) defined giftedness as, “The top 1 percent level in

general intellectual ability as measured by the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale or a comparable instrument” (1926, p. 43). However, Renzulli (2002) stated that Terman’s definition has been seen as restrictive because it focused solely on academic ability at the expense of others who might possess creative, artistic, or leadership potential.

In the late 1950s, other areas of giftedness such as creativity; leadership; academic aptitude; music and visual artistry were recognised as needing to be studied and explored. Consequently, experts of the field of giftedness have felt that the use of the IQ testing was insufficient to cover this wide range of performance areas. Accordingly, they urged researchers to reduce reliance on IQ tests and formulate a more flexible definition. This flexibility not only expanded the conceptions of giftedness, but also allowed for “more flexibility in the interpretation of both test and nontest performance” (Renzulli, 2002, p. 68). This new perspective led Witty (1958) to criticize the equivalence of giftedness with IQ test results. He felt that the conservative perspective in perceiving giftedness was not fair and could limit other areas of remarkable performance. He tried to refocus attention and expanded the traditional perspective of gifted children to include other specific performance areas. He established a new standard of recognition which was later considered to be the liberal definition of giftedness:

“There are children whose outstanding potentialities in art, in writing, or in social leadership can be recognized largely by their performance. Hence, we have recommended that the definition of giftedness be expanded and that we consider any child gifted whose performance, in a potentially valuable line of human activity, is consistently remarkable” (Renzulli, 2002, p. 62).

After two decades from Witty’s definition, the interest in exploring the performance of gifted children has increased. As a result, the conservative view that considered gifted children as those who have a high IQ scores has been significantly shifted to focus on performance rather than IQ test results. One of the pioneering works in expanding the conception of giftedness has been conducted by Marland (1972). The findings of his work established one definition that has been widely adopted and adapted in the United States and other countries around the world. This new perspective is called Marland’s (1972) definition:

“Gifted and talented people are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contributions to self and society. Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential in any of the following areas:

- General intellectual ability
- Specific academic aptitude
- Creative or productive thinking
- Leadership ability
- Visual and performing arts
- Psychomotor ability” (cited in Brown et al., 2005, p. 70).

The work of Witty (1958) and Marland (1972) not only expanded the conception of giftedness but also encouraged subsequent researchers to take multiple aspects of giftedness into account when defining it. For example, Renzulli (1978, 1988) analyzed the definition of giftedness from conservative to liberal perceptions and affirmed that the conservative perspective focused only on the intelligence performance area and overlooked other areas such as “music, art, leadership, public speaking, and creative writing” (p. 180). He also criticized the extremely high cut-off points used in this perspective for the eligibility for gifted programs. Therefore, in his theory, he considered giftedness to consist of an interaction among three basic clusters of human traits. They are above-average general ability, high level of task commitment, and high level of creativity. He did not specify superior or high IQ ability in his model:

‘Giftedness consists of an interaction among three basic clusters of human traits, these clusters being above-average general abilities, high levels of task commitment, and high levels of creativity. Gifted and talented children are those possessing or capable of developing this composite set of traits and applying them to any potentially valuable area of human performance”, (Renzulli, 1978, p. 261).

In 1983, Gardner proposed the theory of multiple intelligences (MI). MI theory consists of eight intelligences. The following figure outlines these intelligences and

the indications that may lead to recognition of the potential of gifted children in each domain:

Figure A: 1MI theory and the indication for recognition the potential of the gifted

Intelligence	Indications
1. LINGUISTIC	A mastery and love of language and words with a desire to explore them.
2. LOGICAL-MATHEMATICAL	Confronting and assessing objects and abstractions and discerning their relations and underlying principles.
3. MUSICAL	A competence not only in composing and performing pieces with pitch, rhythm and timbre but also in listening and discerning. May be related to other intelligences, such as linguistic, spatial or bodily-kinesthetic.
4. SPATIAL	An ability to perceive the visual world accurately, transform and modify perceptions and re-create visual experiences even without physical stimuli.
5. BODILY-KINESTHETIC	Controlling and orchestrating body motions and handling objects skillfully.
	Accurately determining

6. and 7. PERSONAL INTELLIGENCES  moods, feelings and other mental states in oneself (intrapersonal intelligence) and in others (interpersonal) and using the information as a guide for behavior.
8. NATURALIST  Recognizing and categorizing natural objects.

(Cited in Gardner, 1998, p. 22).

Gardner (1998) claimed that the MI theory reveals two inferences. The first one is that all humans can display all these intelligences. The second is that as we are not identical and “have unique personalities and temperaments, we also have different profiles of intelligences” (p. 21). This expansion of the concept of giftedness contributed by the MI theory has increased the possibility to locate exceptionalities in people. It gives a useful insight into the competencies of humans and it can be helpful to recognize the giftedness of children in one or more of the eight intelligences (Chan, 2004).

Sternberg (2003) was also concerned about the reliance on IQ testing to determine the potential of gifted children. He argued that IQ testing alone cannot capture giftedness. He proposed a model of gifted knowledge that consists of three components: “wisdom, intelligence, and creativity, synthesised” (WICS). He argued that “Without a synthesis of these three attributes, someone can be a decent contributor to society, and perhaps even a good one, but never a great one” (p. 112). Sternberg’s model significantly develops the conception of giftedness and broadens the umbrella to include not only individuals who show a high IQ score but also who are able to demonstrate gifted behaviour. Another significant contribution is that this model has changed the mainstream view that perceived giftedness as “inherited static traits”, to be “distinctly a dynamic” (Dai, 2033, p. 141). Sternberg (2003) perceived intelligent individuals as those who possess the following abilities:

1. “the ability to achieve one’s goals in life, given one’s sociocultural context;
2. by capitalizing on strengths and correcting or compensating for weaknesses;

3. in order to adapt to, shape, and select environments;
4. through a combination of analytical, creative, and practical abilities". (p. 112-113).

Creativity as another component of Sternberg's model is perceived "as much a decision about and an attitude toward life as it is a matter of ability" (p. 117). Sternberg argued that creativity can be obvious when observed in young children, while the possibility of finding it in older children and adults is hard because of the suppression of their society. To enhance the potential of creativity, Sternberg (1985) suggested applying three intellectual abilities; analytic ability, which refers to those children who have an ability to analyse and understand a problem; the second, synthetic ability, which means that those children are insightful, intuitive, and creative; and the last component, practical ability, refers to those children who apply analytic or synthetic abilities to everyday problems.

The last component is wisdom. Although wisdom is placed in the first of the acronym (WICS), Sternberg discussed it after intelligence and creativity (Sternberg, 2003). He thought that the construction of wisdom "goes beyond intelligence and creativity" (p. 112). He argued that it is possible for people to be smart or creative without being wise. He defined wisdom:

"As the application of intelligence and creativity as mediated by values toward the achievement of a common good through a balance among (a) intrapersonal, (b) interpersonal, and (c) extrapersonal interests, over the (a) short and (b) long-terms, in order to achieve a balance among (a) adaptation to existing environments, (b) shaping of existing environments, and (c) selection of new environments" (Sternberg, 2003, p. 123).

The WICS model proposes a synthesis of intelligence, creativity, and wisdom as a construction of giftedness. It perceives intelligence differently to conventional views which narrow down the nominations of gifted children to be those in the top of one or two percent as measured by IQ testing. The WICS model considers intelligent people to be those who have exceptional abilities to adapt to their environment in order to achieve an extraordinary goal in life through paying attention to their strengths or correcting weakness. In a like manner, the model perceives creativity as

a combination of three intellectual abilities. A creative person has the potential to sort out problems (analytic), display insightfulness and intuition (synthetic), and is able to use the above two abilities in real life (practical). The last component discussed in this brief review is wisdom. Wisdom is perceived in this model as an ultimate ability that needs intelligence and great insightfulness. It is concluded that not all intelligent or creative individuals are wise, but wise persons need to be smart and creative.

In summary, two main issues have emerged in the course of the development of conceptions of giftedness. The first was the argument against reliance on IQ testing as the sole criterion in defining gifted children. The second concerned the expansion of the conceptions of giftedness that resulted in focusing on the performance of gifted children rather than judgment of their abilities based on IQ tests.

The growing interest in studying the performance of gifted children resulted in the emergence of a variety of characteristics in relation to which giftedness could be defined. The majority of these traits were identified in the West. The following subsection explores the perceptions of the West as a dominant culture that defines the characteristics to be associated with gifted children.

### **The characteristics of gifted children**

The characteristics of gifted children have been given much attention by scholars. Early pioneers such as Terman (1916, 1925) and Hollingworth (1927) were interested in recognizing the characteristics of gifted children. Understanding the characteristics of gifted children helps psychologists and educationalists to provide educators and parents with knowledge of the specific abilities of their children (Van Tassel-Baska, 1998). In addition, recognizing these traits has played a key role in determining suitable interventions for gifted children in schools. In this section, the attention focuses on the characteristics of gifted children as perceived commonly in the literature.

In the literature, the manifestations of gifted children have been classified under a variety of categories. Commonly, gifted children's traits are clustered as follows: cognitive traits, personal traits, social and/or leadership, and visual and performance arts traits. While it seems safe to assume that not all intellectually gifted children demonstrate similar characteristics in every area (Clark, 1997; Freeman, 1991; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998), most of them to some degree share some of these characteristics. Intellectually gifted children show an advanced level of language and capability in oral expression (Creel, & Karmes, 1988; Distin, 2006; Harrison, 2004; Rotigel, 2003), and have a large vocabulary which helps them to communicate at a mature level at an early age (Porter, 2005; Renzulli, 1978; Rotigel, 2003). Having an excellent memory (Porter, 2005; Sankar-Deleeuw, 2004; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998) and displaying a high level of curiosity (Harrison, 2004; Louis & Lewis, 1992; Renzulli, 1978; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998) are also frequently associated with intellectually gifted children. The tendency of gifted children to demonstrate knowledge about a wide range of subjects attests to their advanced level of thought and imagination (Silverman, 1993; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998). Intellectually gifted children have also been described as individuals who prefer to work independently (Renzulli, 1978; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998), have logical imperatives and tend to prefer precise facts (Silverman, 1993). The intellectually gifted child often displays a wide range of interests which sometimes are classified as mature-level interests (Clark, 1997; Rotigel, 2003; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998). Most gifted children tend to read at an early age, can understand and critique in an advanced way (Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Rotigel, 2003), and show originality in writing (Renzulli, 1978). They manipulate words and display a sense of humour (Clark, 1997; Distin, 2006; Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Porter, 2005; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998). Gifted children are also perceived to have a quick understanding of new ideas, to be able to find appropriate solutions to new problems (Distin, 2006; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998), and to prefer to participate in complex exercises (Clark, 1997).

Intellectually gifted children commonly manifest some traits that may be linked to their personality. Silverman (1993) proposed that cognitive and personal traits somehow interrelate. She thought gifted children who show curiosity also at the same time display a personal need for understanding things. She also listed perfectionism as a personal trait and linked it to the intellectual trait of "Facility with abstraction"

(p. 52). In addition, intellectually gifted children who have complex mental processes tend to find logic in their work and their arguments. Gifted children typically show a high sense of justice and tend to treat others fairly (Davis & Rimm, 2004). Van Tassel-Baska (1998) offers the following characteristics which may represent affective traits of intellectually gifted children: altruism; fear of death; perfectionism; high energy; commitment, and a highly developed sense of beauty.

Dauber and Benbow (1990) reviewed the personality of gifted children and found that the majority of studies agreed that these children generally are well-adjusted emotionally. In addition, they found in their study that gifted children are perceived by themselves and by their peers as being popular. Gifted children are highly organized thinkers. They perceive and treat situations and events differently than ordinary children do, therefore, they may display a degree of argumentativeness and questioning (Silverman, 1993). Gifted children may feel more positive self-concepts compared with ordinary children. Hoge and Renzulli (1993) assume that labelling children as gifted may enhance their self-concepts and may reflect positively upon their personality. However, these views should consider the complexity of gifted children's behaviours. Gifted children who are sensitive about criticism and their performance achievements may under some circumstances feel negative self-concepts (Clark, 1997).

Kitano and Kirby (1986) reviewed the characteristics of gifted children and focused on some previous works that were interested in studying negative traits of gifted children. They produced a list of some characteristics which may be perceived negatively. Among them are "gullibility; perfectionism; resistance to authority; omission of detail; difficulty in accepting the illogical; dislike of routine and drill; impatience with waiting for the large group of average students to catch up; and tendency to dominate discussions" (p. 70). Silverman (1993) also noticed that gifted children are described in the literature as those children who are argumentative and persistent in rejecting authority. However, although these behavioural traits are classified or named among other common traits of gifted children as negative aspects, scholars, based on Western contexts, have perceived these traits positively and attributed them to the unique potential of gifted children. For example, Silverman (1993) reported that argumentativeness or questioning of authority are

understandable and should be considered as a natural characteristic of those children who are very independent and analytical individuals. In addition, Sankar-DeLeeuw (2004) pointed out that gifted children also to some degree demonstrate a high level of motivation which may lead them to be persistent to attain their goals.

Most gifted children who show high cognitive ability also display a high degree of social skills (Porter, 2005) and the potential for leadership (Bain, Choate & Bliss, 2006). These children are described as sociable and with a tendency to empathize with others' problems, value the meaning of friendship, and prefer to accompany older children or adults (Porter, 2005). In regard to leadership, Landau and Weissler (1991) reviewed a large number of studies investigating the aspects of leadership. According to their review and their study's aim, they targeted and further investigated the following characteristics: displaying responsibility, showing a tendency to control and dominate others, demonstrating "consistency and preferences," being "achievement-oriented," "expressive and persuasive," showing physical energy, being able to organize things and others, displaying self-confidence, and being well-adjusted emotionally (Landau & Weissler, 1991, p.683). Another two aspects emerged during the interview sessions and the researchers added them to the previous lists. They were "cooperation" and "adaptability" (p. 683). The subjects consisted of 63 gifted children. Their ages ranged between 10 and 14 years. They were first given an IQ test and requested to complete a leadership questionnaire. The findings of this study showed that leadership characteristics can be observed in very young gifted children. In addition, the results of this study confirmed others' results that found a strong relationship between confidence and courage as elements of leadership characteristics. However, unlike other perspectives that assumed "leadership means being different and venturing to dare," many children included in this study felt that they were no different and tended to be part of the social framework (p. 686).

Performing music and visual arts and psychomotor ability (i.e. music, drawing and athletic prowess) are also perceived in the literature as manifestations of giftedness (e.g., Clark, 1997; Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Porter, 2005; Renzuli, 1978; Silverman, 1993; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998). Musically gifted individuals profoundly enjoy music sounds, show a high level of sensitivity to musical structure, have

outstanding ability in recalling music and playing it back, have perfect pitch, and enjoy dancing (Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Porter, 2005).

In the West, music is not only perceived as a component of giftedness, but is also considered an educational requirement (Dai & Schader, 2002). The teaching of music and caring for musically talented persons is a fundamental part of Western educational systems. Widespread interest in music has resulted in numerous educational institutions as well as voluminous research focusing on music. For example, in Australia a total of 346 research projects focusing on music were undertaken between 1977 and 2002 (Stevens & McPherson, 2004). About 15 musical education research projects were undertaken in the United States, and two musical therapy periodicals were published (Price, 2004). In the United Kingdom, the national curriculum allows and encourages children to listen to and perform music (Welch et al., 2004). In Germany, musical research has a long educational history (Gruhn, 2004). The tradition of concern for music and musicians in the West justifies its appreciation among Western people. The importance of music in the Western life has led many researchers to establish lists of the traits of musically talented people (e.g., Clark, 1997; Porter, 2005; Silverman, 1993).

In addition to music, gifted children may show an outstanding ability in drawing objects, may enjoy art and show high interest in others' art, and use art to express emotion and experience. Gaither (2008) described her experience in teaching exceptional artists. She nominated one of her high school art classroom students who showed a highly ability in the area of art performance. An interview of three and a half hours was conducted asking the participant about her history as a graphic artist and about her past experience as a student. Gaither focused on the characteristics identified in the literature as part of the visual arts manifestations. She also aimed to form a relationship between what the participant currently knew regarding the traits of artistic individuals and whether she identified them when she was a high school student. The participant was asked to describe the feelings, emotions, and methods she experience when deciding to make art. The participant reported that the main influential factor helping her to articulate her thoughts or feelings was memory. She continued and said "I sit on a couch and observe the objects surrounding me and start to transform them to real shapes." Interestingly, the participant described herself as

someone who “had no attention span” (p. 51). She said she was always sitting beside the window and looking at clouds and grass and that behaviour would make her teachers angry. Actually, demonstrating behaviour similar to this, plus other characteristics of gifted children, does not mean that a child has no attention span. It is widely agreed that gifted children show high levels of concentration regarding the things that are close to their interests (Clark, 1997; Silverman, 1993; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998). In other words, this participant at that time may have been listening to a tedious session and she used her spontaneous sense to follow her interests, even though it made her teachers upset. The participant also described herself as a shy person although she understands that her contribution is usually significant and always attracts people’s attention. When the participant was shown some photography she produced at high school she responded “I see a lot of technique and not a lot of compositional skill yet” (p. 51). When the interviewee asked her whether she agreed with the observation that gifted children can demonstrate art ability at an early age, she responded yes and considered herself one of them. She remembered the admiration of her friends when she was five years old and they looked at her drawings. The participant summarized her characteristics and said that she enjoyed doing details, tended toward complexity, stuck with her art with all her emotion, began doodling at an early age, and disliked routine. Gaither also added visual fluency to the list of characteristics and considered that visually fluent children are able to generate ideas more than others.

The above section mainly investigates the traits of gifted children as perceived in middle-class Western cultures. However, the fact that some Western researchers acknowledged the importance and the impact of culture when discussing giftedness (Gardner, 1998, Sternberg, 2003) validates the use of these views in this investigation. These studies may increase our understanding in respect of who might be gifted, not only in the dominant culture, but also worldwide. In the following, the interface between culture and giftedness is discussed.

## **Understanding the interplay between culture and giftedness**

The meaning of giftedness may differ from nation to nation. Children who may be perceived as smart in one culture may be perceived as stupid in another (Cole, Gay, Glick, & Sharp, 1971; Sternberg, 2007). For this reason, understanding culture is an essential factor in identifying giftedness. Culture can be defined as “the set of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours shared by a group of people, communicated from one generation to the next via language or some other means of communication” (Barnouw, as cited in Sternberg, 2004, p. 325).

Researchers in the field of giftedness face a great challenge in determining the role of culture in giftedness (Phillipson, 2007), at least partly because giftedness is not consistently interpreted across cultures (Chan, 2007). Differing concepts of giftedness apply not only to the term “giftedness”, but also to distinctions in this notion among cultures. Cramond (2004) argued, “Why should giftedness be defined the same way in China and Beirut? The music, food, art, alphabet, predominant religion, and other cultural aspects are very different” (p. 15). The place and the impact of culture upon the meaning of giftedness are clearly mentioned by some Western scholars. For example, Gardner (1998) in the MI theory stated that cultures might play a key role to encourage “the development of one or another intelligence (p. 22). Sternberg (2007) argued that the conception of giftedness is perceived differently across cultures. If this is the case, it would be useful to know the construction of giftedness in Western cultures and the extent to which this construction would affect the views of other cultures.

### **The construction of giftedness in Western culture**

In a middle-class Western cultural perspective, giftedness was for many years synonymous to intelligence (Brown, et al., 2005; Davis & Rimm, 2004; Gordon & Bridglall, 2005, Terman, 1925). Since the middle of the last century, however, this conservative view has gradually been changed to be more liberal (e.g., Marland, 1972; Renzulli, 1978; Witty, 1958). During this historical development, many areas of giftedness have been established. This includes creativity, leadership, academic performance, music and visual arts, and special giftedness (e.g., Gardner, 1983; Marland, 1972; Renzulli, 1978; Renzulli, 2002). The development of some Western

countries such as the US, the UK, Germany, and France in many areas of life has resulted in there being significant contributions for identifying and nurturing gifted children. Consequently, several views of giftedness as provided by experts, teachers, parents and gifted people have played an influential factor to expand the conception of giftedness. Examining these various views showed that all sources of giftedness based on Western perspective have agreed that gifted children have an extraordinary potential which is not perceived in ordinary children who are the same age and grade school level. The distinctions or the debates found among Western countries' views regarding giftedness is not about the potential of giftedness. Rather, it is about the construction of giftedness. For example, Renzulli (1978) perceived giftedness as a combination of three basic clusters, above average general abilities, high level of task commitment, and high level of creativity. Gardner (1983) believes that the majority of children have a degree of intelligence in a specific area such as logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical-rhythmic, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist. Sternberg (2003) considered giftedness as a synthesis of intelligence, creativity, and wisdom. None of the above researchers disagreed on the importance of the components of giftedness mentioned in these views. However, they showed a degree of distinction about the amount of these components gifted individuals need to possess giftedness. For instance, while Renzulli (1978) reduces the condition of intelligence to the average level, Sternberg (2003) perceives intelligence as "a basis for creativity and wisdom" (p. 112). The disagreement regarding the construction of giftedness is also perceived among Western teachers. For example, the findings of the study conducted by Busse et al., (1986) showed a degree of differences between teachers in West Germany and the United States in identifying and making provision for gifted children in the two countries.

If the construction of giftedness between homogeneous cultures seems to be, in some degree, different, it is possible to find another construction in other cultures, particularly in indigenous cultures. In the following, some examples regarding the interplay between culture and giftedness are discussed.

**What does it mean to be gifted in indigenous cultures?**

Baarda (1990), (as cited in Gibson & Vialle, 2007) studied Aboriginal culture and compared it with White Australian culture, finding stark differences between the two. The perceptions of the Aboriginal people resemble other conservative cultures such as the Maori and the Keresan Pueblo Indians. Baadra summarized these differences as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison between White Australian and Aboriginal culture

<b>The White Australian Culture</b>		<b>The Aboriginal Culture</b>	
1	Comparative 1.1 competing for resources 1.2 competing for status	1	Co-operative 1.1 sharing resources 1.2 equal status
2	Hierarchical 2.1 for decision making	2	Not hierarchial 2.1 decision by consensus
3	Contractual personal relationships	3	Unconditional acceptance all in the group
4	Changing law	4	Static law
5	Knowledge for anyone 5.1 can be questioned 5.2 trial and error learning acceptable	5	Knowledge belongs to certain people 5.1 can't be questioned 5.2 mistakes must not be made
6	Challenging learning situations	6	Supportive learning situations
7	Individualism encouraged	7	Conformity encouraged
8	Extroverted behavior encouraged	8	Extroverted behavior usually condemned
9	Verbal communication and approval	8	Nonverbal communication and approval
10	Task oriented	10	Person oriented
11`	Privacy desirable	11	Company always desired
12	Separate subculture for children	11	No separate subculture for children
13	Internal morality 13.1 Children learn to make own rules to ensure acceptance by significant others	13	External morality 13.1 rules are made and enforced outside 13.2 no internal guilt or self punishment

(Baarda, as cited in Gibson & Vialle, 2007, p. 207).

The influence of Aboriginal culture shapes aboriginal people's perceptions of life. Aboriginal culture strongly values unity, and altruism is emphasized. For example, the Aboriginal students "are often unhappy if it is pointed out that they have scored higher or performed better than their friends and relations" (Baarda, as cited in Gibson & Vialle, 2007, p. 207). Aboriginal people use words such as cleverness or brightness interchangeably with giftedness (Gibson, 1997). Gibson and Vialle (2007) pointed out that although Aboriginal people do not use the term "gifted" to describe individuals, knowledge is highly valued. However, acquired knowledge is attributable to age development matters more than genetic superiority.

Similarly, the Puluwat of the Caroline Islands in the South Pacific believe that giftedness describes a person who demonstrates their culture's values, customs, and knowledge (Sternberg, 2007). Gladwin (1970) as cited in Sternberg (2007) studied Puluwat culture and found that individuals who know about the wind, weather, and the direction of stars and can use them to navigate are highly appreciated.

Not all gifted traits common to cultures all over the world are expressed the same way in different cultures. Attributes such as the ability to generate a wealth of ideas, identify problems, think critically, and/or identify subtle hidden meanings by "reading between the lines" are frequently associated with creativity; however, these traits are not necessarily perceived similarly across different cultures (Bevan-Brown, 2005, p. 151). Serpell (1979) studied the extent to which children's abilities are influenced by their culture. The results demonstrate that English children demonstrated good drawing, while Zambian children were adept in designing wire shapes. Serpell attributed these differences to the fact that Zambian children performed better using materials that were found in their environment. Nevertheless, discrepancies have been observed among indigenous cultures. For example, Ngara and Porath (2007) pointed out that "While the Maori spiritual aspect is partly intertwined with values of caring and serving others, Shona culture's spiritualism is enshrined in the belief that giftedness is spiritually blessed and may be withdrawn if it is abused" (p. 194).

According to the above review of the meaning of giftedness in Western and indigenous cultures, it is observed that giftedness means something different and is

limited to specific people. However, indigenous cultures may not necessarily use the construction of giftedness found in a middle-class perspective to nominate giftedness. For example, Bevan-Brown (2005) examined the relationship between culture and giftedness in Maori culture. She found that Maori culture influences giftedness in three different dimensions. The first dimension represented cultural skills, including “arts, crafts, music, historic, and cultural knowledge and traditions” (p. 150). The second dimension concerned culturally valued characteristics. The Maori admire individuals who display traits such as helping others, generosity, and altruism. Interestingly, Bevan-Brown declared that some characteristics of gifted children found in the international literature (e.g. emotional intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence) are not necessarily perceived by Maori people as important or culturally valued qualities. For example, the Maori admire people who demonstrate the uniqueness of Maori culture as much as they admire people with exceptional abilities.

The third dimension involved interpretation of widely-accepted characteristics of gifted children and whether these interpretations apply across all cultures. Bevan-Brown reported that abilities such as creativity, leadership ability, and talent for visual arts are interpreted differently from culture to culture. She illustrated the identification of leadership in Maori culture by examining three different aspects of leadership, two of which were perceived similarly to the definition of leadership found in international literature “up-front” leadership and “leadership by example”. The third aspect of leadership was unique to Maori culture. This aspect includes “... a behind-the-scenes genre where the leader provides emotional support, guidance and inspiration in a quiet, unassuming way” (p. 151). Similarly, among the Keresan Pueblo Indians, the perception of giftedness is based on the values, beliefs, and behaviours of the native culture (Ngara & Porath, 2007).

In summary, the foregoing discussion demonstrates that the abilities of gifted children vary according to the values and traditions of their culture. The concurrence of indigenous views towards gifted children contrasts with views found in dominant cultures. These distinctions seem to affect the meaning of giftedness among cultures. It is observed that indigenous peoples such as the Maori, the Shona, the Keresan

Pueblo, the Aborigines and the Puluwat share both similarities and differences in perceptions of giftedness.

Surprisingly, however, the place of religion and its impact upon the perceptions of members of dominant and indigenous cultures is not directly mentioned as an influential factor in this literature. In Saudi Arabia, the place of religion and its interplay with perceptions toward life and individuality is considered to be very important. The investigation of religion as a factor that influences perception toward giftedness requires investigating different views concerning this matter; however, the researcher has been unable to find any such study. For this reason, the place of religion and its interplay with perceptions of giftedness are discussed only within Islamic contexts.

### **Context of Saudi Cultural Views of Giftedness**

No specific name to describe exceptional persons, such as “gifted” appeared until the early part of the 20th century, when Terman (1925) used it to describe his sample. The concept of “giftedness” seems to be new in both Saudi Arabia and the rest of the world. However, terms such as “genius” (عبقري), super (المعي), talented (نابغة), and/or smart (ذكي) can be used in Arab culture to describe giftedness and appreciation of human mental abilities. According to Clark (2002), exceptional people can be found in any culture. Saudi Arabia, as part of Muslim and Arab cultures shares similar perceptions toward exceptional people.

Arab culture has its own ideas about the exceptionality of human beings; exceptional people can be identified by the contributions they make to their societies. For example, generosity is highly appreciated among Arabs. This encompasses not only providing food for needy people but also showing sympathy to others and involving oneself in their problems and feelings. A person who is able to reconcile and resolve problems between tribes will likely be perceived as an exceptional person. In addition, a person who demonstrates wisdom in problem-solving would be admired from one generation to the next. Arabs strongly believe in the transference of extraordinary traits from fathers and/or mothers to their offspring. Despite this fact, Arabs also believe that giftedness can be acquired.

In ancient times Arabs used to send their children to “*Bedouin*” regions to become fluent in the local language because Arabs greatly value the acquisition of verbal skills. Arab culture, which requires people to defend and express their values to other nations, gives fluent public speakers a glorified role in their societies. In order to become “fluent” by the standards of Arab culture, a number of abilities such as intuition, wisdom, courage and eloquence are required. Arabs also consider memory to be one of the most important aspects of an intelligent person. This is because Arabs have traditionally relied on people with good memories to transcribe their history and important events. In addition, Arabs appreciate poets and consider them to be the tribe’s voice, thereby glorifying their tribe compared to other tribes. Arabs also value leadership and are likely to describe skilled leaders as exceptional people.

When Islam arose in the 6th century, it did not conflict with the heritage of Arab culture - rather, it aimed to organize and perfect human morality. Consequently, a number of habits and traditions that were already found in Arab culture such as generosity, courage, honesty, justice, and sympathy for others’ problems were legalized in Islam. The instruction of Islam emphasizes benevolence and encourages Muslims to show altruism and help other Muslims. The emphasis on displaying virtue is mentioned in the Holy Quran<sup>1</sup> and *hadith* (a record of sayings of the prophet). Allah says that “Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancour: fear Allah. for Allah is strict in punishment” (Al-Quran, Al-Maidah, 2).

Al-Munajjid (2009) explained that Allah commands Muslims to help each other in doing *Al-Birr* and *At-Taqwa* (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression. Ordering Muslims to offer help to others has instilled the values of cooperation and supportiveness among Muslims. The prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) says that “The likeness of the believers in their mutual love, mercy and compassion is that of the body; if one part of it complains, the rest of the body joins it in staying awake and suffering fever.” (Al-Munajjid, 2009). This leads to the understanding that Muslims are ordered to be

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<sup>1</sup> All verses of the Quran included in this thesis are cited based on the interpretation of the meaning of the holy Quran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali

united and coherent. Being persistent or having the tendency to conflict with other Muslim groups is not accepted in Islam. According to the Quran and the saying of the prophet Mohammed, Muslims are commanded to not be rebellious toward their rulers or to the concurrence of Muslims. These instructions inform us that a person who may show resistance to the unity of Muslims is not accepted (Al-Munajjid, 2009).

Exceptionality or superiority is appreciated in Islamic thought. The teachings of the Holy Quran and *hadith* provide the basis for an appreciation of highly intelligent people. For example, the Holy Quran mentions in several verses that meditation, contemplation and understanding are to be highly glorified. Allah emphasizes the appreciation of individuals who use their minds to understand and explore their lives, asking “Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?” (Al-Quran, Al-Zumar, 9). The prophet Mohammed also orders Muslims to learn and increase their knowledge. He taught that if anyone travels the road of knowledge, Allah will reward him by allowing him to travel on one of the roads of heaven.

Exceptional performance is not restricted to one gender in Islam. Both women and men are required to practise most Islamic commands. According to Al-Qaradawi (2004), women are perceived in Islam in the same way as men are perceived. They are similarly required to worship Allah and do what Allah commands them to do and to abandon what Allah orders them to not do. Al-Qaradawi stressed the role of women in Islam. He explains that the first person, who believed and supported the prophet Mohammed when he announced his prophecy, was his Wife Khadija. In addition, he highlighted the contributions of Muslim women across Islamic history.

However, according to the Islamic rules, there is a degree of difference in regard of the onuses of man and woman. This difference considers the nature of men and women rather than preferring one more than another. For example, it is widely agreed among religious scholars (e.g., Al-Qahtani, 2008; Al-Qaradawi, 2004; Hasan 2005; Ibn Baz, no date) that women are allowed to officiate in any leading position, except for the presidency position or leading military positions. Ibn Baz (no date) stated that according to the Quran woman are not allowed to be a leader of a nation (i.e. presidency position). He supported his interpretation by citing this verse from

the Holy Quran “Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more [strength] than the other, and because they support them from their means” (Al-Quran, Al-Nisa, 34).

In response to a question regarding the legitimacy of women officiating in all but the presidency position, Al-Qaradawi (2004) explained that women are not allowed to officiate this position not because they are perceived differently in Islam, but because this position needs special ability which is not suited to the nature of women. Hasan (2005) explained the special requirements of the presidency in Islam. He said that this position requires the president to travel from one region to another in caring for the nation, to meet male strangers, and to lead the military of the nation. In addition, women compared to men are sensitive and have weakness in their emotions. Thus, they are not eligible to lead military. Accordingly, Islam perceives the presidency or leading the military as requiring male qualities (Hassan, 2005).

Al-Qaradawi permitted women to officiate in any other leading positions. He permitted women to nominate themselves to public elections. This includes membership of the nation’s council, or ministry positions. He explains that these positions do not conflict with the instructions of Islam. In addition, the uniqueness of women in Islam, which is required to discuss some sensitive women’s issues, requires the presence of women in such positions. Another religious scholar, Al-Qahtani (2008), argued for allowing women to officiate in leading positions in Saudi Arabia. He grounded his argument on religious views. He agreed with other religious scholars who do not allow women to officiate presidency position. However, he argues that the complexity of life now requires women to take part in most social activities. He did not perceive any clash between religious instructions and nominating women for other leading positions.

According to the previous review of the perceptions of Islam toward men and women, it could be argued that Islam perceives them equally, though there are some differences in their duties. These differences do not mean Islam is biased against women. Rather, Islam does understand the nature of women and based on this understanding it asks them to act in accordance with its instructions.

Understanding the nature of women by Islam is also observed in other issues such as music and singing. While some religious scholars have prohibited men from playing music or listening to songs (e.g., Ibn Baz, 1987; Ibn Jebreen, no date), women are allowed to sing and play a *def* [a tambourine but without the symbols]. This exclusion considers that women compared with men may be emotionally more interested in practising singing or dancing. The task of the next section is to focus on the legitimacy of accepting the playing of music and listening to songs as well as gender differences relating to these issues.

### **The Concept of Music in Islamic Thought**

The Islamic religion is widely known, but it is not nearly as well-known that there are diverse doctrines within it. This diversity results in varying interpretations of Islamic religious tenets among Islamic scholars. All Islamic scholars agree on the basic rules of Islam, though some have disagreed on secondary issues. For example, music has been the topic of much debate among Islamic scholars since its earliest times. Some religious scholars allow singing with instrumental accompaniment, while others consider all music to be unlawful. However, most religious scholars permit only women to sing and play the *def*. This review focuses on these views and their impacts upon Muslims' perceptions. This has resulted in a great diversity of attitudes towards music among Muslims.

The debates on the prohibition of music and singing were derived from the interpretation of the Quran and the *hadith*. For example, scholars who believe that music is forbidden support their judgment with this verse: "But there are, among men, those who purchase idle tales, without knowledge (or meaning), to mislead (men) from the Path of Allah and throw ridicule (on the Path): for such there will be a Humiliating Penalty" (Al-Quran, Luqman, 6). Sheikh Abdulaziz Ibn Baz (1987) interpreted "idle talk" to refer to, among other things, music and singing. For this reason he believed that music and singing must be banned in Islam. This interpretation was originally derived from Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328 AD), a prominent early religious scholar who prohibited listening to music or any sounds of

instruments that could be referred to as music (Berglund, 2008). This interpretation is highly respected among a wide range of Muslims, and especially among Saudis.

Muslims who do not ban music justify their perceptions by the statement: “what is not clearly forbidden should be accepted until the opposite is proven” (Berglund, 2008, p. 164). Of the many religious scholars who have argued in favour of music, one is Al-Qaradawi, a contemporary scholar who represents the *wasatteyya*, “the ideological center of reformist Islam” (Berglund, 2008, p. 165). Al-Qaradawi (1999) did not perceive any evidence either in the Quran or in the *hadith* that would indicate that music is a sin. In his argument, he mentioned a number of examples showing that music is permitted in Islam. For example, Al-Qaradawi stated that Al-Zubar, one of the associates of the prophet Mohammed had odalisques playing *aoud* (a musical instrument that resembles a guitar), and singing to him. In addition, Ibn Umar, another associate of the prophet Mohammed, did not perceive playing the *aoud* to be prohibited in Islam.

Whether singing itself is prohibited in Islam is also the subject of great debate among religious scholars. Some Saudi religious scholars, such as the late Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdulaziz Ibn Baz and Sheikh Abdualah Ibn Jebreen, thought that singing leads Muslims astray from the right path to Allah and may distract people from their religious duties. However, although the interpretation of Saudi religious tenets was established according to Ibn Taymiyyah’s view, which obviously prohibited performing music yet permitted chanting (i.e. religious chants performed during pilgrimages), most Saudi religious leaders have prohibited both singing and music.

Despite these trends, Al-Qaradawi (2001) has argued for singing. He grounded his arguments on the interpretations of famous religious scholars such as Ibn Hazm (994-1063 AD), and Al-Gazzali (1058-1111 AD). Al-Qaradawi pointed out that singing may comfort the soul and heart as well as refresh the ear. However, singing that includes sexual innuendo, aggressive talk or debauchery is prohibited. According to Al-Qaradawi, Ibn Hazm understood that considering whether singing is *halal* or *haram* (permitted/prohibited) depends on the tendency of the listeners. Ibn Hazm explained that if anyone listens to music in order to support his/her

communication with Allah, he/she has not fallen into sin. Al-Qaradawi also brought into the debate Al-Gazzali's judgment of this issue, saying that Al-Gazzali proved that singing is permitted by a vast majority of associates of the prophet.

The attitudes of Muslims toward music depend on their beliefs about what has been written regarding the issue. For example, Berglund (2008) interviewed a female music teacher who works in a primary Muslim school in Sweden. The purpose of the study was to discuss the use of music within the participant's school. The participant generally thought that the utility of music in education is undeniable. The acceptance of music by the participant was not for its own sake. Rather, the participant perceived it as an essential factor for education. The participant referred to a number of scholars such as Al-Qaradawi, who permitted music for medication and comfort of the soul. When the participant was asked about her view of the music she performed in class, she labelled it as *nasheed* (a poem performed as a song). In her class, the *nasheed* is often accompanied by instrumental music. Whether the participant believed that music is lawful or unlawful was not discussed in this study. And whether the participant felt that her practising of music and singing was supported by religious interpretations of permissible behaviour for women was not mentioned by the participant.

Instead, the participant attempted to articulate her perception toward music by focusing on the utilitarian advantages of its use. For example, she showed her students a video featuring a song of Ramadan<sup>2</sup>. Children were very excited to listen and learn the song's lyrics. The participant explained the use of the song and said that it would help children to learn about Ramadan in a joyful manner. The utility of music and singing were not only for religious reasons but also to promote nationalism. The participant taught her children how to sing the United Nations Day song. She believed that teaching children this song would increase their sense of belonging and peace. The author inferred that the participant did not see any sin in performing, listening to music, or singing. The author assumed that referring to

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<sup>2</sup> Ramadan is a fasting month in Islam. It is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. During this month Muslims sympathize with other people and thank Allah for the gifts He has given us.

religious scholars such as Ibn Hazm and Al-Qaradawi, who permitted music, may mean that the participant advocated the fact that music is lawful. However, the participant stated that she does not like any kind of music in which the lyrics are obscene, preferring lyrics with themes of “nature, friendship, faith, the prophet or religious festivities” (Berglund, 2008, p. 172).

The permissibility of using music was also investigated by Adely (2007). She conducted a study to investigate the performance of music in Jordan high schools. One of her objectives was to investigate whether performing music would be considered *haram* (prohibited) based on Jordanian perspectives. A group of female high school music students took part in her study. In the introduction of Adely’s study, she stated that the lack of male participation in musical activities in Jordan schools motivated her study. The participants were asked whether they experienced any problems in practising music. A tenth-grade student replied to this question by saying, “We sing songs about the nation. There is nothing wrong with that” (p. 1670). Another girl said that, “the music is national music. It’s not something loose [immoral]” (p.1673).

In response to the question of whether most Muslims consider music to be *haram*, one girl replied, “Everyone knows music is *haram*, but there are some such as us who don’t pay attention and others who do” (p. 1672). Another girl argued that “ It is musical instruments which are *haram*. Only the *def*... is not *haram*...Everything that we do is not *haram*. I just recite [poetry] and Hanan plays the *def*” (p. 1672). Another girl said that the acceptance of music depends on a person’s thinking and fundamental beliefs. Among the author’s comments was that some participants admitted that some musical instruments are classified as *haram*. Nonetheless, they participated in a performance celebration that was accompanied by instruments.

Although the author stated that she was aware of a diversity of views among religious scholars with respect to music and singing, she did not detail these views when justifying her perceptions of the participants towards music and singing. For example, according to the responses of the participants in this study, most girls said that they just sing and play a *def*, which is permitted in Islam (Al-Qaradawi, 1999). The late Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdulaziz Ibn Baz

(no date) and Sheikh Abdualah Ibn Jebreen (no date) were asked about the use of musical instruments in weddings. They permitted women to sing and play a *def*. Therefore, the participation of girls (i.e. in singing or playing *def*) is generally acceptable in Islam. The satisfaction that the girls felt in playing the *def* and singing, and whether they perceived their participation is *halal* (permitted), while other instruments were performed by teachers, was not clearly discussed in the study of Adely.

Another issue that was inadequately discussed in that study is the lack of the participation of males in performing music. Adely thought that males had the opportunity to practise outdoor activities and did not pay much attention to music. Actually, this justification may be correct in general, however, the involvement of males in singing and music is restricted based on religious views. Most scholars pay considerably more attention to the legitimacy of the participation of males in performing music than participation by women. For example, according to the above advisory, Ibn Baz allowed only women to play the *def* and sing. Thus, the question of whether the lack of the participation of boys in this study was due to their awareness of the legitimacy of their participation, or whether they paid attention to outdoor activities at the expense of music was not adequately addressed.

The previous review shows that the legitimacy of playing music or listening to songs differs between religious scholars. Some thought that performing music or listening to songs was sinful, while others did not perceive that. However, religious scholars agree on the permissibility of women practising these activities. Most religious scholars permit women to sing and play the *def*.

Another issue, which is perceived differently within the religious context, is the visual arts. In the following section the review focuses on this issue.

## **The concept of visual arts in Islamic context**

The permissibility of photography and drawing activities is related to specifically religious rather than general cultural values. However, the question of whether these activities are permitted or prohibited seems to be less complicated than in the case of music. The majority of religious scholars agree that making or drawing animated objects is banned in Islam. For example, Al-Qaradawi (1999) stated that although a number of religious scholars do not perceive photography or drawing as prohibited, the majority of Islamic scholars prohibit the drawing of any animate shapes. This interpretation is consistent with the views of Sheikh Abdulaziz Ibn Baz and Sheikh Abdualah Ibn Jebreen. They classified drawing into two categories. The first includes any animate objects such as humans and animals, which are prohibited. The second includes any inanimate objects such as mountains, trees, airplanes, cars, etc., which are permitted. The scholars referred to the Quran and the *hadith* for authority.

According to the Quran, artists are refused God's mercy. Artists who draw human pictures are cursed in Islam because they are considered to be trying to do what only God can do. According to religious instruction, drawing animate objects (e.g., human or animals), is not allowed. However, drawing inanimate objects such as trees, mountains and so on is allowed in Islam. Narrator Ibn Abbas asked the prophet Mohammed about which pictures are allowed. The prophet replied, "If you insist on making pictures, I advise you to make pictures of trees and other inanimate objects" (Sahih Bukhari , *hadith* Number 448).

However, due to globalization, which makes the world seem like a small town, some religious scholars have argued for reconsidering the judgments of photography and drawing. Among these scholars is Al-Qaradawi. In his book (1999), *al-hala wal haram fil islam* (the lawful and the prohibited in Islam), he discussed this issue extensively, drawing into his arguments a number of issues that motivated him to rethink the Islamic judgment regarding photography and drawing. Among these issues is the attachment of Muslim children to cartoon films. It is known that these cartoons use animated figures that are considered prohibited in Islam. Al-Qaradawi admitted that most cartoon films are imported from the West, including some

materials that are not compatible with Islamic values. However, because of the inevitability of watching these films, he did not perceive parents or children to be sinful for watching these animated objects. On the other hand, Al-Qaradawi strongly urged Arab movie directors and producers to produce cartoon films locally to ensure their compatibility with Islamic values. Although the interpretations of Al-Qaradawi have been accepted among a wide range of Muslims, the interpretation of Ibn Baz (no date), which perceives drawing animate objects as unlawful, is widely accepted among Saudis.

Religious people are often very sensitive toward any consensus among religious scholars. However, according to religious rules, people are permitted to adhere to any religious interpretation unless it clearly violates the basic rules of Islam. Consequently, the appreciation of photography and drawing differs across the Islamic world.

In Saudi Arabia, religion and culture are inseparable. Religion plays a key role in shaping the values, customs, beliefs and perceptions of Saudis. Religion consists not only of spiritual practices but is also considered central to people's beliefs. This shapes Saudis' perceptions toward individuals and life. At an early stage of children's lives, parents and educators teach their children Islamic values and concepts. Religious institutions (e.g., mosques) are also influential in establishing and developing these Islamic concepts. These perceptions influence social attitudes toward giftedness and gifted children. Saudis do not reject giftedness or any admired domain in human life, but they accept it only in conformity with their own religious and cultural rules. For example, it is widely mentioned in the West that skills in music and visual arts are considered to be indicative of giftedness. These manifestations are banned by a significant amount of religious perspectives in Islam, especially among Saudi religious scholars. As a result, music or drawing animate objects among these scholars are perceived as useless activities by religion. Saudis in general are religious and "have trouble accepting new ideologies that might clash with their values, beliefs, customs, or rituals" (AlFahaid, 2002, p. 2). Slackman (2008) has reported in the New York Times, in reference to young Saudis, that:

“What stood out in dozens of interviews with young Saudi men and women here was how completely they have accepted the religious and cultural demands of the Muslim world’s most conservative society....they are committed to perpetuating these rules with their own children” (No page number).

In the following chapter, the review will specifically focus on the perceptions of teachers and parents toward gifted children. This review would allow us to understand the views of giftedness teachers and parents have so that could facilitate answering the research questions. Upcoming review will discuss the ability of teachers and parents to recognize the potential of gifted children. In addition, common traits of gifted children as perceived by teachers and parents as well as the relationship between the participants and their background will be discussed.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RECOGNISING THE POTENTIAL OF GIFTED CHILDREN**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter focused on the development of the conceptions of giftedness as well as the diversity of interpretations of the meaning of giftedness across cultures. This chapter will focus on the involvement of teachers and parents in recognizing the potential of gifted children. It includes their accuracy in identification and the common characteristics of gifted children as identified by both groups. The relationship between the perceptions of teachers and parents toward gifted children and their background is discussed. Finally, the gaps in the related literature are identified and summarized.

#### **Using teachers and parents in identifying gifted children**

The identification of gifted children by teachers and/ or parents has been the topic of much debate over the years (e.g., Clark, 1988; Ciha et al. 1974; Cornish, 1968; Davis & Rimm, 2004; Gagne, 1994; Hoge & Cudmor, 1986; Jacobs, 1971; Neber, 2004; Pagnato & Birch 1959; Renzulli & Delcourt, 1986; Silverman, Chitwood & Waters, 1986; Terman, 1925). This section focuses on the role and practices of teachers and parents in identifying gifted children. It presents studies that criticize their ability to identify gifted children as well as the studies that attest to their accuracy and reliability in this task. Terms such as identification, nomination, and recognition are used interchangeably.

The importance of teachers' and parents' views in relation to identifying gifted children has been emphasized by researchers. For example, Clark (1988) argues that a teacher is a unique resource able to reveal information not available in identification processes such as formative assessment, observations and students' progress reports. In addition, Strip and Hirsch (2001) pointed out that, "Parents and

teachers each possess valuable information about the children they know at home and in the classroom” (p. 27). However, a significant amount of research has evaluated the perceptions of teachers and parents toward gifted children by using IQ testing or other standardized tests to identify gifted children. Some have found that teachers are not a reliable instrument to identify gifted children (Ciha et al. 1974; Jacobs, 1971; Pagnato & Birch, 1959; Terman, 1925), while others disagree (Clark, 1988; Davis & Rimm, 2004; Neber, 2004). Similarly, using parents to identify gifted children has also become controversial. Some researchers have hesitated to ask parents about whether or not their children were gifted, because the belief is that all parents may perceive their children to be gifted (Silverman et al., 1986). In contrast, some findings revealed that parents are much better in identification of gifted children compared to teachers themselves (Ciha et al. 1974; Louis & Lewis, 1992; Jacobs, 1971).

In the early part of the last century, Terman (1925) examined the accuracy of teachers’ nomination and found that teachers were poor identifiers compared to various groups of tests. He concluded that teachers missed up to 25% of children who were identified as gifted based on IQ testing. Pagnato and Birch (1959) also examined the efficiency and the effectiveness of teachers’ identification. They found that the ability of teachers to nominate all children who were already confirmed as gifted according to standardized IQ tests (effectiveness) was low, at 45 percent (41/91). The ability of teachers to identify children who were gifted but did not meet IQ test criterion (efficiency) was poor, at 27 percent (41/154). Pagnato and Birch concluded that teachers were poor identifiers of gifted children. However, Gagne (1994) criticized the conclusion of the study of Pagnato and Birch (1959). His criticism focused on the methods used in this study. He argued that “we should not compare the effectiveness and efficiency level of a given method (e.g., method X is very effective, but not very efficient) because these two indices will move in opposite directions as we change the cut-off scores” (p. 125).

Another researcher, Cornish (1968), also conducted a study to investigate the efficiency and the effectiveness of teachers. Teachers were asked to complete a form with the request “to rate each child in their classes according to his ability” (p. 14). There were 86 students enrolled in these classes. In addition to the teachers’

judgment, intelligence tests were used to nominate gifted children (132 or above on the Stanford-Binet scale and 130 or above on the Wechsler scale (WISC) were set as cut-off points). Teachers nominated 12 children as being gifted. Then, in order to identify gifted children among them, all students enrolled in these classes were given either the Stanford-Binet test or WISC. According to the intelligence tests, 16 children were identified as gifted. A comparison of the results of IQ tests with the results of teachers' identification showed that teachers were only able to identify five children who were confirmed as gifted according to intelligence tests. This means that teachers failed in recognizing seven children, so their efficiency was 42 percent (5/12) and their effectiveness was 31 percent (5/16). In contrast, a more recent study by Neber (2004) compared the quality of teachers' nomination with the result of psychometric testing and with self-identifications. He found that teachers were able to identify all highly gifted children who were already identified as such according to a cognitive ability test. On the other hand, Neber reported that the efficiency of teachers was somewhat low.

Pertaining to parents' identification, some researchers felt that parents are not reliable for identifying gifted children. For example, Davis and Rimm (1994) cautioned that not all parents "know their children well" and may not be aware of their gifted children's original ideas (p. 81). The most common statement that comes to mind when asking parents about their children is that "all parents think their children are gifted" (Silverman et al., 1986, p. 23). However, some researchers (e.g., Ciha et al. 1974; Jacobs, 1971; Louis & Lewis, 1992) have examined the accuracy of parents' identification and concluded that parents are good identifiers of gifted children.

Jacobs (1971) investigated the accuracy of parents and teachers in recognizing gifted children. The IQ test was also used as a parameter to confirm this result. A total of 654 kindergarten children and their parents were represented in this study. Among the sample of parents, 26 considered their children might be gifted. Then, all 654 children were given an individual test, the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI). The cut-off point used to determine giftedness was a full-scale IQ or 125 and above. The results of IQ tests showed that 21 children were confirmed as gifted. From the 21 confirmed gifted on IQ testing, the parents

successfully identified 16 children. The effectiveness of parents' nominations was 76 percent (16/21).

Six-months later, a total of 12 teachers were requested to identify any children enrolled in their class who might be gifted. A total of 46 children were recognized by their teachers as gifted. Among the 46 children who were nominated as gifted by teachers, only two children were confirmed according to the IQ test as being gifted. Jacobs reported that 96% of those children nominated as gifted by their teachers were of average ability. Therefore, the efficiency of teachers was 4.4 percent and, the effectiveness was 9.5 percent. Jacobs concluded that "It would appear that parental opinion of a child's high intellectual ability is a potentially useful source" (p. 142). In a like manner, Ciha et al. (1974) compared the effectiveness of teachers and parents of the identification of gifted children and found that parents' effectiveness was 67 percent and teachers' effectiveness was 22 percent. Ciha et al. confirmed the results found in Jacobs's (1971) study. It was concluded that parents of children were more accurate compared with teachers in identifying the potential of gifted children.

However, despite the fact that parents' effectiveness was perceived as greater than that of teachers in these studies, parents missed up to 24 percent of gifted children in Jacobs's study, and 33 percent in the study by Ciha et al. As mentioned earlier, Terman (1925) considered teachers as unreliable identifiers of gifted children as they missed up to 25 percent of these children. So, if this is the case, parents here in general, missed more than 25 percent of gifted children. This would suggest that the efficiency and the effectiveness of parents when compared with the results of IQ testing were not high enough to conclude that they are good identifiers.

In light of current understandings of giftedness, it is clearly problematic that these previous studies, which either criticized or supported the use of teachers and/or parents, relied on IQ testing when judging the utility of using teachers' and parents' nominations of gifted children. Naglieri and Ford (2003) reviewed many studies concerning the use of IQ testing for identifying gifted children and reported that intelligence tests have been mainly used for middle class children ignoring smart gifted children from different minority groups and backgrounds. Renzulli and Delcourt (1986) criticized studies that compared the ability of teachers for

identifying gifted children with the results found in IQ testing. They argued that comparing the ability of teachers for identifying gifted children with the result of IQ testing does not reflect the real ability of teachers' nomination. It could be argued that examining the value of information teachers and/or parents have regarding the abilities of their children, according to existing results found on IQ testing, would prevent teachers and parents from expressing their views sufficiently. Consequently, Renzulli and Delcourt declared that, "the value of alternative criteria increases because they do not correlate highly with intelligence" (p. 21).

Other researchers stressed this view and stated that it may be useful to allow teachers and parents, as the first observers of their children's development, to express their perceptions without judging them through an existing view found in the IQ testing results. This led Busse et al. to state that, "it is more useful to allow teachers to identify highly gifted students and then detail the characteristics of these persons" (p. 55).

Chan (2000) examined the use of teachers' and parents' nominations and reported that a number of educators have agreed that "teacher nominations may be a useful source of information on aspects of giftedness not easily discernible using IQ tests or other standardized tests". In addition, parents as another source of information concerning their children were perceived to be "more knowledgeable in evaluating their children's precocious cognitive development, creativity, leadership, motor coordination, energy and persistence and other characteristics not easily detectable in school settings" (p.70).

The more recent study conducted by Al-Hroub and Whitebread (2008) examined the valuable information teachers have regarding gifted children. Instead of using psychometric instrument to identify gifted children, the researchers organized two seminars in order to discuss the definition of giftedness plus some issues related to gifted children and their traits. The participants were allowed to use their definition of giftedness and they nominated children accordingly. The researchers summarized their results and reported that although many teachers were not skilled or familiar with the characteristics of dual exceptional children (i.e. gifted children with some learning difficulties), 58 percent of teachers were able to

accurately identify these children. In addition, although Silverman et al. (1986) judged the accuracy of parents' recognitions based on results found from IQ testing, they admitted that, "When provided with a framework of characteristics with which to evaluate their children, parents do appear able to identify signs of giftedness in their youngsters" (p. 35).

Practically, teachers and/or parents are often given a list of characteristics (e.g., Silverman et al., 1986) or asked to articulate their perceptions regarding what characteristics they believe represent giftedness (Busse et al., 1986; Louis & Lewis, 1992). In the following section, common characteristics that are identified by teachers and parents are discussed.

### **Characteristics of gifted children as perceived by teachers and parents**

Daily events such as interactions may give teachers and parents a great opportunity to obtain valuable information concerning their children's characteristics. Plunkett (2000) asked her teachers to specify the strategies they used to identify gifted children. All participants reported that they used observations. Effective observer teachers need to be aware of the characteristics of gifted children (Shaklee, 1992). It could be argued that instead of judging giftedness in children using IQ testing for a specific time and for specific knowledge, observation may help teachers to observe the ability of children for a period. This would allow teachers to reveal accurate judgments concerning the potential of gifted children. In addition, parents have been able to contribute information in relation to their children, often unavailable from the school (Strange, 2005). Generally, many researchers (e.g., Endepohls-Ulpe & Ruf, 2006; Harrison, 2004; Rohrer, 1995; Siegle & Powell, 2004; Snowden & Christian, 1999), have observed agreement between teachers and parents on the characteristics of gifted children regarding cognitive traits or skills that may relate to the scholastic environment. However, discrepancies between the two groups can be found over the interpretation of the social and emotional behaviours of gifted children. In addition, both groups also inconsistently mentioned other aspects of giftedness such as leadership, creativity, and traits related to personality or the visual

arts. To facilitate our understanding of the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the characteristics of giftedness, this review focuses first on teachers' perceptions. Next, parental perceptions of the identifying traits of gifted children are described. Finally, similarities and differences between these two groups in perceiving these traits are discussed.

### **Teachers' perceptions**

Teachers frequently describe gifted children as those who have extraordinary abilities. Cognitive traits, including verbal skills, were most often identified by teachers as the most important indications of giftedness. For example, Endepohls-Ulpe and Ruf (2006) attempted to find the characteristics that may lead teachers to perceive a child as gifted. A total of 317 female and 67 male primary school teachers took part in this study. The researchers categorized the responses of the participants into five categories: a) "physical maturity", b) "cognitive features", c) "motivational features", d) social behavior", and e) "personality traits" (p.221). The results showed that the majority of participants stressed cognitive and motivational traits when judging gifted children. Other features were rated between "played a minor role" (p.221) and "rarely mentioned" (p.222). For cognitive traits, the participants judged a child as gifted if he/she showed excellent results at school, intelligence, good ability in verbal tasks such as "vocabulary, articulateness, elaboration of language use", and early reading and writing abilities. In motivation traits, the participants judged children as gifted if they were avid for knowledge or showed "an interest in extracurricular subjects", boredom with tedious work, and independent learning (p. 222). Findings of this study were consistent with the findings of Rohrer's (1995) study. For example, when teachers were asked to explain their perceptions of gifted children, they focused mainly on academic performance rather than personality or social and emotional aspects. They thought that these children possessed "extensive vocabulary" and used "expressive language". Teachers also mentioned other intellectual traits such as "wide general knowledge; advanced insights; problem-solving ability; creativity; high level of curiosity; initiative; interest and ability in written language" (p. 274). Rohrer also found that teachers perceived gifted children as those who are interested in specific topics.

The importance of intellectual traits to teachers has been also stressed by a number of researchers (See Brighton, Moon, Jarvis & Hockett, 2007; Copenhaver & Mc Intyre, 1992; Hunsacker, 1994). For example, Brighton et al. (2007) asked primary teachers to describe the characteristics of gifted children they thought were most important. Approximately 400 participated in this study. The questionnaire distributed to the sample contained a number of sections. Among them were: "Teachers' Conceptions of Giftedness," this part focused on the perceptions of the characteristics of gifted children. It was rated from "Very easy to imagine" to "Cannot imagine"; and "Consideration for Identifying Gifted Students," this part focused on aspects that may be considered an indication of giftedness when nominating children for gifted programs. It was rated from "very likely" to "not likely" (p. 26). Concerning the first part, teachers described their perceptions toward gifted children as "very easy to imagine and easy to imagine", 99 percent thought that the gifted child "tries to understand the how and why's of things", 98 percent stated that they have a wide range of knowledge, 98 percent said that they are imaginative, 96 percent thought that they complete their work faster than ordinary children, and 94 percent thought that they have unusual interests (p. 32). In addition, 84 percent found it "very difficult" or "cannot imagine" that a gifted child "is not curious," and 75% could not imagine a gifted child who "has a limited vocabulary" (p. 34).

Teacher perceptions of the characteristics of gifted children also included the areas of creativity, social and personal traits, and leadership. While teachers perceived creativity as a primary indication of giftedness (Hunsacker, 1994), and leadership as the most important trait of gifted children (Chan, 2000), teachers in the study by Brighton et al. (2007) paid less attention to these traits compared to cognitive traits. For instance, 60 percent of teachers stated that it was difficult or impossible to imagine that gifted children are not creative, while 38 percent found it easy or very easy to imagine that gifted children were not creative. In addition, teachers were inconsistent on whether gifted children were able to dominate and lead a group: 49 percent stated that it was easy or very easy to imagine gifted children as followers, while 47 percent did not. Teachers also showed a degree of disagreement when describing the trait "independence": 43 percent of teachers could imagine that these children "cannot work independently", whereas 57 percent found this difficult

to imagine (p. 34). For personality and social issues, 83 percent stated that they could easily imagine these children to have poor social skills and 84 percent stated that these children are shy. In contrast, 89 percent of teachers could easily imagine that gifted children are able to make “people laugh with clever jokes” (p. 33). Although it may be reasonable to assume that a child who is able to make jokes and enjoy them with others would be sociable and outgoing, the perceptions of gifted children as shy and having poor social skills but at the same time being able to make others laugh may show that teachers linked humour to high cognitive abilities more than to personal or social traits. Interestingly, when teachers were asked to describe the traits that may convince them to identify children as gifted, only 14 percent stated that the students who made others laugh were very likely to be identified.

In the second part of the survey, teachers responded to a long list of traits that could be used to identify children as gifted. The findings of the study showed a significant strong consistency in the way teachers perceived gifted children and the required traits for nominating them as gifted. Specifically, intellectual traits, such as a large vocabulary, early reading and writing abilities, imagination, high levels of information and knowledge, interest in specific topics, and curiosity were most often mentioned by teachers when describing the identification of gifted children. Similarly, traits such as creativity, leadership, and independence, which were perceived as less important in participants’ perceptions of gifted children, were also among the least important traits when nominating children for gifted programs. In addition, in this part, teachers did not perceive certain personal and social traits as significant for giftedness. For example, only 20 percent of teachers thought that children who show willingness to help others may be identified as gifted, and only 15 percent thought that children who are “well liked by classmates” would be nominated as gifted (p. 44). In addition, some behaviours that may disturb teachers such as “has a lot of energy, sometimes 'smart-aleck' answers” were associated with negative traits of gifted children (p. 42). It is rare for teachers not to mention or describe personal or personality traits. However, these traits seemed to be less important compared to cognitive traits due to the fact that some teachers “have a more difficult time envisioning identifying a student as gifted who disrupts class and interferes with classroom control and management” (Brighton et al., 2007, p. 42).

A study by Busse et al. (1986) attempted to compare American and German teachers' perceptions regarding the characteristics of gifted children. Teachers in both countries responded to a long list of characteristics covering a variety of areas of giftedness. Statistically, teachers showed significant agreement in respect to some cognitive traits, including intelligence, curiosity, "quick intellectual grasp", and liking reading. Although teachers thought that gifted children had unique personal traits, the researchers reported that, "several personal characteristics are not quite so important as the intellectual qualities noted above" (p. 58). Concerning music, the visual arts, and sport, teachers in both Germany and America perceived these areas as part of giftedness.

It could be argued that Busse et al. were more interested in comparing the perceptions of American and German teachers than understanding the perceptions of teachers toward gifted children's traits. This may allow us to interpret their findings quite differently than they did. An examination of the analytical description of the findings reveals that the respondents rated the characteristics of gifted children from 1 to 5. The researchers deemed low scores (that is, closer to 1) to "indicate that a characteristic is typical of highly gifted students" (p. 57). According to this, teachers gave mean values ranging from 1.38 to 1.89 to characteristics such as independence, confidence, ability to solve problems in unusual ways, honesty, effectiveness in arguing, and high achievement. In addition, teachers gave mean values ranging from 4.27 to 4.75 to characteristics such as verbally unskilled, aggressive, poor memory, and having "few interests" (p. 57). This result can explain that these teachers were more interested to stress traits related to intellectuality or scholastic environment. It was found that when teachers were asked to mention which traits of gifted children may be perceived importantly, they often paid much attention to traits that may help children to be successful at schools (Strip, & Hirsch, 2001).

In a study conducted in Saudi Arabia, AlFahaid (2002) found that teachers emphasized the importance of characteristics such as "superior general intellectual potential and ability, asking perceptive questions, possessing outstanding abilities, and having great task commitment" (p.67). Teachers in this study significantly valued memorization and critical thinking. The appreciation of memorizing among Saudi teachers is not surprising. Persons who are able to memorize and repeat

information are not only appreciated at schools but also in the society. For example, a person who can memorize the Holy Quran or *hadith* is highly appreciated among Saudis. Concerning social and behavioural traits, while elsewhere gifted children were described as those who display humour (Silverman et al., 1986), Saudi teachers did not perceive this trait as an aspect of giftedness. The acceptance of joking may differ between teachers. Some teachers thought that they are responsible to teach a large number of students for a specific time (Strip & Hirsch, 2001), so allowing students to exchange jokes would hinder their plan and may affect the quality of teaching they provide. In addition, the differences here regarding the appreciation of humour may be because of the differences between genders. In the study of Silverman et al., the majority of the participants were females, while AlFahaid's study consisted of only males. For other social traits, most Saudi participants thought that gifted children may be described as "being bored or easily distracted and being socially maladjusted" (p. 68).

Galloway and Porath (1997) conducted a study to investigate the similarities and differences between teachers and parents in perceiving certain social skills of gifted children. The researchers found that the perceptions of teachers and parents were similar. The findings revealed that gifted children were well-behaved at home and school. However, when teachers and parents were asking to articulate their perceptions regarding certain specific social skills and characteristics such as cooperation and assertion, differences between groups did emerge. Teachers more than parents perceived that these children were cooperative. Parents perceived more than teachers that these children displayed more assertive behaviour. It may be agreed that both parents and teachers are very interested in finding the potential of giftedness in their children. However, the way teachers and parents perceive giftedness may differ, based on their understandings of the behaviour of the children. For example, parents may interpret the exhibition of certain undesired behaviours such as "interrupting, challenging authority, becoming excessively upset over trivial incidents or perceived slights", as normal everyday events, while teachers may perceive "these traits as disrespectful and disruptive to the class as a whole, and that perspective may determine how he or she works with the gifted child" (Strip & Hirsch, 2001, p. 27).

**Parents' perceptions**

The perceptions of parents seemed to be consistent with the perceptions of teachers concerning the importance of cognitive traits, specifically high general ability, including verbal skills. For example, in a study by Snowden and Christian (1999), parents were surveyed and interviewed in order to investigate their perceptions toward gifted children. Like teachers in previous studies, parents emphasized the intellect. The majority of parents believed that their children “had an advanced vocabulary”. Parents also said that their children “processed information quickly, recalled facts easily”, and “wanted to know how things work”. Leadership ability also seemed to be important to parents. Gifted children were described by their parents as those who “tended to dominate others if given the chance”. Gifted children were also perceived “as having persistence, task commitment” and “long attention span” (219). These children were also perceived through their parents’ eyes as sociable, able to make others laugh, in good physical condition, and adventurous. Most traits mentioned by parents in this study were confirmed by another study. For example, Gross as cited in Harrison (2004) found that parents often associate traits such as good memory, curiosity, and humour with the characteristics of gifted children (p. 79).

Intellectual traits were also emphasised by parents in the study by Wright (2000). Parents were asked to describe their children. All parents described these children as having thinking skills, advanced language, showing curiosity and having excellent memory. In addition to cognitive traits, parents frequently mentioned a number of personal traits. Parents stressed the values of altruism, justice, loyalty, honesty and fairness. One mother commented “You know the honesty thing, the fairness thing, and just all those positive things that help us through our lives” (p. 82). Parents frequently mentioned leadership and persistence. They describe their children as persons who control others and decide their actions. This result was consistent with a number of researchers’ views that parents perceived leadership ability in their children (e.g., Gross as cited in Harrison, 2004; Snowden & Christian, 1999).

Silverman et al. (1986) study examined the traits most often mentioned by parents as observable manifestations of giftedness. Most parents of gifted children who participated in this study felt that their children demonstrated most of the following traits:

“good problem-solving abilities, rapid learning ability, extensive vocabulary, good memory, long attention span, sensitivity, compassion for others, perfectionism, high degree of energy, preference for older companions, wide range of interest, excellent sense of humor, early or avid reading ability, ability in puzzles, mazes, or numbers, at times, seems mature for age, perseverance in areas of interest” (p. 25).

In another study, Louis and Lewis (1992) designed a questionnaire to examine the beliefs of parents regarding their children. The survey allowed parents to provide many responses to describe giftedness in their children. A total of 118 families, 60 of whom had male children, and 58 with female children, participated in this study. The findings showed that parents of children with higher IQ compared with parents of children with lower IQ strongly associated traits such as expressive language, memory, curiosity, and abstract thinking with the characteristics of gifted children. Interestingly, although many researchers (Distin, 2006; Harrison, 2004; Sankar-Deleeuw, 2004; Silverman et al., 1986; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998) have shown that gifted children are profoundly interested in reading at an early age, the findings of the study of Louis and Lewis (1992) indicated that reading “was not mentioned by parents very frequently” (p. 30). In addition, parents of children with higher IQ mentioned music, independence, creativity-imagination and socialization, as indications of giftedness. Both parents of higher and lower IQ children mentioned artistic ability.

Interestingly, the parents of children with higher IQ ranked leadership as the least important characteristic of gifted children, though parents often consider it a component of giftedness (Chan, 2000; Snowden & Christian, 1999). For example, Chan (2000) used adaptive Chinese versions of the Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (SRBCSS), in order to investigate the traits that may be associated with gifted children as perceived by teachers and parents in Hong Kong. The results showed that parents perceived leadership as more important for

judging giftedness in their children. Further, traits that were less important observed by parents were those related to creativity. Interestingly, although the scale used in Chan's study was originally established based on the theory of Renzulli, which perceived creativity as a principal component of giftedness, Chinese parents perceived gifted children to possess traits less related to creativity. These differences between the response of parents involved in the study of Louis and Lewis (1992) and Chan (2000) regarding leadership and creativity may relate to the instruments used to judge the perceptions of parents regarding the characteristics of gifted children, or to actual differences between the perceptions of parents concerning these traits.

In regard to the perceptions of parents toward other areas of giftedness, such as music and sports, Dai and Schader (2002) investigated the value of these areas from the parents' perspective. The results showed that parents valued musical and academic abilities more highly than athletic ability. In contrast, parents in another study appreciated sport and thought that their children were athletic (Wright, 2000).

Appreciation of music is frequently mentioned, especially in Western countries. Debates around this issue focus mainly on the benefit of music and its impact on children's academic abilities, rather than considering it as useless for cultural or religious reasons. Therefore, most studies of parents or teachers in regard to this matter have aimed to identify factors that may increase the development of children's musical talent. Evans, Bickel, and Pendarvis (2000) found that parents described themselves as influential in improving their children's musical ability. The parents described their children "as having only ordinary levels of inborn talent, and they attribute their children's musical accomplishments to encouragement provided by family and friends" (p. 80). This result can be interpreted as indicating that music is encouraged and appreciated by parents.

Parents experience some behavioural difficulties with their gifted children. Parents, as the primary observers of their children's behaviour, are in a good position to identify these aspects. For example, in a study conducted by Morawska and Sanders (2008), parents stated that one of the main problems they found in their children pertained to their acceptance within peer groups. Parents of gifted children felt that their children were "likely to be perceived as different by other children, and

may be labelled as ‘nerdy’ or a ‘teacher’s pet’” (p. 824). However, some previous studies have shown that teachers are sometimes unhappy with certain behaviours of gifted children, such as interruptive or destructive behaviour (Strip & Hirsch, 2001).

In addition, parents thought that the consequences of labelling their children as having poor social ability would affect their tendency to interact or communicate with others. Most parents highly appreciated discussion and conversation with their children. On the other hand, parents admitted that they faced a degree of difficulty with obedience. For example, ‘parents felt least confidence in handling children’s non-compliant and defiant behaviours, such as the child refusing to do as they were told’ (p. 825). However, the perceptions of parents regarding obedience and accepting authority seemed different in another study. For example, Wright (2000) noticed that parents inconsistently described obedience and accepting authority. Some parents described their children as disobedient and argumentative against authority. They attributed these behaviours to the needs of their children. Some parents explained that if children did not get enough attention, they may break things around them or scream. In contrast, other parents reported that their children were well-behaved and obedient.

In summary, the foregoing review reveals that teachers and parents show a degree of agreement over some characteristics of gifted children, but some disagreement on others. The main agreement is observed in regard to cognitive traits, while inconsistent views emerge on certain issues related to creativity, personality and social and emotional areas.

## **The relationship between teachers' and parents' background and their perceptions toward gifted children**

The background variables of teachers have often been studied when examining their views toward gifted children and gifted education. It was found that the number of coursework and training programs studied in gifted education positively influenced the perceptions of teachers toward gifted children (Copenhaver & McIntyre, 1992). However, in a study conducted by Mills (2008), it was found that “formal training in the field of gifted education may not be as important for teaching gifted students as a strong background and interest in an academic discipline” (p. 278). In addition, it was found that there were no significant differences between the gender of the participants, their ages or the level of education completed and their perceptions for teaching the gifted. Among the results of that study was the finding that the personality of teachers and cognitive style she or he prefers influence the effectiveness of teaching gifted children.

However, Buxton (1997) studied the relationship between some selected demographic information and the perceptions of teachers regarding the characteristics of gifted children. Among these demographics were gender, age, highest degree completed, qualification, courses in gifted education, and experiences of teaching. There were 162 teachers, 95.8 percent of whom were females, and 4 percent males. The results showed that there were no significant relationships between the perceptions of teachers and their background regarding the characteristics of gifted children. In a similar manner, Houghton (1994) attempted to investigate the perceptions of teachers toward the characteristics of gifted children. She tested a number of hypotheses. She hypothesized that there was no relationship between teacher demographic variables and their perceptions toward common identified characteristics of gifted children. Among these variables were age, qualification for teaching gifted children, the highest degree completed, number of years as teachers, and number of recommended children for gifted testing in the last three years. The results showed that none of these variables statistically influenced the perceptions of teachers toward commonly identified characteristics of gifted children.

Experience in teaching gifted children was found to be an important factor in determining the perceptions of teachers toward gifted children. Endepohls-Ulpe and Ruf (2005) found significant differences between teachers who had experience in teaching gifted children and teachers who had not. They found that experienced teachers of gifted children were more likely to view gifted children in a positive manner than teachers without experience of teaching such children. However, in a study conducted by Neumeister, Adanms, Pierce, Cassady, and Dixon (2007), the experience of learning about teaching gifted children did not influence the perceptions of teachers. It was found that, although teachers who participated in that study had already attended professional courses for gifted education, teachers did not show improved understanding of the manifestations of giftedness.

Regarding parents, it was found that examining the impact of factors such as the ages of parents and the experience of parenting gifted children, upon the perceptions of parents regarding who might be gifted are still limited. According to Morawska and Sanders (2009), "There is limited empirical research on the experience of parenting a gifted child" (p. 164). The vast majority of studies dealt with parents of gifted children focused on issues related to their perceptions regarding their children's educational needs (Hertzog & Bennett, 2004), or focusing on providing parents with some skills that may help them to support and develop the abilities of their children (Gross, 1999). It could be argued that understanding the relationship between parents' background and their perceptions toward gifted children may help to understand these perceptions properly. It was found that parents of gifted children compared to parents of non-gifted children have often raised some difficulties of parenting their children (Morawska & Sanders, 2009). Whether these difficulties are related to the nature of gifted children or to the type of backgrounds those parents have are limited. It may be agreed that all parents want their children to be successful in school and life, but "little is known about the differences between parenting a gifted and nongifted child" (Morawska & Sanders, 2009, p. 165).

To best of my knowledge, I only found few studies confirmed that the perceptions of parents of gifted children are influenced by the level of education. Snowden and Christian (1999) conducted a study to investigate the perceptions of parents regarding gifted children. A total of 46 parents took part in this study. The

participants were asked to provide their demographic information. Among this information, there were 44 parents who had some college experience and 17 had graduate school certificates; 59 percent of parents had two children. The researchers reported that the level of education of parents involved in this study was high. The researchers concluded that the higher the level of education parents have, the higher the level of perceptions and understanding of their gifted children's abilities they have. However, the researchers cautioned the readers not to assume that "all well-educated parents are good parents" (p. 220). The factor of education was also found in a study conducted by Gottfried, A, W, Gottfried, A, E, Bathurst and Guerin (1994). In their longitudinal study they found that gifted children often came from highly educated parents.

## **Summary of related literature**

The expansion of the conceptions of giftedness has resulted in there being numerous characteristics of gifted children. The majority of the traits of giftedness have been identified from a Western perspective. Western theories of giftedness may cover some areas relevant to other cultures, but may not adequately describe giftedness as it is perceived within its cultural contexts. The view of gifted children as those who have exceptional abilities holds true everywhere, although the interpretation of this exceptionality across cultures is inconsistent. For example, in indigenous cultures, traits that describe gifted people include the ability to find their way effectively through the bush, or the desert, and the ability to reconcile and resolve problems between tribes. These traits may not be recognized in the West as being as important as in indigenous cultures.

In indigenous cultures, including Saudi Arabian culture, perceptions of giftedness seem more related to the values and qualities appreciated in those cultures. The impact of culture on perceptions of people toward gifted education and gifted children has been widely addressed. However, the interplay between culture and religion and their roles in shaping the perceptions of people toward gifted children have not been studied. The impact of religion in Saudi Arabia can be observed when describing the acceptance of music and visual arts, and whether these can be considered part of the characteristics of gifted children among Muslims. The arguments regarding music can be summarized through two religious interpretations. The first regards as lawful and permissible music, including singing, that excludes sexual or obscene content. The second perceives both music and singing as prohibited. However, religious scholars agree on permitting only women to sing in wedding occasions. Concerning the visual arts (i.e. drawing and photography) the majority agree that the drawing of inanimate objects is allowed in Islam. In addition, under some circumstances, such as on the issue of personal identity cards, some religious scholars permit photography.

Teachers and parents have conventionally served as the main source for identifying gifted children. Arguments between researchers regarding the ability of teachers and/or parents to identify gifted children have continued. This review has

shown that some researchers regard teachers as an unreliable source of identification, whereas others do not. In addition, some researchers have found that parents are much better than teachers at identifying gifted children. This discrepancy in views has motivated the current study, which explores the characteristics of gifted children as identified by teachers and parents.

An examination of the characteristics of gifted children included in this literature has shown that teachers and parents agree quite closely on the importance of cognitive traits. Other traits of personality, creativity, leadership, music, and visual arts are also perceived by both groups with some degree of agreement, while social and emotional traits are inconsistently interpreted by teachers and parents. Some behaviours such as interruptive or disruptive behaviour in the classroom may be interpreted by teachers as disrespectful, while parents attribute this to the natural activity of gifted children.

The final area covered in this review involves the relationship between teacher and parent backgrounds and their perceptions of gifted children. The review has shown that some studies found a relationship between experience and training in gifted education and teachers' perceptions of giftedness, while others did not. Other studies showed that a strong academic background was more important in shaping the perceptions of teachers toward gifted children than a training or qualification in teaching gifted children, while others did not find any significant relationship between teachers' perceptions and their background regarding gifted children. The level of education parents had seemed an important element to determining giftedness in children. However, some findings cautioned against generalizing the finding that gifted children came from educated parents.

The paucity of research considering the inseparability of religion and culture and their impact upon the perceptions of teachers and parents toward who might be gifted in general and in Saudi Arabia in particular, formed the motivation for the current study to explore this area. The study aims to answer the following questions:

Research question 1 What do teachers and parents perceive as the defining characteristics of gifted children?

Research Question 2 Are there any significant differences between teachers and parents in their perceptions regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

Research Question 3 Are there any significant differences between teachers of gifted children and teachers of non-gifted children in their perceptions regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

Research Question 4 Are there any significant differences between parents who have a child identified as gifted and parents who have a child not identified as gifted in their perceptions regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

Research question 5a. Is there any relationship between the perceptions of teachers of gifted children and their demographic background regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

Research question 5b. Is there any relationship between the perceptions of teachers of non-gifted children and their demographic background regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

Research question 6a. Is there any relationship between the perceptions of parents of gifted children and their demographic background regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

Research question 6b. Is there any relationship between the perceptions of parents of non-gifted children and their demographic background regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

To answer these questions, a number of issues were taken into account. First, most of the theories and views of giftedness in Saudi Arabia were adapted from the West. It was found in the review of the literature included in this study that giftedness differed from one culture to another. If this is the case, it could be argued that the adapted views of giftedness that have been used in Saudi Arabia for defining and identifying gifted children may not allow Saudis to show the whole picture of

giftedness as what they believe. The second issue is related to the uniqueness of Saudi culture. As mentioned earlier, Saudi Arabia was perceived from insider and outsider points of view as a conservative culture. In addition, Saudis are religious in general. Therefore, it could be argued that adapting an existing view of giftedness from another culture, which was not designed to consider the importance of religion and traditions in Saudis' lives, may fail to capture all meanings of giftedness as held by Saudis.

Accordingly, three separate studies were conducted. Study One, (Chapter Four), aimed to explore the perceptions of Saudis toward giftedness. It was designed to elicit information and opinions of giftedness based on the views of Saudis. In Study Two (Chapter Five), all identified traits of gifted children were used to create the study scale. It included a consultation of the experts regarding the suitability of the content of the scale as well as the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Then, in Study Three (Chapter Six), the designed scale was used to investigate the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the traits of gifted children. In addition to that, a qualitative approach was used to investigate the perceptions of the participants in greater depth.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY ONE**

### **EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SAUDIS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED CHILDREN**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter focused on the use of teachers and parents in identifying gifted children as well as their perceptions toward the traits of gifted children. The aim of this chapter is to elicit information and knowledge of giftedness as perceived by the participants. This includes a brief description of the suitability of the use of focus group as a method to collect data. This is followed by the selection of the subjects. Data analysis, results and the discussion are provided at the end of this chapter.

#### **Focus groups**

Due to the complexity of Saudi context which is perceived by both Saudis and non-Saudis as a religious and conservative culture, a decision was made to not adapt an existing instrument from the literature. Instead, it was decided to develop a tool according to the understanding and beliefs of Saudi Arabians regarding who might be gifted. It is cautioned that interpreting the experience of one culture based on the beliefs of others may lead to inaccurate conclusion (Vogt et al., 2004).

To achieve this goal, the current study aimed to gather information about giftedness from the perspective of Saudis. The findings of the study were used to design a scale. This study used a structured focus groups approach. Structured approaches are appropriate when the researcher is focused on specific subject matter (Morgan, 1996). Open-ended questions were used for the focus groups discussions, because such questions allow people to talk comfortably and encourage them to generate much information through discussion (Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1997).

Focus groups have become popular, and have been used in many different fields. The use of focus groups is widely accepted in marketing research (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1996), communications studies (Staley, 1990), education (Flores & Alonzo, 1995), and political science (Kullberg, 1994). Morgan (1996) defined focus groups as a method that helps researchers gather information through group discussion on the topic determined by the researcher. Vogt, King, D. and King, L. (2004) considered focus group as “a technique that involves a moderator-facilitated discussion among multiple participants about a specified topic of interest” (p. 233).

Focus groups, as a qualitative method, have weaknesses and strengths. Morgan (1996) linked the weaknesses of focus groups to the method that the moderator uses in gathering the data, and the influence of the group itself upon the data. Agar and MacDonald (1995) compared a single focus group and a set of individual interviews. The researchers aimed to evaluate the amount of conversation between the interviewers and interviewees. Agar and MacDonald concluded that the nature of individual interviews put responsibility on the interviewees to express themselves to the interviewers, whereas the moderator in the focus group discussion disrupted the interaction, which was the reason for having a group.

Another weakness of focus groups involves the willingness of the participants to discuss sensitive information effectively in groups. For example, issues such as sexual behaviour (Morgan, 1996), or sensitive subjects that could be harmful to someone in the group (Krueger & Casey, 2000), affect the participation of individuals, and do not allow them to chat openly and comfortably.

Despite these weaknesses, focus groups are considered to be a useful tool to gather qualitative data (Krueger, 1994; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1996, 1997; Wilson, 1997). They are also a relatively inexpensive tool, and give the researcher the opportunity to interview several individuals at once. In addition, focus groups function well when researchers are trying to determine people's perceptions, attitudes, and feelings about issues (Krueger & Casey, 2000; O'Brien, 1993; Wilson, 1997). O'Brien (1993) pointed out that “focus group data can inform the actual content of the survey questionnaire - its wording, item development” (p. 106). In

social science research, focus groups can be used as a self-contained method, in multimethod studies, or as supplementary sources (Morgan, 1997). When focus groups are used as supplementary sources, the participants' discussion often works as a source of groundwork in primarily quantitative studies (Morgan, 1997).

Gibbs (1997) proposes using focus groups to organize discussion and understanding implicit perceptions of the participants about given topic. She also argues that focus groups, compared to one-to-one interviews or observations, enable researchers to obtain multiple views about the discussed topic. Moreover they allow researchers to gather a large amount of information within short time, whereas, observations may need waiting times for things to happen. Given these benefits, “focus groups provide a methodology that can allow researchers to learn about the meaning of a construct from the perspective of the population under study” (Vogt et al., 2004, p. 233).

## **Participants**

Nassar-McMillan and Borders (2002) state that because of “the practical necessity of conducting the groups locally, focus group participants do not constitute a random sample” (p. 4). The homogeneity of the participants not only facilitates the discussion, but also facilitates data analysis (Morgan, 1997). Therefore, the selection of the participants was intended to represent a given population. This study's sample comprised of experts, teachers and parents.

### **Experts' group**

Four experts were selected from three institutions in Riyadh: a) the General Department for Gifted Students, b) the Ministry of Education, and c) the Teachers' College in Riyadh. The experts' sample was recruited by presenting requests for volunteers to their directors. Three experts who work at the General Department for Gifted Students and one who works at the Teachers' College in Riyadh responded. Three of the experts possess a doctoral degree, and one has a bachelor's degree. The expert with the bachelor's degree has made significant contributions to the field of

giftedness in Saudi Arabia. He was a member of the Saudi National Project for Gifted Students.

### **Teacher groups**

Male and female participants in this group were divided into two separate groups. The directors of the Center of Gifted Boy Students and the Center of Gifted Girl Students were requested to inform their staff about the invitation to participate in the study, and to find out whether anyone was willing to take part in the focus group discussions. Four male teachers and three female teachers were selected from these institutions. All seven teachers consented to be interviewed. They all had bachelor's degrees. All teachers had also previously attended a number of courses or workshops in gifted education.

### **Parent groups**

Like teacher groups, the participants of parent groups were separately interviewed based on their gender. Parents were chosen from the database of gifted children who attend enrichment classes at the Center for Gifted Students in Riyadh. The participants volunteered and were selected by sending a letter to the directors of the Centers of Gifted Students seeking participants. The directors were asked to identify parents and then forward the invitation letter to them. The selection criteria for participating in the parents' focus group discussion were as follows: they have one child or more who is/are identified as gifted, and they live close enough to the location at which the focus groups' sessions were to be conducted.

Only two mothers and one father of gifted children agreed to be interviewed. Due to the fact that the main advantage of a focus group lies in the interactions between individuals, the researcher sent another letter to the director of the Centers for Gifted Students in Riyadh asking him to recruit other parents, especially fathers, to take part in the study. After one week, only one more mother accepted to join the mothers' group discussion. Therefore, the researcher conducted a one-on-one interview with the father. All mothers who participated in the study had bachelor's degrees. In addition, they all, except for one mother, had gifted daughters. The one father who participated had a master degree as well as a gifted son.

### **Time and Location of Focus Groups**

Focus groups can be conducted in people's homes, public buildings, hotels, or even restaurants (Litosseliti, 2003). Whatever the place and time, they should make the participants feel comfortable during discussions. To facilitate the interviews and to encourage participants to become freely involved in the discussions, the moderator should, early on in the discussions, take the responsibility of establishing an atmosphere of trust (Stewart, Shamadasani & Rook, 2007). It is logical enough to assume that a number of strangers sitting together to discuss a topic, will become hesitant or shy prior to becoming involved in the discussion effectively. Thus, the agenda for the discussions was carefully prepared to consider all issues that might impede the effectiveness of the participation in the discussions.

One and a half hours of structured focus group discussions were conducted. All focus group sessions were conducted during the morning. The participants were interviewed at the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity. This is a central location between the Ministry of Education and the Teachers' College, where the experts work, and the Centers of Gifted Students, where the teacher participants regularly work. The father's interview was conducted at the King Saud School in Riyadh. The mothers were interviewed in the female meeting room at the King Abdulaziz Foundation.

### **Data Collection**

An approval letter to conduct the study was received from Monash University. The approval letter was submitted to the Saudi Ministry of Education with the request to allow the researcher to carry out the study. The educational system in Saudi Arabia is segregated. Moreover, the structure of the Islamic religion and the Saudi culture do not allow male strangers to meet and talk with women. The researcher considered these facts prior to conducting the data collection. The current study targeted two different populations: male groups and female groups. Therefore, the researcher requested the General Department for Gifted Children to nominate a female teacher from the Center of Gifted Girl Students who could assist him in interviewing the female groups. All letters related to the above procedures were

listed in the appendices (See Appendix A-1). To increase the quality of the focus group discussions and to minimize inconsistency factors among groups, the author prepared his colleague before starting the data collection stage. These preparations included PowerPoint slides, which explained the purpose of focus groups, some tips about group interaction skills, the use of audiotape, and how to ensure the participants' privacy. This was followed by phone conversations to clarify any ambiguity and ensure her readiness.

The data for the focus groups study were collected during September/October 2006. A copy of the permission letter for conducting the study and invitation letter referring to the purpose of the study, plus the consent letters to the participants who are willing to participate in focus groups discussions and a reply paid envelope in which to return the participants' responses, were sent to the target institutions (See Appendix A-2 and A-3). All focus group sessions were audiotaped with the consent of participants.

### **Analysis**

Focus group discussions were transcribed using Microsoft Word in Arabic, and then translated into English. The names of the participants were replaced with codes during the transcription phase to protect the confidentiality of the participants. The Arabic transcripts and English translations were submitted to a Melbourne University PhD student who is studying applied linguistics and who holds a bachelor's degree in Arabic for review of the accuracy of the English translation. Slight changes were made to some of the translated responses.

The primary goal of the study was to generate an item list that could be used to form a survey scale. The topic of discussions was the perceptions of Saudis regarding the characteristics of gifted children in Saudi Arabia. Participants in each of the focus groups were asked a series of questions related to the characteristics of gifted children (See Appendix A-4). Participants' responses to each question were analyzed with the purpose of identifying any words they used to designate the characteristics of gifted children. A sample of one group's discussion and the method used to extract items is included in the Appendices (See Appendices, A-5 and A-6). Then, the

characteristics that were mentioned more than once across the groups were clustered together in sub-categories.

The analysis and the description of the data in this study used groups, instead of participants, as the unit of analysis. The response of the participants was divided based on the number of groups: the experts' group, the male teachers' group, the female teachers' group, the mothers' group, and the father. Each group was followed with two options (agree/ disagree). Right tick was used to show the groups' response regarding each mentioned trait. If most participants in each group shared a similar perception toward any listed trait, the mark would be ticked under their specific judgment (agree or disagree). Finally, to locate items for developing the scale, all items that were significantly agreed or disagreed among groups were extracted. In addition, items that were mentioned less throughout the group discussions but were emphasized in the literature as characteristics of gifted children, were also selected.

## **Results**

### **The perception of the groups**

Prior to recording the participants' responses regarding these questions, the researcher and his colleague aimed intentionally to break the ice and to identify what discourse the participants preferred when talking about their perceptions (Stewart, et al., 2007). The discussion started with a general topic related to giftedness and gifted children's characteristics (i.e., your experience with gifted children and your knowledge about giftedness). Starting focus group interviews with a broad topic helps participants to integrate into discussion easily (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1996).

There was significant agreement recorded amongst the participants regarding some traits such as: smartness, independence, accuracy, commitment, sensitivity toward others, helpfulness, curiosity, problem-solving, leadership, popularity, sports, and drawing. In addition, significant differences, in respect to other traits – music, language ability, obedience and the reaction toward routine tasks, persistence, argumentativeness, academic performance, and organization – were also noticed among the groups.

Table 2: Agreements/disagreements on the traits of gifted children as perceived across groups

The characteristic	The experts' group No=4		The male teachers' group No=4		The female teachers' group No=3		The mothers' group No=3		The father No=1		Total N = 15	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	disagree
Are smart	√		√		√		√		√		5	
Are independent	√		√		√		√		√		5	
Are accurate	√		√		√		√		√		5	
Are committed	√		√		√		√		√		5	
Show high level of altruism	√		√		√		√		√		5	
Are helpful	√		√		√		√		√		5	
Confront problems	√		√		√		√		√		5	
Focus on solutions	√		√		√		√		√		5	
Are curious	√		√		√		√		√		5	
Display a wide range of interests	√		√		√		√		√		5	
Are leader	√		√		√		√		√		5	
Are lovable	√		√		√		√		√		5	
Like sports	√		√		√		√		√		5	
Like drawing	√		√		√		√		√		5	
Like music		√		√		√		√		√		5
Like singing	√				√		√				3	
Have advanced language		√		√	√		√			√	2	3
Use a large number of words		√		√	√		√			√	2	3
Are obedient	√			√		√		√		√	1	4
Are persistence		√	√		√		√		√		4	1
Are argumentative		√	√		√		√		√		4	1
Are high achievers		√	√		√		√		√		4	1



Table 2 showed that all groups agreed that gifted children are smart, accurate and independent learners. In addition, most participants of groups agreed that these students are very committed. For example, comments such as gifted children are smart and usually attract their teachers' attention toward their brightness and smartness were repeatedly mentioned throughout all groups. Besides this agreement, all groups agreed that those students prefer to work independently. For example, most male teachers and female teachers described their gifted children and stated that, "those gifted children enjoy doing their work themselves", "they are committed and accurate children". The parents also emphasized that gifted children tend to work individually. One mother described her daughter and stated, "She does not ask others to do her work on her behalf; she just wants some hints or tips." The father described his gifted son and said that, "He seldom asks help. He loves his work too much... he always achieves his work in the specified time with high level of accuracy".

All groups significantly agreed that gifted children show high levels of the sensitivity. One teacher in the teachers' group described their gifted children, saying,

"They feel with others' problems and initiate action to join with them. Yesterday, a colleague, who was sick for a few days, came back to school. In the second day, my students gave her a nice bouquet of roses. It was an emotional situation and the colleague could not keep her tears back when she was hugging them. My students performed this wonderful action themselves and they did not receive any previous instructions from me. It means that they feel with others and act well with such situations".

Another parent in the parents' group described his son and pointed out that "he is very sensitive, especially, toward domestic problems". He continued and said that, "when I am arguing with his mother, he tries to fix the problem and return it to normal."

The experts also emphasized the sensitivity trait as a component of gifted children. One expert thought that gifted children are affected by unhappy situations more than non-gifted children. Moreover, the groups linked the sensitivity to the tendency to help others. They all believed that gifted children express their empathy for others through real action. For instance, one expert in the experts' group described his experience with several gifted children's attitudes towards poor people's

suffering. He said, "I noted that some gifted children said to me, 'I do not have money to help those people, but I will write/make some posters to encourage wealthy people to contribute to them'". Another teacher described one of his gifted children and stated that,

"He feels for others' problems. He is able to translate people's suffering into actual written text. One of my students watched a victim's child who was killed in a war. He got sad and wrote an expressive poem – I could not keep my tears back when I read it".

Curiosity was frequently mentioned across the groups as an element of gifted children's characteristics. The groups perceived gifted children as those who have the tendency to discover everything around them. For example, one mother described her daughter and stated that, "she is very curious and always asks about everything around her". Another mother completely agreed with this view. She explained that such children always bother you with their endless questions. She described her daughter and said that

"My daughter always shows high tendency to discover every new thing. When her dad focuses on installing some new home equipment, she sits close to him and tries to know how this stuff would be assembled. Moreover, she tries to put some parts together and sometimes she fixes them accurately".

Another teacher described gifted children saying, "they like to discover and try out new things. I remembered my students' reactions when I introduced them to the overhead projector. They wanted to know how to use it." In addition, one expert said, "those children sometimes may bother you with their curiosity. They want to know about everything." Furthermore, most of the groups linked the curiosity with the diversity of interests. Gifted children were perceived as those who display a wide range of interests. However, although the groups strongly agreed that gifted children have multiple interests and tend to explore many areas around them, the groups thought that those children pay most of their attention to the area that is linked to their giftedness. For example, most of the groups thought that not all gifted children are bright in all areas of giftedness. They thought that gifted artists are interested in literature and history stories. Others who are distinguished in electricity, for example, will search about electrical books and so on and so on.

Problem solving was listed very often by the participants of the groups. For example, one expert described the value of gifted children's solutions when some offered solutions to problems during one of the gifted children's programs. In this program gifted children were asked to give some suggestions to a water problem, which is currently considered a big national problem in Saudi Arabia. The expert said: "I'm not exaggerating if I say some students' projects were an initial step in a national project." In addition, another participant stated that, "gifted children were perceived as those students who always think in a different way than others think. She continued to say "I sometimes consult with her about some of my life problems and I like her contribution."

This view was also confirmed by teachers of gifted children. Teachers agreed that gifted children have wonderful insight into problems. This insight allows them to identify useful solutions for these problems. One teacher said that "those children have exceptional ability in identifying problems. They classify the problems based on their importance. He continued, saying that they sometimes do not care about one problem which is considered very important by other students".

In addition, another teacher thought that gifted students not only attract one's attention with their excellent solutions, but they also attract one with the ways they use to fix up the problems. The teachers stated that "gifted children perceive problems from a creative angle. I asked my students to give some uses for an ambulance. Ordinary students did not participate or at best offered the usual uses whereas gifted children presented excellent and amusing uses".

The parents' groups shared the same opinion with the experts' and the teachers' views regarding this case. The parents thought that gifted children can seriously confront problems and they usually focus on solutions rather than the problem itself. The father described his son and pointed out that, "He does not overstate problems and does his best to reach a solution". In addition, mother groups agreed that their children showed this ability.

The leadership characteristic was strongly agreed among the participants. All of them believed that gifted children tend to dominate others. They described the positions of gifted children when they are involved in activities and said that they

always try to control groups – give them the instructions, and represent the groups to classroom teachers. One teacher stressed that these children “are able to control groups and lead them successfully”. In addition, one expert thought that gifted children display leadership because they “have the ability to organize and draw up the plan for peer groups”. Parents also shared this perception with other groups. One mother said that her daughter displayed this trait. She described her and said “My daughter tends to organize and lead her friends. When they were playing, I observed that she tried to offer and suggest all games. She instructs other children on their participation and arranges their turns”. Female groups seemed to be very interested in perceiving leadership in girls. Actually, perceiving this trait in girls seemed to be an interesting result. In Saudi Arabia, leadership is considered to be more often evident in males.

In addition, all participants agreed that gifted children are considered lovable by their peers. One teacher talked about how gifted children leaders were perceived by their peers and said that, “gifted children are often admired by other children”, therefore, they are able to dominate and lead groups. Another mother affirmed that “her daughter is loved by her friends”.

Other traits such as sports and visual arts were recorded among the participants’ comments. The impact of religion upon some groups’ perspectives was observed when discussing sports and visual arts. All groups perceived athletics and sports positively. For example, one expert said, “Sports is appreciated in Saudi – our local team won a number of regional and international competitions. Another teacher in the male group said, “regarding sport, it is not rejected in the religion, so it may be accepted among the Saudis.” The female teachers and the mothers in the female groups also agreed with the fact that sports are perceived positively in Saudi Arabia. However, the female participants did not give valuable information concerning it, although they admitted that some exceptional athletes may be considered as gifted. Female groups generally thought that some soccer players have special characteristics such as leadership and intelligence which allow them to be in the centre of others’ attention. However, the female groups seemed to hesitate to become involved in this discussion since they have poor experience in relation to the field of sports. One female teacher said, “We cannot discuss sports in giftedness because

Saudi's girls are not allowed to be involved in these activities. I suggest the researcher ask the male teachers about this.”

Regarding the visual arts activity, the influence of religion also framed the perceptions of the participants when discussing this issue, that is, they perceived the value of visual arts to be only within a religious context. The participants all agreed that drawing, especially of inanimate objects and sculpture, has a long history in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, people who are distinguished in arabesque or drawing are valued among Saudis. For example, one expert said that Saudi Arabia has professional photography institutions. Also, one teacher pointed out that Saudi photographers have participated in many local and international competitions. Another female teacher also stated that currently, Saudis are becoming flexible in accepting more artistic pursuits and in recognizing giftedness. The participants believe that Islam does not reject beauty. One mother said that the prophet Mohamed (peace be upon him) said that God is beautiful and likes beauty. The groups nearly all agreed that images of any inanimate object are welcomed in educational institutions and society.

In addition to the above agreement among the participants, a significant degree of disagreement among the participants regarding some gifted children's characteristics was recorded in the discussion. The discrepancy was recorded among the participants when discussing the value of music. The music aspect, and whether it is considered to be a part of the characteristics of children in Saudi Arabia, was perceived inconsistently between the participants' personal perceptions on one hand and the religious perspective on the other. From groups' personal perspectives, they all agreed that musical individuals are gifted. They frequently stated that music is part of giftedness. However, due to religious and cultural reasons most participants in the groups did not classify music as a component of giftedness in Saudi society. For example, one male teacher said that, “I personally appreciate music. However, society plays an important factor in accepting this element or not. Most Saudi Arabia people are religious and music is not perceived as important”.

Another expert stated that "music is a very sensitive issue in Saudi Arabia, and I think it is perceived differently than in the Western world.” The researcher tried, here, to encourage the participants to justify the difference between music in the

Western and Saudi Arabia. One teacher stated that “music exists in Saudi Arabia for particular reasons such as the celebration of Saudi National Day, or for royal receptions, whereas music in Western cultures maybe includes singing containing things such as sexual innuendo, aggressive talk or debauchery”.

Moreover, one expert suggested that the author should cross out the [music item] from the survey and replace it with [singing without musical instrument], specifically, singing which glorifies worship and chastens humans' behaviour.

On the other hand, a slight difference among the participants in relation to the value of music in Saudi Arabia was recorded. Two participants, one in the female teachers' group and another in the mothers' group, considered music to be an activity that is appreciated by Saudis. They stated that "Mohammed Aubdo who is a famous Saudi singer is perceived to be gifted. His ability is admired by a wide range of Saudis". In addition, they said that people in Saudi society enjoy music and appreciate it. However, they generally do not allow people to play music due to their religious beliefs and cultural traditions.

Another distinction between the groups' perceptions was also recorded when discussing language ability and vocabulary. The mother and the female teacher groups perceived the ability of language skills as an important indicator in recognizing giftedness. They emphasized that gifted children are very fluent and possess a large amount of vocabulary. For example, one mother in the parent group perceived her daughter as being very fluent and as using different language than others. Another mother described her daughter and said that “My daughter uses different language than other children who are in the same age and grade level. I have observed that she uses a lot of words and sometimes seems to be talkative.” In addition, one female teacher described one of her students stating, “I have observed that she has a lot of words and sometimes seems to be talkative.” On the contrary, most of the experts' group, and all the male teachers and the father thought that there was no relationship between giftedness and language use. For example, among the comments in the expert group was the remark that not all gifted children are bright in language. One expert said, "I met some gifted persons, and they are not fluent”. Another example was extracted from the male teacher group. It was that the Saudi custom does not often allow children to communicate with adults freely. Thus, in

general, gifted children demonstrate average language skills. To investigate this view in depth, the researcher requested the participants to give more explanations and to mention the reasons that reduce the language capacity of gifted Saudi children. One male teacher pointed out that:

“Saudi children’s vocabulary is affected by Saudi culture. Saudi parents do not allow children to participate in activities with adults, and restrict children from interfering in adult issues. For example, purposely, some parents command their boys to sit with adults in order to give them an opportunity to learn customs’ instruction. However, some children, particularly gifted children, sometimes display a curiosity to find out or ask about adults’ conversations. Some parents, unfortunately, respond to their children negatively. Parents may say things such as, ‘this is not your business’ or ‘these are adults’ affairs’. The participant continued and said these types of responses may make children quite hesitant. This hesitation may be reflected in their languages abilities”.

In addition, the father also shared this opinion with the experts’ and the male teachers’ views. He brought up his son as an example of this issue. He described his language skills as being in the normal level.

Another significant difference was about obedience. Most of the experts thought that gifted children are very obedient. As a result, they obey their teachers’ and parents’ instructions. One expert said that, “I think our students are obedient in general. Parents nurture their children and advise them to respect their elders and listen to their recommendations”. He justified the differences in the concept of obedience between West and Islamic culture and said that “In Western countries the gifted child is perceived as rebellious, adventurous and an outlaw. In Islamic culture, religion’s instructions command individuals to respect rules and not to throw themselves into danger”. Another expert described his experience in this case and stated that “When I was a student there was a group of students who were neither gifted nor high achievers. They often rejected teachers’ instructions. On the contrary, bright students were more obedient”.

However, this view was disagreed with by most males and females in the teachers’ groups and parent groups. The participants thought these children were disobedient because they displayed a level of persistence or argumentativeness. For

instance, some teachers described their experience with those students and stated that they often argue with the teacher or parent prior to accepting tasks. Another similar view was recorded in the parent groups. One mother said that her daughter “frequently argues with her teachers and does not accept commands easily”. Another mother described her daughter and said, “She does not do as others command unless they discuss the matter and convince her”. The mother continued and said that, “when we ask her to do something that is maybe boring, she grumbles and refuses to do it. We encourage her to be patient, but she is somehow elusive.” The father also described his son and said that, “he just complies a little bit with others’ commands and manages to get out of the rest smartly”.

Another significant difference emerged when discussing the academic performance ability. The teachers’ and the mothers’ groups perceived a strong relationship between high academic performance and giftedness, while the expert group and father stated that not all gifted children are necessarily high achievers. Statements such as “gifted students are always bright and high achievers” were frequently mentioned in the teacher and mother groups’ comments, whereas the experts and father most often repeated that “there are underachievers among gifted children.” One expert thought that teachers usually paid much attention to the achievement test as an important factor when nominating children for gifted programs. He pointed out that, “we use teachers’ recommendations to identify gifted students and I have observed that teachers usually focus on achievement tests”.

The focus groups showed a degree of difference regarding organization traits. All groups, except the female teachers’ group, perceived gifted children as unorganized. However, they were not perceived as being careless toward their own belongings. Parents described their children, and stated that they were unorganized but careful. They were able to locate their stuff in messy conditions. Also, the experts’ and teachers’ groups shared a similar perception with parents and mentioned that gifted children do not care about their belongings. They organize their stuff in a suitable style for them. On the other hand, the female teachers’ group all agreed that, “all gifted children they have taught are very organized”.

## **Summary of the results**

In summary, analysis of the groups' discussions revealed a long list of the characteristics of gifted children (See Table 1). There was significant agreement between groups regarding a number of characteristics. They all agreed that gifted children are intelligent, independent learners, accurate and committed. In addition, the groups all agreed that gifted children display altruism towards others and usually feel with others' problems more than ordinary children. Gifted children were also perceived by all groups as persons who are helpful. In addition, they were perceived as problem-solvers. All groups believed that these children have outstanding abilities to resolve problems. The groups described them as persons who focused on solutions rather than focusing on, or overestimating, problems. Agreement was also found between groups when discussing sports. All groups perceived good athletes who are distinguished on the sports field as gifted. Surprisingly, female and male groups shared a similar perception regarding sports. Another interesting finding was that female groups perceived leadership ability in gifted Saudi girls.

Differences in perceptions between the groups were found in perceiving language skills. While all-female groups considered good language skills, (e.g., vocabulary and fluency), as very important traits of gifted children, all-male groups thought that not all gifted children are bright in language. In addition, the expert group thought that gifted children are obedient, whereas teacher and parent groups perceived those children as less obedient, argumentative and persistent. Another disagreement between groups was found about academic performance. The teacher and mother groups all agreed that gifted children are high achievers and the expert group and father all agreed that gifted children can be found among underachieving students.

The influence of religion and culture upon the perceptions of groups toward gifted children was recorded when discussing visual arts and music. Significantly, all groups agreed that exceptional drawers, who are interested in drawing inanimate objects, can be considered gifted. In addition, musical talent is appreciated based on groups' personal views. However, due to music being banned in Islam, most groups

did not consider exceptionally musical individuals as gifted. Instead, all groups appreciated singing without musical instruments as a possible focus of giftedness.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

The current study aimed to elicit traits of gifted children as perceived by people who are more familiar with giftedness and gifted children in Saudi Arabia. Experts in the field of gifted education, male and female teachers and parents of gifted children were targeted to describe their perceptions regarding their views toward gifted children. This required conducting a series of focus groups. For religious and cultural reasons which do not allow male strangers to interview females, the group discussions were segregated by gender. This task required preparing a female to be responsible for conducting female focus groups. Although the researcher assured the readiness of his colleague to conduct this mission, limitations in describing the ultimate and implicit beliefs of the female groups regarding their perceptions toward gifted children should be considered.

In addition, the participants were encouraged to respond to a number of questions so that the researcher could better understand their perceptions regarding the characteristics that may be associated with gifted children. However, the questions discussed in focus groups focused only on the traits of gifted children as perceived by the groups. It is probable that discussing the traits of non-gifted children would help to specify the traits of gifted children more clearly. The participants provided a long list of traits of gifted children. Three categories were used to organize and extract items: traits agreed across the groups, traits disagreed across the groups, and traits not emphasized across the groups but frequently mentioned in the literature as traits of gifted children.

### **Traits agreed on across the groups**

The majority of participants feel comfortable with the description of gifted children as those who are intelligent, independent learners, accurate and committed (Busse et al., 1986; Endepohls-Ulpe & Ruf, 2006; Renzulli, 1978; Snowden & Christian, 1999; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998). They also emphasized that gifted children display altruism toward others and usually feel with others' problems more than

ordinary children (Davis & Rimm, 2004; Wright, 2000). Religiousness, empathy and sympathy are glorified in Islam. All Muslims are encouraged to demonstrate these feelings to others. All Muslims are obliged to cooperate with and support one another. The prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) likens Muslims to a single body; if one part feels hurt, other parts of the body feel the same (Al-Munajjid, 2009). Therefore, it is not surprising to observe results that refer to help or empathy/sympathy to others. The presence and the impact of the religious factor, as will be discussed at the end of this chapter, cannot be overlooked as an important factor which may shape the perceptions of groups towards some issues related to gifted children.

The participants all agreed that gifted children are able to deal with problems and contribute valuable solutions. This view also was stressed by a number of researchers (Busse et al., 1986; Silverman et al., 1986). The agreement between groups in perceiving curiosity in gifted children seemed consistent with other views (Brighton et al. 2007; Busse et al., 1986; Harrison, 2004; Louis & Lewis, 1992; Renzulli, 1978; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998). Describing gifted children as those who display a variety of interests presented another agreement among the participants (see also Brighton et al. 2007; Clark, 1997; Rotigel, 2003; Silverman, 1993; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998). The majority of groups, except the experts, perceived gifted children as high achievers in line with research by Busse et al. (1986). The responsibility of teachers and parents to assure their academic success and to maintain their future career may explain this perception (Strip & Hirsh, 2001).

Agreement was also found between groups when discussing sports and leadership. Connecting the perceptions of respondents to previous studies showed that there were similar views stressing the importance of athletics (Dai & Schader, 2002) and leadership (Bain et al., 2006; Chan, 2000; Landau & Weissler, 1991; Snowden & Christian, 1999) as indications of giftedness in children. However, perceiving leadership in Saudi girls by female groups was surprising. As a native Saudi, I have known that, for religious and cultural reasons, practising sports or leadership in Saudi Arabia is only accepted and appreciated in males. Whatever the reasons behind the views of female groups, the purpose of focus group study is not to draw a conclusion about the perceptions of Saudi toward the gifted. Rather, it serves to identify the manifestations of giftedness as perceived by the participants, which will be used to construct the study scale. Thus, these perceptions of sport and

leadership as aspects of gifted girls in Saudi prompted their inclusion in the study scale.

Another agreement between the current investigation and the literature was found with regard to drawing. However, the acceptance of this trait was shaped by religious and cultural perspectives rather than the explicit perceptions of the respondents. Therefore, it will be discussed in another section below which is designed to describe the interplay between religion and culture and the perceptions of the participants toward complicated issues related to Saudi contexts such as music and singing. It is assumed that pulling these sensitive issues together will facilitate our understanding about the implicit beliefs the participants had. In addition to the above agreement, the participants showed a degree of disagreement on some other traits of gifted children. The task of the next section is to focus on these differences.

### **Traits disagreed on across the groups**

Discrepancies between the perceptions of participants were observed in traits related to language. Most participants paid less attention to these traits when describing their perceptions. Tracing this view showed that considering language as an indication of giftedness was only mentioned by female groups. Taking into account that all female teachers, for religious reasons, only teach girls and all mothers who participated in this study, except for one mother, had gifted girls, may clarify this result. It is widely known that girls at early ages show significant development in verbal tasks. The perceptions of female teachers and parents in the current study seemed also to be consistent with other previous findings. For example, describing gifted children as those who possessed expressive language and a large vocabulary was significantly mentioned by female teachers in Rohrer's study (1995). In addition, among the sample of Louis and Lewis (1992), there were 58 parents of higher/lower IQ children who had female children. The results showed that, among a total of 26 traits mentioned by parents, parents of children with higher IQ ranked language at the top of the most important traits of their gifted children. However, although the above explanations of the perceptions of female groups toward verbal tasks may justify their perceptions, less emphasis on the importance of verbal tasks by other groups seemed inconsistent with many views found in the literature, where demonstrating exceptionality in verbal tasks including vocabulary, elaboration of

language use and early reading, and advanced expressive language ability were most often considered indications of giftedness (e.g., Brighton et al., 2007; Busse et al., 1986; Creel, & Karmes, 1988; Distin, 2006; Endepohls-Ulpe & Ruf, 2006; Harrison, 2004; Porter, 2005; Rotigel, 2003; Wright, 2000).

The perceptions of some behavioural problems were observed throughout group discussions. While teachers and parents perceived gifted children as disobedient, argumentative and grumpy, the experts did not. Silverman (1993), an expert in giftedness, reasoned that gifted children may be perceived as argumentative or rejecting authority due to the fact that these children are highly organized thinkers. They deal with issues in different ways from how ordinary children do.

The unique position of teachers and parents, which allows them to have valuable information concerning their children's behaviour, perhaps led them to articulate these views. Generally, teachers do not like students who demonstrate some undesirable behaviours such as disruptiveness or interrupting in a classroom lesson (Strip & Hirsch, 2001). Consequently, teachers may not feel comfortable nominating such students for gifted programs (Brighton et al., 2007). In a similar manner, some parents, in another study, acknowledged that they faced difficulties with such children displaying a degree of disobedience and rejection of authority (Morawska & Sanders, 2008). Other parents affirmed this view but said it seemed somewhat understandable given the nature of their children. Wright (2000) found that some parents admitted that their children were disobedient, argumentative and persistently against authority. These parents attributed these behaviours to the nature of the needs of these children and considered this expression as a way of expressing their feelings. Agreement and disagreement between groups also emerged in other aspects of gifted children. However, due to these aspects seeming more related to Saudi contexts (religion/culture), they are discussed together below.

According to the results found above, it is observed that teachers and parents paid a lot of attention to intelligence and commitment and associated these traits with children who might be gifted. This view is consistent with Western views that perceived intelligence and commitment to be components of the construction of giftedness. For example, Renzulli (1978) recognized commitment to be one of three components interacting together to construct giftedness. Sternberg (2003) perceived

intelligence as an important element to build up giftedness. This agreement between participants and Western literature's views may explain why the construction of giftedness in the West may somehow influence the views of Saudis regarding the traits of the gifted. However, the significant agreement between groups on the altruism trait which is appreciated in the Saudi context (religion/culture) may convey that the ultimate perception of Saudis regarding who might be gifted is shaped by culture. It was mentioned earlier that culture plays a key role in determining giftedness (Bevan-Brown, 2005; Sternberg, 2007). The impact of religion and culture are also observed when discussing other traits of gifted children as discussed in the following.

### **Less emphasized traits across groups**

Traits grouped in this section were either less mentioned by the groups as aspects of gifted children or perceived irrelevant to gifted children for religious and cultural reasons. Most of the traits that were less repeatedly mentioned by groups were significantly associated with gifted children in some previous studies. For example, in the previous studies, it was noticed that gifted children are described as those who display humour, creativity and high levels of motivation (Chan, 2000). In addition, it was found that gifted children have good understanding of emotion, a high level of self-awareness and an advanced level of morality (e.g., Chuska 1989; Clark 2002; Silverman 2000). It could be argued that why teachers and parents did not mention these traits? Since the exploratory study focuses mainly on extracting knowledge and information of giftedness in order to use them to construct the study scale, the reason behind overlooking these traits by groups was not discussed sufficiently. It could be because Saudi do not perceive those as necessary attributed of giftedness or they are not relevant for Saudi context. Whatever the reasons, this area needs further investigation to determine the views of Saudi regarding these traits.

In the current study, only experts thought that gifted children are imaginative. Actually, this trait was very often perceived in gifted children (Brighton et al., 2007). In addition, some personal traits such as faithfulness, frankness, fairness and loyalty were only mentioned by the parents of gifted children. This view seemed consistent with other parents' view found in another study by Wright (2000) who found that

parents placed much emphasis on some personal traits such as justice, loyalty, honesty and fairness. The findings also showed that the participants placed less emphasis on certain traits than was noted in other research, including precision (cf., Silverman, 1993), ability to read at early age (cf., Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Rotigel, 2003), displaying sociability and preferring to interact with older children or adults (cf., Porter, 2005). Interestingly, while having an excellent memory was often considered as a trait of gifted children in previous studies (Busse et al., 1986; Porter, 2005; Sankar-Deleeuw, 2004; Snowden & Christian, 1999; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998), in this study it was only mentioned by the experts.

In addition, while musically talented and exceptional in visual art domains were included in many lists of gifted children's traits (e.g., Clark, 1997; Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Porter, 2005; Renzuli, 1978; Silverman, 1993; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998) and were frequently mentioned by teachers and parents as indications of giftedness (e.g., Dai & Schader, 2002; Evans, Bickel & Pendarvis, 2000; Gaither, 2008; Louis & Lewis, 1992), most participants did not associate traits such as musical talent or exceptional in drawing (i.e. drawing animate objects) with gifted children.

The reason behind articulating such views by the participants was not because they perceived music and visual arts as less important compared to other traits, such as cognitive or personal, but because music performance or drawing animate objects are prohibited in Islam. Saudis in general are religious and very resistant to accept any new ideology, especially if it conflicts with their values and religious instructions (AlFahaid, 2002). The one religious view regarding the judgment of music that is more accepted by Saudis is the view of the late Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, bin Baz. The Mufti prohibited both music and singing. In addition, many religious scholars (e.g., Al-Qaradawi, 1999; bin Baz, 1987; Ibn Jebreen, no date) prohibited drawing animate objects (i.e. human and animals). Therefore, it was not surprising that most participants of the current study seemed somehow affected by these views. The tendency to not appreciate music or drawing animate objects can be understandable by Saudis or other Muslims, but how about others who do not share these religious and cultural views? Although I knew that music and visual art performances are not widely accepted among Saudis, it seemed difficult to explain such views to non-Saudis unless I was able to present scientific evidence for my

argument. Accordingly, a decision was made to include them in the study scale in order to investigate the acceptance of these aspects using a large sample.

In sum, the participants involved in this study provided a variety of traits of gifted children (See Table 1). The participants showed a degree of agreement and seemed inconsistent in perceiving others. The above mentioned traits that were either agreed or disagreed upon by groups were found in many previous studies that dealt with the characteristics of gifted children. Concurrence and discrepancy were also noticed between the results of the current study and some previous findings.

Among the traits mentioned by groups there were some traits perceived by participants through religious and cultural views. These included music, singing and drawing.

All items listed in Table 1 were used to construct the study scale for Study Two. This decision was taken for two reasons. First, the participants showed a degree of agreement/disagreement with some previous studies. Therefore, it was considered appropriate to investigate these similarities and differences using a large sample which may help to increase our understanding of the perceptions of the characteristics of gifted children in Saudi Arabia. The second, the lack of studies that examine the impact of religion on the way that people perceive the characteristics of gifted children may allow the current study, as conducted in conservative contexts, to contribute new perceptions regarding the traits of gifted children. All the steps and procedures used to design the study scale are presented in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: STUDY TWO**

### **SCALE DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter focuses on gathering information regarding the traits of gifted children. The aim of this chapter is to focus on the procedures used to develop the study scale. It provides an overview of the semantic differential scale (SD). Next, steps used for constructing the scale are described. Included in these steps are the selection of participants, data collection and data analysis. Finally, the results and the discussion used to extract items are discussed.

#### **The semantic differential scale**

A semantic differential scale was developed for use in the current study. The SD scale was originally introduced by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957). It has been used to measure meaning and opinions (Ribich, Barone & Agostino, 1998; Carter, Ruggels, & Chaffee, 1968). Originally, the SD scale consisted of 1-7 point rating using adjectival antonyms. Subsequent researchers modified the rating of the SD scale to be 5-, 6-, 9-, or 10-point scales. The SD scale represents three measurable attitude factors: evaluation scales (e.g., good-bad, hot-cold), potency (e.g., strong-weak) and activity (e.g., active-passive) (Tanaka, Oyama & Osgood, 1969).

The development of an SD scale should consider the diversity of meaning among people. It was found that the values of some characteristics may differ from culture to culture. For example, Page, Reed, Ruammake, Taffel and Baiey (1995) used the SD scale to evaluate love, guilt, and anger in American and Chinese (in Taiwan) cultures. The findings of this study revealed that emotional expression is more reserved in Chinese culture than in American culture. In the current study, the traits extracted from the focus groups discussions (See Chapter 4) included a number of traits which may be perceived negatively among Saudis. These traits were

persistence, talkativeness, hating school, liking music, liking singing, liking drawing and liking sports. The judgment about whether these traits should be retained or removed from the scale, will be decided after analysing the pilot study data.

### **Steps in developing the scale**

A SD scale was designed to investigate the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the characteristics of gifted children in Saudi Arabia. The following steps were undertaken in the construction of the scale:

#### **Step 1: Identifying the characteristics of gifted children**

A separate study was conducted in order to obtain information regarding the characteristics of gifted children in Saudi Arabia (See Chapter 4). The interviewees provided a long list of gifted children's characteristics as they perceived them to apply to Saudi Arabian gifted children. Based on the analysis of data, a list of 46 items was extracted that can be used for designing the current study scale.

#### **Step 2: Determining the format for the scale**

All 46 items were used to construct a draft scale (See Appendix B-1). As SD scales mainly use antonym adjectival words, bi-polar adjectives were randomly listed on the scale with positive and negative pairs being placed on both sides; positive adjectives on the left side and negative on the other. A seven point SD scale classification was adopted. The numbers (between 1 and 7) give participants flexible options to express their perceptions concerning the given adjectives.

#### **Step 3: Review of the scale by the experts**

A draft scale was submitted to an English native speaker who works at Monash University to review the antonyms of the SD scale adjectives. Then, the SD scale was sent to three experts: two from Monash University and one from Melbourne University. They were requested to check the English version and provide their comments in relation to the clarity of the scale's items and add any suggestions which might help to improve the scale. According to the experts' feedback, two items were modified. They were *smart* and *like reading*. They were modified to

*sharp* and *critical reader* respectively. In addition, *accurate* was removed and *loves writing* was added. The revised scale including experts' comments is included in the Appendices (See Appendix B-1)

Beside the above comments, one expert suggested designing a heading above the SD scale rating that would help the participants to complete the scale accurately (See Figure B)

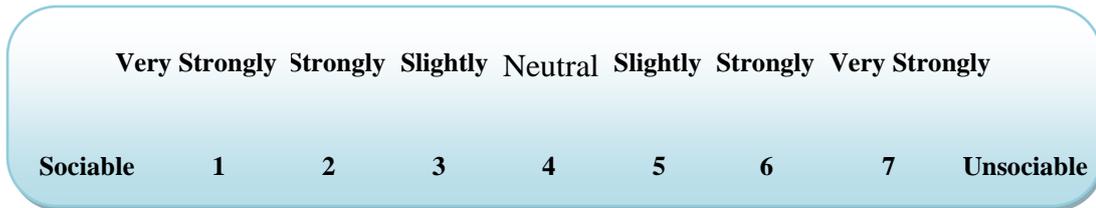


Figure B: The suggested headings of the SD scale

The headings explained the meaning of each number between the two bipolar adjectives using the words “very strongly,” “strongly,” and “slightly,” on both sides surrounding the words “Neutral”. The subject is requested to tick on the scale based on how they perceive each listed characteristic on a seven-point scale. For example, in the current instrument, the sample is given a number of characteristics of gifted children. Among them is sociable-unsociable. If the respondent considers sociable to be “very strongly” representative of gifted children, he or she would circle number (1), which is nearest to sociable. If the respondent considers sociable to be “strongly” representative of gifted children, he or she would circle number (2). If the sample considers sociable to be “slightly” representative of gifted children, he or she would circle number (3). However, if the sample considers unsociable to be “very strongly” representative of gifted children, he or she would circle number (7) which is closest to unsociable. If the respondent considers unsociable to be “strongly” representative of gifted children, he or she would circle number (6). If the respondent considers that unsociable is “slightly” representative of gifted children, he or she would circle number (5). If the respondent is not sure whether gifted children are sociable or unsociable, in respect to this point he or she should circle the middle position number (4), and so forth for other adjectives.

The second draft of the revised scale consisted of 46 items. All these items were prepared for translation to the Arabic version in the next step.

**Step 4: Translation of English scale**

After preparing the English scale version, the instrument was translated to the Arabic version. Team translation was used for translating the scale. According to Brislin, (1980) the procedure of team translation involves a number of translators who independently translate the same questionnaire. In addition, the translators meet and discuss all similarities and discrepancies prior to determining the final version of the translated survey. The author translated the whole instrument into Arabic. The English survey versions were forwarded to two Saudi researchers. They were studying linguistic terminology at Melbourne University. One holds a bachelor's degree in Arabic language rules. In addition, his PhD's subject focuses on teaching English language to non-English speakers. Another colleague holds a bachelor's degree in English language, and he currently has prepared a thesis in the applied linguistics field. They were asked to examine the clarity of the language and terms, basic spelling and grammar in English, and the accuracy of the translated survey. Later on, the translators met to discuss their translated versions. The colleagues gave satisfactory agreement concerning all instrument sections. However, they amended some Arabic words in the instructions part to be more readable and understandable. Finally, the surveys were submitted to a senior Arabic lecturer at the School of International and Political Studies at Deakin University for comparison of the English and Arabic versions. Minor changes concerning Arabic language rules were made.

Prior to administering the scale to the participants, the author sent the Arabic version to two Saudi experts who work at the King Saud University in Riyadh. These experts had supervised a number of gifted programs in Saudi Arabia. The experts were requested to review the Arabic scale and provide their comments about the clarity of the scale instructions, the clarity of items on the scale, and adding any further comments that they think important for constructing the scale. The experts perceived that the instructions of the scale were clear and the items were understandable except "follows rules/ rebellious". They thought that the rebellious term may refer to political issues rather than gifted children's characteristics. Therefore, they suggested changing it to "follows rules/ does not follow rules" (See Appendix B-1). Moreover, the researcher prior to distributing the questionnaires to the respondents explained the instructions verbally and clarified what are they had

been asked to do. The researcher asked the participants to read the instructions carefully and circle only one number found between the two antonym pairs.

### **Step 5: Pilot study**

#### *Participants*

In order to obtain the desired sample of participants, a predetermined procedure was followed. A request letter including the description of the desired sample was handed to the General Department of Education in Riyadh. The target sample was determined to include: male and female teachers of gifted children, male and female teachers of non-gifted children, parents of gifted children, and parents of non-gifted children. All teachers of gifted children had attended a number of courses/workshops in gifted education or were qualified to teach gifted children. The teachers of non-gifted children were neither qualified in teaching gifted children nor had they attended any courses/workshops in gifted education. The parents of gifted children have at least one child who is identified as a gifted student, and the parents of non-gifted children have at least one child who is not identified as a gifted student.

#### *The selection of participants*

It was planned that all selected participants would be representative of all the areas in the Riyadh districts (north-south-east-west-centre). Therefore, intentionally the General Department of Education nominated eight schools, four boys' and four girls' schools for participation in the current study. The sample of selected schools was (n=148). It represented (n=80) a sample of teachers and (n=68) a sample of parents. The locations of selected schools and the distribution of the participants in these schools are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of participants based on school location

School location	Teachers of gifted children		Teachers of non-gifted children		Parents of gifted children		Parents of non-gifted children		Total
	Males	females	Males	Females	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	
North	6	4	4	2	6	4	5	2	33
South	3	2	4	1	4	3	1	1	19
East	5	4	8	3	2	6	4	1	33
West	2	3	3	1	3	1	3	1	17
Center	7	8	6	4	6	8	5	2	46
Total	23	21	25	11	21	22	18	7	148

### Data collection

Permission to carry out the study was obtained from the Ministry of Education (See Appendix B-2). The data for the pilot study were collected in July 2007. Letters, including a permission letter to conduct the study, an invitation to the participants, and an explanatory letter of the purpose of the research, were mailed to the principals of the selected schools (See Appendix B-3)

After obtaining the approval of the target schools and required information, 300 questionnaires were mailed to the principals of these schools. The principals were asked to hand out the surveys to the participants based on the following distribution:

- all teachers of gifted children in your schools;
- all parents of gifted children in the school;
- a maximum of 20 teachers of non-gifted children; and
- all sixth-grade children's parents of non-gifted children whose children are studying in their schools.

The teachers were asked to fill out the surveys and return them to their schools' principals in the enclosed envelopes. The principals of these schools were requested to hand the surveys to gifted and non-gifted students in their schools. The students then delivered the surveys to their parents. The parents were asked to return their responses in sealed envelopes to the school's principal through their children.

Each survey envelope contained a letter to the participant indicating the purpose of the study and informing them that all the information they provided would be used for research purpose only and that they must not write their name on the survey. Instructions for filling out the questionnaire and demographic form were included.

The author provided his contact details to the principals with a request to send the completed surveys to him. After two weeks, 120 surveys were received. The author sent a reminder letter to the schools with a request to complete and mail the remaining questionnaires. An additional 47 surveys were obtained. Before moving to the analysis stage, the author reviewed the response sheet to exclude any incomplete surveys. Nineteen surveys were excluded either because the participant did not complete all survey questions or because he or she did not fill out the demographic section.

### **Data analysis**

Principal components analysis was run on the scale in order to reduce the set items of the semantic differential to a smaller number of factors representing subsets of bipolar pairs measuring similar aspects of the characteristics of gifted children. The adequacy of the reliability (internal consistency) of the scale for factorizing data was first made using Cronbach's alpha. Then, the correlation matrix, the significance test – Bartlett's Test of Sphericity – and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value were taken into account when determining the suitability for factor analysis.

Two criteria, screeplot and parallel analysis, were used for extracting the components of the scale. After determining the number of factors, the communalities table was used for identifying and removing any item possessing a value less than .03. According to Pallant (2007), it is helpful to interpret the communality values after determining the number of retained components. She pointed out that a communalities table would help, in that “if you are interested in improving or refining a scale, you could use this information to remove items from the scale” (p.196).

## **Results and discussion**

### **Reliability**

The analysis showed that the reliability (internal consistency) of the 46 items scale was .92, using Cronbach's alpha. DeVellis (2003) and Pallant (2007) pointed out that a reliability coefficient of a scale above .8 is preferable. This result indicates that the level of the reliability is sufficient for conducting factor analysis.

### **Factor analysis of the scale**

All 46 pairs of adjectives were examined for factor analysis using SPSS Version 15. Although Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggested a large sample for determining factor analysis, at least 300 cases, they agreed that a smaller size (e.g. 150) should be enough if the high loading marker variables were .80 or above. In the current study the total sample size was (n=148). The second issue that should be considered prior to making a factor analysis is the suitability of data for factor analysis. The correlation matrix should be  $r \geq .3$  or greater (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), and Bartlett's test of Sphericity should be significant at  $p < .05$  (Pallant, 2007). In addition, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value should be .6 or greater. In the current data, scanning the correlation matrix showed that the values of many coefficients were .3 or above and the KMO value was .841. The significance of Bartlett's test of Sphericity was .000. This result indicates that factor analysis is appropriate for this data.

After examining the suitability of these data for factor analysis, factor extraction was carried out in order to determine the number of factors that can be representative of the interrelations among the set of items. The initial attempt for deciding the number of components required using Kaiser criterion. It showed that 12 factors recording eigenvalues 1 or above (13.019, 3.359, 2.359, 2.333, 2.029, 1.658, 1.536, 1.414, 1.329, 1.297, 1.194, 1.087, and 1.048). These factors explain a total of 68% percent of the variance. However, since using Kaiser criterion may result in too many factors, Pallant (2007) proposed using a Screeplot chart for checking the extracted components number. This criterion simply shows a break or elbow in the shape. All components above this break should be retained. In the current data, a break also was observed between the fourth and fifth factors (See

Figure C). According to Pallant (2007) factor analysis gives an exploratory picture regarding analytical data, so analysts should decide the suitability of extracted factors. This suitability relies on research contexts and the possibility of data interpretation. Therefore, at this stage and based on the result shown on the shape of the plot, it would be appropriate extracting only four factors.

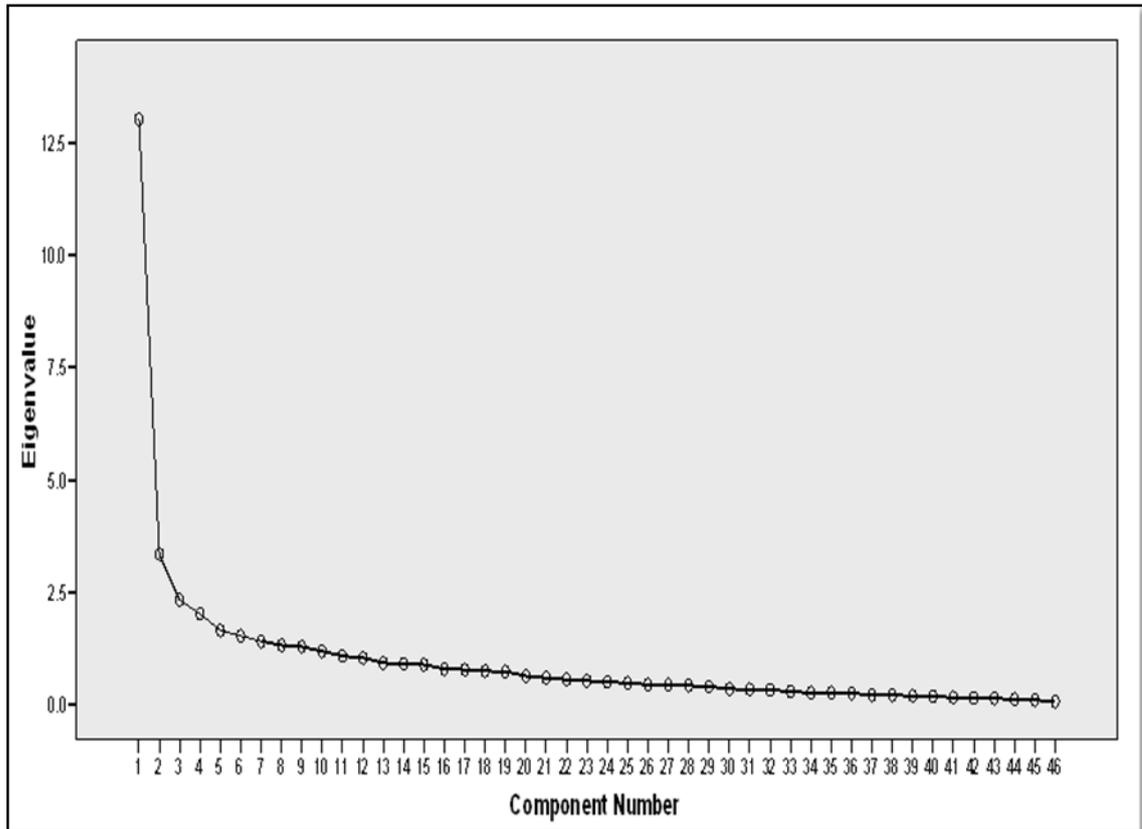


Figure C: Screeplot for components' extraction

The determination of the retained factors was also examined using parallel analysis. The confirmation whether the extracted factors should be retained or removed relies on the comparison between the first eigenvalue that the analysis in SPSS with the first value from the random results obtained by parallel analysis. If the value of extracted factors is larger than the value of parallel analysis, the nominated factors should be retained and eliminate them if it is not. In the current data, the results shown on parallel analysis confirmed the extraction of only four factors (See Table 4).

Table 4: The confirmation of extracted factors

Factors	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Parallel analysis	
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative	Random Eigenvalue	Standard Dev.
1	13.019	28.303	28.303	2.2730	.0858
2	3.359	7.301	35.604	2.1382	.0663
3	2.333	5.072	40.676	2.0240	.0546
4	2.029	4.411	45.087	1.9203	.0454
5	1.658	3.605	48.692	1.8480	.0485
6	1.536	3.340	52.032	1.7679	.0412

Checking up the content of the four extracted factors presented in Table 5 showed two problems. The first, factor four, had only three items. It was decided to find a statistical solution to increase the loading items on this factor. The second and more importantly, the interpretation of the content of most extracted factors, seemed difficult. For example, the content of factor one covered two areas of gifted children's characteristics; cognitive and personal traits. Items that describe gifted children as those who have a large vocabulary, advanced language, curiosity to explore and to know about everything, sharpness, outstanding or critical reading ability, excellent ability in writing, profound imagination and multiple interests are frequently mentioned by many researchers (e.g., Brighton et al. 2007; Busse et al., 1986; Distin, 2006; Endepohls-Ulpe & Ruf, 2006; Harrison, 2004; Rotigel, 2003; Silverman et al., 1986) as manifestations of intellectually gifted students. In addition, items that describe gifted children as those who are fair, loyal and frank, are mentioned in the literature as components of personal traits (Wright, 2000). However, Silverman (1993) argued that cognitive and personal traits interrelate together. She explains that the nature of the personality of gifted children urges them to be curious to understand things. This view may contribute a valuable solution to manage and interpret the content of this factor. But, how about other factors? The content of these factors seemed to be more complicated when trying to link them to a specific area of giftedness which may help to interpret and discuss it in a meaningful way. Common areas of giftedness can be represented by the cognitive domain, personality, creativity, leadership, motivation and the social domain (Clark, 1997; Porter, 2005; Renzulli, 1978; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998). To facilitate the use of the study scale, it has to specify the area under focus that the scale aims to measure.

Due to the current study being aimed at designing a new instrument, Pallant's (2007) recommendation to check the information that was shown earlier in the commonalities table was followed. She stated, "Low values (e.g. less than .3) could indicate that the item does not fit well with the other items in its component" (p.196). In addition, crossing out the items that showed low commonality values would help to increase the total variance explained. In the current data, item 3 "sensitive/ insensitive," item 12 "dislikes routine/ likes routine," item 21 "enjoys sports/ hates sports," item 32 "socializes/ socializes with same age," item 35 "radical/ conservative," and item 37 "likes school/ hates school," have the lowest commonality values among all remaining items. In addition, they possess the lowest loading among other items on their extracted components. The commonality value of these items and their loading on their factors are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: The lowest commonality values and their loading on their components

Characteristics	Commonalities		Loading item on its components			
	Initial	Extraction	Factors			
			1	2	3	4
Large vocabulary/ Limited vocabulary	1.000	.531	.712			
Curious/Uninterested	1.000	.514	.688			
Precise/Imprecise	1.000	.509	.669			
High achiever/Underachiever	1.000	.528	.643			
Sharp/Dull	1.000	.606	.623			
Careful/Careless	1.000	.564	.621			
Exceptional memory/Forgetful	1.000	.522	.608			
Loves writing/Hates writing	1.000	.504	.607			
Imaginative/Unimaginative	1.000	.508	.586			
Outstanding reader/Ordinary reader	1.000	.399	.586			
Advanced Language/Age-appropriate language	1.000	.443	.580			
Of multiple-interests/Of limited interests	1.000	.446	.559			
Attentive/Distracted	1.000	.485	.553			
Critical reader/not-critical reader	1.000	.383	.538			
Logical/Illogical	1.000	.526	.511			
Task-committed/Uncommitted	1.000	.466	.501			
Cheerful /Grumpy	1.000	.384	.481			
Fair/Unfair	1.000	.528	.480			
Independent/Dependent	1.000	.407	.476			
Solution focused /Problem focused	1.000	.348	.453			

Characteristics	Commonalities		Loading item on its components			
	Initial	Extraction	Factors			
			1	2	3	4
Admired/Despised	1.000	.391	.451			
sensitive/ insensitive	1.000	.250	.428			
Radical/ Conservative	1.000	.283	.420			
Frank/Evasive	1.000	.342	.398			
socializes/ socializes with same age	1.000	.247	.312			
Sociable/ Unsociable	1.000	.572		.722		
Reliable/Unreliable	1.000	.640		.674		
Helpful/Unhelpful	1.000	.583		.668		
Lovable/Unlovable	1.000	.522		.651		
Courageous/Cowardly	1.000	.453		.646		
Outgoing/Shy	1.000	.444		.564		
Confident/Unconfident	1.000	.591		.554		
Obedient/Disobedient	1.000	.520		.529		
Organized/Disorganized	1.000	.408		.515		
Loyal/disloyal	1.000	.497		.505		
Leader/Follower	1.000	.325		.495		
Enjoys sports/ hates sports	1.000	.265		.434		
Follow rules/Does not follow rules	1.000	.494			.696	
Persistent/Not persistent	1.000	.415			.607	
Quiet/Talkative	1.000	.339			.519	
Confronts problems/Avoids problems	1.000	.365			.381	
likes schools/ hates schools	1.000	.175			.355	
dislikes routine/ likes routine	1.000	.270			.333	
Enjoys music/Hates music	1.000	.731				.824
Likes singing/Dislikes singing	1.000	.714				.808
An exceptional drawer/an ordinary drawer	1.000	.301				.393

After removing all items that have the lowest commonality value (less than .3), forty items were factorized again in order to determine the loading of each identified factor. The highest loading for each item was used in order to determine the distribution of these items to extracted factors. Eighteen items were grouped on Factor 1, eleven items were listed on Factor 2, five items were loaded on Factor 3, and six items were listed on Factor 4 (See Table 6).

Table 6: The loading and the distribution of items on determined factors

Characteristics	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
Has large vocabulary/ Has limited vocabulary	.732			
Advanced language/ Age-appropriate language	.672			
Curious/ Uninterested	.629			
Outstanding reader/ ordinary reader	.629			
Imaginative/ Unimaginative	.610			
Critical reader/ Non-critical reader	.592			
Precise/ Imprecise	.572			
High achiever/ Underachiever	.557			
Exceptional memory/ Forgetful	.544			
Sharp/ Dull	.522			
Likes writing/ Hates writing	.495			
Attentive/ Distracted	.485			
Of multiple interests/ of limited interests	.477			
Solution focused/ Problems focused	.429			
Cheerful/ Grumpy	.400			
Admired/ Despised	.399			
Independent/ Dependent	.387			
Confronts problems/ Avoids problems	.382			
Fair/ Unfair		.695		
Obedient/ Disobedient		.670		
Logical/ Illogical		.639		
Loyal/ Disloyal		.614		
Helpful/ Unhelpful		.609		
Careful/ Careless		.599		
Reliable/ Unreliable		.579		
Task-committed/ Uncommitted		.553		
Lovable/ Unlovable		.532		
Frank/ Evasive		.511		
Organized/ Disorganized		.479		
Sociable/ unsociable			.705	
Outgoing/ shy			.676	
Courageous/ Cowardly			.605	
Confidant/ Unconfident			.546	
Leader/ Follower			.543	
Follows rules/ does not follow rules				.366
Persistent/ Not persistent				.383
Enjoys music/ hates music				.800
Likes singing/ Dislikes singing				.788
Talkative/ Quiet				.512
An exceptional drawer/ An ordinary drawer				.408

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. A Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

Repeating factor analysis has resulted in increasing the total variance explained of the four extracted factors from 45% to 49% (See Appendix B-4 and B-5). In addition, the number of items loaded to Factor Four increased from three to six items. Repeating factor analysis not only increases the variance explained of the extracted factors or the number of items loaded to Factor Four, but it also significantly homogenised the meaning of items loading on each factor. For example, as mentioned earlier, items such as fair, loyal and frank, which were clustered together with other traits that may be perceived as aspects of cognitive or scholastic traits, are now joined to other traits that may describe something other than intellectuality. In addition, the loading of Factor Three completely changed. On the other hand, this new change seemed to be more meaningful than before. The possibility of linking its content to a specific area of giftedness became attainable.

Interesting loading was observed in Factor Four. A first glance at the three new loading traits (follows rules/ does not follow rules, persistent/ not persistent, and talkative/ quiet), may convey that these traits do not fit with the other loading traits found on this factor. It could be argued that the value-loading of these items (.366, .383. and .512 respectively) was low compared with other value loading on the same factor, such as enjoys music/ hates music (.800) and likes singing/ dislikes singing (.788). Statistically, this argument makes sense and would be accepted. However, considering the fact that statistical numbers may not be sufficiently able to explain the implicit beliefs of humans, this argument could change. Grouping these traits with others that may be perceived as aspects of music and visual arts domain raised the assumption that the perceptions of participants regarding these traits may be influenced by something else other than their experience or understanding of giftedness. Indeed, the results found in the previous study (See Chapter Four) showed that the perception of participants regarding music and visual arts was significantly shaped by religion and culture. So, if that is the case, grouping persistence, talkativeness and following rules with the music and visual arts domain may have happened for the same reasons. Accordingly, a decision was made to retain these traits in this component in order to investigate the perceptions of the teachers and parents toward these traits in greater depth.

**Final version of the scale**

The final scale consisted of 40 items (See Appendix B-6). As mentioned above, these items are distributed in four dimensions. In order to give these components an appropriate name, a group of the panel<sup>3</sup> discussed the content of the whole scale including all four extracted factors. The criteria used to name these factors were based on the appropriate representation of each factor to any well-known area of giftedness and the contexts of Saudi Arabia which may influence the perceptions of participants. Consequently, the group of the panel named Factor One “cognitive traits of gifted children,” Factor Two “personal traits of gifted children,” Factor Three “social and leadership of gifted children,” and Factor Four “traits perceived within a religious and cultural context”.

Demographic information was added in the end of the scale. To facilitate the analysis, the researcher designed two versions of this part. The first one was designed to collect the following information from teachers: gender, age, year of highest degree, number of years of teaching experience, number of years teaching gifted children, subject area, and number of students recommended for gifted programs. The second was designed for parents to collect some general personal information such as: gender, age, highest level of education completed, the total number of children in their family, the number of children they had that had been identified as gifted, and whether they had a child or children who has/had been nominated for gifted programs.

In summary, this chapter focused on steps used to develop the study scale. This includes examining the validity, reliability, and the suitability of factorizing the scale. The validity of the scale was assured through a long process, which included consulting a number of experts regarding the content of the two Arabic and English versions of the scale. This comprehensive consultation enhanced and refined the clarity and the meaning of items. Moreover, examining the reliability of the scale provided excellent results. The distribution of items on identified components seemed consistent with the fact that the perceptions of the participants may share some similar views of giftedness with others and feel comfortable to perceive other

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<sup>3</sup> The researcher and his supervisors discussed the content of the scale and made a decision to name all identified factors.

traits of gifted children within Saudi context. Even though the main purpose of conducting this study was to develop the study scale, taking these views into account may facilitate the interpretations of the perceptions of the participants in the following study.

## **CHAPTER SIX: STUDY THREE**

### **THE PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AND PARENTS REGARDING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED CHILDREN**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter described the construction of the scale for this study. This chapter describes the utilization of this scale for the investigation of the research question. The aim of this research is to investigate teachers' and parents' perceptions in relation to the characteristics of gifted children in Saudi Arabian public elementary schools. These perceptions are further analysed to determine how they are affected by a number of demographic variables. Information is provided about the quantitative and qualitative approaches and these include research design, instrumentation, sampling, data collection, and data analysis.

#### **Research Design**

This study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative methods are suitable for obtaining useful data from a large sample of subjects. Quantitative research is inexpensive, and can, in most cases, be conducted by a single researcher. In order to obtain information about participants' perceptions, attitude, and/or knowledge across a wide geographical area, a mailed questionnaire is the most efficient approach (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). Such a survey was designed for this study in order to collect data from a broad population (and so increase the applicability of results that are amenable to statistical analysis).

Merriam et al., (2002) has suggested that qualitative methods are most suited to research that aims to deepen understanding of a situation or to determine a process (how things happen). The primary methods of data collection within a qualitative research study are observation, analysis, and interviews. Minichiello, Aroni,

Timewell and Alexander (1990) pointed out that, qualitative research is a technique which attempts to “capture people’s meanings, definitions, and descriptions of events” (p.5). Bell (2005) has further stated that, in an interview, an investigator can follow and interpret individual feelings and motivations in a way that is not possible using a questionnaire. Furthermore, interviews help investigators to develop and clarify participants’ responses. In order to obtain more detailed information than that obtainable with a standardized survey, a number of teachers and parents were interviewed about their perceptions of gifted children. Semi-structured interviews were used in this study. This allows the researcher to modify and organize participants’ responses and seek clarification of meaning. Some degree of structure enables the interviewer to manage time and provide a direction to the discussion.

The following section focuses on quantitative investigations. It includes sampling, instrumentation, data collection, analysis, results and discussion. Next, the qualitative investigation will be described, including the selection of participants, data collection, data analysis and presenting the findings.

## **QUANTITATIVE DATA**

### **Sampling**

#### **Identifying participants**

The target population of the current study was teachers employed in public primary schools in Riyadh city and parents who have children enrolled in these schools. The sample teachers consisted of teachers of gifted children and teachers of non-gifted children. The parents sample comprised of parents who have a child identified as gifted and parents of who have a child not identified as such. An initial attempt was made to identify the number of public primary schools in Riyadh that have both qualified teachers for gifted children and students who are identified as gifted children. According to the database of the General Department for Gifted Children in Riyadh, there are 121 schools in five geographical zones under study: 69 boys’ and 52 girls’ schools (See Table 7).

Table 7: The target schools and their distribution in all Riyadh educational sectors

Zone	Boys' schools	Girls' schools	Total
North	15	12	27
South	13	9	22
West	11	8	19
East	14	11	25
Centre	16	12	28
Total	69	52	121

In Saudi Arabia, the identification of gifted children in primary schools has only focused on children enrolled in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. Therefore, the teachers and the parents of children enrolled in these grades represented the population of the current study. The next section describes the selection of teachers and parents of gifted/non-gifted children.

### Teachers of gifted children

The teachers' sample was divided into male/female teachers of gifted/non-gifted children. Each of the selected schools, depending on its capacity, has between one and two teachers qualified for teaching gifted children. Therefore, it was decided to select all teachers of gifted children employed in all selected schools (n=121) to invite them to participate. In order to assure that the participants has got adequate surveys, two surveys were sent to all boys' schools (n=69) and another two surveys were mailed to girls' schools (n=52). Out of a total of 242 surveys sent to these schools, 81(33.4%) teachers responding after two reminders had been sent to the selected schools (See Table 8 & Table 9). Even though, this rate is low, it is comparable to similar survey of educators in other countries (Groves, Cialdini, & Couper, 1992).

Table 8: Surveys distributed and completed by male teachers of gifted children

No. of schools	No. of male teachers of gifted children	No. of distributed surveys	No. of returned surveys
North (n=15)	30	30	9
South (n=13)	26	26	8
West (n=11)	22	22	5
East (n=14)	28	28	10
Centre (n=16)	32	32	10
Total	138	138	42

Table 9: Surveys distributed and completed by female teachers of gifted children

No. of schools	No. of female teachers of gifted children	No. of distributed surveys	No. of returned surveys
North (n=12)	24	24	7
South (n=9)	18	18	8
West (n=8)	16	16	7
East (n=11)	22	22	8
Centre (n=12)	24	24	9
Total	104	104	39

### Teachers of non-gifted children

The sample was divided into two groups: the male and female teachers of non-gifted children. In order to obtain an adequate representative sample from all Riyadh educational zones, a stratified random sampling technique was used. The schools of the participants were stratified according to the gender of the participants and to their school zones. The schools for each zone were randomly assigned a number from 1 to the last number of schools in that zone. Then, schools were randomly selected from that list. All male and female teachers of fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in the target schools were surveyed. The desired number of teachers of non-gifted children was 250 participants. The number of teachers teaching 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grades is between 8 and 10, therefore, five boys' and five girls' schools were randomly selected from each location. Out of a total of 50 schools that were randomly selected, 45 schools responded (See Table 10).

Table 10: Selection and distribution of schools according location

Areas	Boys' schools selected	Boys' schools responding	Girls' schools selected	Girls' schools responding
North	5	5	5	5
South	5	4	5	4
West	5	5	5	3
East	5	5	5	4
Centre	5	5	5	5
Total	25	24	25	21

There were about 450 teachers employed in the responding schools. Ten surveys were sent to each selected boys' school (n=24 schools) and another ten were sent to each selected girls' school (n=21 schools). Out of the 450 teachers, 168 (37%) responded to the surveys (See Table 11 & Table 12).

Table 11: Male teachers of non-gifted children surveyed and the number that responded

Areas	No. of male teachers of non- gifted children	No. of distributed surveys	No. of returned surveys
North (n=5)	55	55	18
South (n=4)	44	44	17
West (n=5)	55	55	20
East (n=5)	55	55	21
Centre (n=5)	55	55	19
Total	264	264	95

Table 12: Female teachers of non-gifted children surveyed and the number that responded

Areas	No. of female teachers of non- gifted children	No. of distributed surveys	No. of returned surveys
North (n=5)	55	55	17
South (n=4)	44	44	14
West (n=3)	33	33	11
East (n=4)	44	44	13
Centre (n=5)	55	55	18
Total	231	231	73

### Parents of gifted children

It was decided that 225 parents of gifted children would be the target number to participate in this study. Six questionnaires were sent to each boy's school and another six were sent to each girl's school. The principal of each selected school was asked to send the survey to the parents of any two children identified as gifted enrolled in each of the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades in his/ her school. One of the child's parents would fill out the questionnaire. Out of a total of 270 surveys that were distributed to the parents of gifted children, 142 were finally received (See Table 13).

Table 13: The number of parents of gifted children surveyed and the number that responded

Zone	boys' schools selected	parents of gifted receiving survey	parents of gifted responding	girls' schools selected	parents of gifted receiving survey	parents of gifted responding	Total
North	5	30	17	5	30	13	30
South	4	24	14	4	24	9	23
West	5	30	16	3	18	14	31
East	5	30	15	4	24	15	30
Centre	5	30	15	5	30	14	29
Total	24	144	77	21	126	65	142

**Parents of non-gifted children**

The selected schools (n=45) were also used for selecting the parents of the non-gifted sample. The proportion of the participants who were invited to participate was similar to parents' of gifted children sample. Therefore, the same number of surveys as was sent to the parents of gifted children was also sent for the parents of non-gifted children. Each boys' and girls' school was mailed a total of six questionnaires. Again, a decision was made that a total of any two enrolled children's parents in each selected grade (fourth, fifth, and sixth) would be sent the survey. Out of 270 surveys that were sent to the parents of non-gifted children, 151 were returned. The return rate of this distribution was 56 percent (See Table 14).

Table 14: Parents of non-gifted children surveyed and the number that responded

Zone	boys' schools selected	parents of non-gifted surveyed	parents of non-gifted responding	girls' schools selected	parents of non-gifted surveyed	parents of non-gifted responding	Total
North	5	25	22	5	25	11	33
South	4	20	16	4	20	14	30
West	5	25	15	3	15	13	28
East	5	25	14	4	20	12	26
Centre	5	25	16	5	25	18	34
Total	24	120	83	21	105	68	151

In addition to the selection of survey respondents, a number of participants were also required for interviews. A consent letter was attached to each delivered survey with a request to the participants who were willing to be interviewed to

provide their contact details in order to arrange an interview time. The purpose of this, as described above, was to provide additional information regarding the perceived traits of gifted children by Saudi Arabian teachers and parents. The geographic categorizations of the schools (north, south, west, east, and centre) were taken into account to provide an evenly distributed random selection of interviewees for the qualitative study. Twelve subjects were interviewed of which six were teachers and six were parents. The teachers included two male teachers of gifted children, one female teacher of gifted child, one male teacher of a non-gifted child, and two female teachers of non-gifted children. The parents consisted of two fathers of gifted children, one mother of a gifted child, two fathers of non-gifted children, and one mother of a non-gifted child.

## **Instrumentation**

### **Semantic differential scale**

A 40-item semantic differential scale (SD) was designed specifically for the current study as described in Chapter Four. The reliability of the scale (internal consistency) was tested and found to have a Cronbach's alpha of .90. The scale comprised four components. These were the cognitive characteristics of gifted children (18 items, with a reliability of .84), the personal characteristics of gifted children (11 items, with a reliability of .82), the social and leadership characteristics of gifted children (5 items, with a reliability of .79), and traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts (6 items with a reliability of .55).

The participants were also asked in the end of the scale to provide general demographic information. This demographic information outlined below differed slightly for teachers and parents.

Teachers were asked to provide the following information:

1. Gender;
2. Age;
3. Highest level of education completed;
4. The number of years they have worked as a teacher;

5. The total number of years they have been teaching students identified as gifted;
6. Their subject areas, and
7. The number of students they had recommended for testing for gifted programs during the past three years;

Parents were asked to provide the following information:

1. Gender;
2. Age;
3. Highest level of education completed;
4. The total number of children in their family;
5. Whether they had a child or children who has/ have been nominated for gifted programs, and
6. (If an affirmative response to number 5) How many children they had that had been identified as gifted.

### **Data Collection**

Prior to data collection, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the General Department of Education in Riyadh (See Appendix C-1). In addition, contact details for all of the selected primary schools in Riyadh were requested from the General Department for Gifted Children in Riyadh. A copy of the research approval (See Appendix C-1), with a letter of invitation, indicating the purposes of the study (See Appendix C-2), and a consent letter for interested participants willing to be interviewed (See Appendix C-3), were attached to each survey envelope. In addition, the envelope contained a letter to the participants to inform them that all of the information they provided would be used only for research purposes, and that they must not write their name on the survey. Instructions were included for filling out the questionnaire and the demographics form. All data were collected between September and December 2007. The process of data collection from the subjects is described below:

**Teachers of gifted children**

The estimated number of teachers of gifted children is between one and two teachers in each school, so a decision was made to survey all selected schools (n=121). All survey envelopes were sent to the principals of the selected schools. The principals were requested to distribute the envelopes to all teachers of gifted children employed in their schools. After two weeks, a total of 63 surveys were returned. A reminder letter was sent to all selected schools with request to teachers who did not respond to complete and return the survey. An additional 18 surveys were received from the participants.

**Teachers of non-gifted children**

Forty-five schools were selected to represent the teachers of non-gifted children (See sampling section). The surveys were sent to the principals of the selected schools. The principal of each surveyed school was requested to hand the surveys only to the teachers of fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in his/ her school. A total of 450 surveys were sent to the teachers. The participants were requested to fill out the surveys and return them to their principals within two weeks. During this time, 107 surveys were received. The schools that did not respond or returned insufficient questionnaires were given an additional two weeks to send their responses. Another 61 surveys were finally received from the participants.

**Parents of gifted children**

All required documents for conducting the study were sent to the principals of selected schools (n=45). A total of six questionnaires were sent to each principal of selected schools. The principals were asked to hand the survey to any two identified gifted children enrolled in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in their schools. Selected children were asked to deliver the surveys to their parents. The parents were informed to return their responses in sealed envelopes to the school's principal through their children. A total of 270 surveys were sent to the parents through their children. A reminder letter after an additional two weeks was sent to all selected schools with request to encourage parents who did not respond during the original distribution time, to complete and retune the survey. The final return was 142 surveys.

**Parents of non-gifted children**

The selected schools (n=45) were also used for collecting the data from the parents of non-gifted children. Principal of each selected school was handed six questionnaires. The principals were also requested to send the survey to any two (sets of) parents who have children not identified as gifted and enrolled in grades four, five, and six in their schools. The surveys were delivered to the parents through their children. The parents were requested to complete the surveys and returned them in the enclosed envelopes through their children who had already been informed to hand these envelopes to the principals of their schools. Out of a total of 270 surveys sent to the parents of non-gifted children, 151 were finally returned.

**Data Analysis**

SPSS 15 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used to manage, analyse, and display data. The analysis of the data aimed to determine the perceptions of teachers and parents about the characteristics of gifted children. To determine the perceptions of teachers and parents, the mean score of the total four components and the mean average response for the items included in these four factors were first calculated. Then, the mean-weights of the top and the bottom three ranked-order traits in each component were listed from the lowest to the highest value for each trait. Once the perceptions of the two groups were ascertained, an independent sample t-test was conducted to investigate whether there were any significant differences between participants' observations in the traits they perceived as characteristics of gifted children. The impact of the demographic variables upon the perceptions of the participants toward the investigated issues was also analysed using multivariate analysis of variance test (MANOVA).

## **Teachers' and parents' perceptions regarding the characteristics of gifted children**

Research Question 1. What do teachers of (gifted/ non-gifted) and parents of (gifted/non-gifted) perceive as the defining characteristics of gifted children?

To answer this question, the mean score average of each dimension was first computed. Then, the mean score average was used to determine the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the characteristics of gifted children. In addition, histogram figures were drawn to trace the differences within and among the groups. Then, a series of *t* tests were employed to determine if significant differences existed between the perceptions of the teachers and parents toward each characteristics of gifted children listed in each factor. To determine which traits of gifted children were the most and least important between teachers and parents, the mean and standard deviation for each item in each factor were computed. Then the items were ranked in order from the lowest to the highest mean. The means of the top three traits and the bottom three traits were used in interpreting the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding each ranked trait. In addition to this, focus group interviews were conducted to gather in depth information about parents' and teachers' perceptions.

Research Question 2. Are there any significant differences between teachers of (gifted/non-gifted) and parents of (gifted/non-gifted) in their perceptions regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

To answer this research question, first the means and standard deviations for the total score of each factor were computed. Then a series of *t* tests were employed to determine if significant differences existed between the perceptions of the teachers and parents toward the characteristics of gifted children. Eta squares ( $\eta^2$ ) were manually calculated to describe the magnitude of the differences in the means between the participants' perceptions for all four scales components. Eta squares can range from 0 to 1. To interpret the values of ( $\eta^2$ ), Cohen (1988) proposed three value levels: 0.01 'very small,' 0.06 'moderate,' and 0.14 'large effect'.

Research Question 3. Are there any significant differences between teachers of gifted children and teachers of non-gifted children in their perceptions regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

Research Question 4. Are there any significant differences between parents who have a child identified as gifted and parents who have a child not identified as gifted in their perceptions regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

To answer Research Questions Three and Four, the means and standard deviations for the total score of each factor were computed. A series of *t* tests were used to determine if any significant differences emerged in teachers' and parents' perceptions toward the characteristics of gifted children. The effect size using ( $\eta^2$ ) were also used for each group for all four components.

Research Question 5. Is there any relationship between teachers' perceptions of the characteristics of gifted children and demographic background?

Research Question 6. Is there any relationship between parents' perceptions of the characteristics of gifted children and their demographic background?

As the data consisted of a number of dependent variables deliberately grouped together, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to answer Research Questions Five and Six.

## **Results**

The current study aimed to investigate the perceptions of teachers and children's parents regarding the characteristics of gifted children enrolled in public primary schools in Riyadh city. The relationship of demographic information variables and the perceptions of subjects toward gifted children's traits were taken into account when investigating the study problem. The demographic information covered male/female teachers of gifted/non-gifted children, and fathers/mothers of gifted/non-gifted children. The description of the demographic participants is shown below.

**Teachers**

Teacher participants were requested to provide information regarding gender, age, the highest level of education completed, the number of years they had worked as a teacher, the total number of years they had been teaching gifted children, subject areas, and the number of students they had recommended for gifted programs.

The sample of teachers consisted of (n=249) teachers. This represented (n=81), teachers of gifted children, 42 of whom were male and 39 of whom were female, and teachers of non-gifted children (n=168), 95 of whom were male and 73 of whom were female. Of the largest amount of responses among teachers of gifted children, 35 were recorded in the 21-30 years of age group, while the largest number of responses among teachers of non-gifted children, 94, were found in the 31-40 years of age group. Among teachers of gifted children and teachers of non-gifted children, the teachers with a bachelor's degree provided the largest number of responses compared to those with other degrees. There were 195 teachers, 67 of whom were teachers of gifted children, and 128 teachers of non-gifted children. The majority of teachers of gifted children, a total of 30, had 4 to 6 years of teaching experience, whereas the majority of teachers of non-gifted children, 78, had 10 years or above of teaching experience. The majority of teachers who taught gifted children were found in the 1 to 3 years group in both groups. Out of 75 gifted children, 34 were taught by teachers of gifted children, and 41 were taught by teachers of non-gifted children. The group of teachers with 4 to 7 years experience also showed that a significant number of gifted children were being taught by both teachers of gifted and non-gifted children. Out of 71 gifted children, 34 were taught by teachers of gifted children, and 37 were taught by teachers of non-gifted children. Further details regarding the demographic information of teachers are provided in Table 15 .

Table 15: Descriptions of the school teachers (N=249)

Teachers of gifted children (N= 81)			Teachers of non-gifted children (N= 168)		
characteristics	N	%	characteristics	N	%
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Gender</b>		
Male	42	51.9	Male	95	56.5
Female	39	48.1	Female	73	43.5
<b>Age</b>			<b>Age</b>		
21-30	35	43.2	21-30	48	28.6
31-40	34	42.0	31-40	94	56.0
41-50	12	14.8	41-50	20	11.9
			Missing response	6	3.6
<b>Highest level of education</b>			<b>Highest level of education</b>		
Bachelor	67	82.7	Bachelor	128	76.2
Master	8	9.9	Master	3	1.8
Doctorate	0	0	Doctorate	0	0
Other	6	7.4	Other	33	19.6
			Missing response	4	2.4
<b>Number of years as teacher</b>			<b>Number of years as teacher</b>		
1-3 years	14	17.3	1-3 years	17	10.1
4-6 years	30	37.0	4-6 years	27	16.1
8-10 years	12	14.8	8-10 years	42	25.0
10+	24	29.6	10+	78	46.4
Missing response	1	1.2	Missing response	4	2.4
<b>Number of years teaching gifted children</b>			<b>Number of years teaching gifted children</b>		
			Zero year	53	31.5
1-3 years	34	42.0	1-3 years	41	24.4
4-7 years	34	42.0	4-7 years	37	22.0
8-12 years	6	7.4	8-12 years	9	5.4
13-16 years	3	3.7	13-16 years	1	.6
17+	0	0	17+	3	1.8
Missing response	4	4.9	Missing response	24	14.3
<b>Subject areas</b>			<b>Subject areas</b>		
Gifted education	81	100.0			
			Islamic studies	28	16.7

			Arabic	42	25.0
			Math	22	13.1
			Science	22	13.1
			Art	5	3.0
			Other	45	26.8
			Missing response	4	2.4
<b>Number of children recommended for gifted programs by teachers</b>			<b>Number of children recommended for gifted programs by teachers</b>		
	Zero child	3	3.7	Zero child	62
	1-3 children	8	9.9	1-3 children	23
	4-6 children	19	23.5	4-6 children	29
	7-10 children	12	14.8	7-10 children	17
	10+	38	46.9	10+	16
	Missing response	1	1.2	Missing response	21

### **Parents**

The demographic information collected from parents focused on parents' gender, age, highest level of education completed, the total number of children in their family, the number of children they had that had been identified as gifted, and whether they had a child or children who has/had been nominated for gifted programs. The subjects comprised (n=293) parents. This number represented 142 parents of gifted children, 77 of whom were fathers of gifted children and 65 were mothers of gifted children, and 151 parents of non-gifted children, 83 of whom were fathers of non-gifted children, and 68 mothers of non-gifted children. The participants recorded a variety responses according to their ages. The highest number of responses between parents of gifted children, 81, was found in the 31-40 year age group, while the lowest number, six, was recorded in the 21-30 years group. In the parents of non-gifted children group, the highest number of responses, 69, was also found in the 31-40 years age group and the lowest response, 21, was found in the 21-30 years group. The majority of respondents in parents of gifted children group, 79 and parents of non-gifted children group, 74, had a bachelor's degree. From the group with the smallest number of participants, 16, holding a doctorate degree, nine were parents of gifted children and seven were parents of non-gifted children. The majority of parents of gifted children, 75, and parents of non-gifted children, 87, had between 4 and 6 children. Of the majority of parents of gifted children, 68, 48

percent mentioned that they had only one child who was identified as gifted, while the highest number of gifted children found in one family, which was reported by 14 parents of gifted children, was four. Table 16 describes all characteristics of parents of children.

Table 16: Description of the parents of children (N=293)

Parents of gifted children (N= 142)			Parents of non-gifted children (N= 151)		
characteristics	N	%	characteristics	N	%
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Gender</b>		
Fathers	77	54.2	Fathers	83	55.0
Mothers	65	45.8	Mothers	68	45.0
<b>Age</b>			<b>Age</b>		
21-30	6	4.2	21-30	21	13.9
31-40	81	57.0	31-40	69	45.7
41-50	43	30.3	41-50	45	29.8
50+	10	7.0	50+	16	10.6
Missing response	2	1.4			
<b>Highest level of education</b>			<b>Highest level of education</b>		
Bachelor	79	55.6	Bachelor	74	49.0
Master	10	7.0	Master	9	6.0
Doctorate	9	6.3	Doctorate	7	4.6
Other	41	28.9	Other	60	39.7
Missing response	3	2.1	Missing response	1	.7
<b>Number of children identified in family</b>			<b>Number of children identified in family</b>		
1-3 children	28	19.7	1-3 children	30	19.9
4-6 children	75	52.8	4-6 children	87	57.6
7-9 children	30	21.1	7-9 children	29	19.2
10+	7	4.9	10+	5	3.3
Missing response	2	1.4			
<b>Number children identified as gifted in family</b>					
One child	68	48			
Two children	44	31.0			
Three children	13	9			
Four children	14	10			

Missing response	3	2
<b>Identified child(ren) for gifted programs</b>		
Yes	130	91.5
No	8	5.6
Missing answer	4	2.8

*Research question 1* What do teachers and parents perceive as the defining characteristics of gifted children?

The teachers and parents were requested to articulate their perceptions toward the characteristics of gifted children listed in the study scale. They were asked to respond to four different components: a) cognitive characteristics of gifted children, b) personal characteristics of gifted children, c) social and leadership characteristics of gifted children, and d) traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts. The content of these four components consisted of two adjectival antonyms with the positive adjective on the left side and the negative adjective on the right. To determine the participants' responses, a seven-point rating (1-7) was used. The response 1 "very strongly," 2 "strongly," and 3 "slightly" indicated that the circled trait was perceived on the positive side. The other rating numbers, 7 "very strongly," 6 "strongly," and 5 "slightly" indicated that the circled trait was considered on the negative side. The middle position number, 4 "Neutral," indicated that the participant was not sure whether the trait could be considered as part of gifted children's traits.

In order to determine the degree of the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the four components, the value of the mean average of the four components was used to describe the perceptions of teachers and parents. The lower mean score indicated that the participants perceived the component positively. The higher mean score meant that the participants considered the component negatively. For example, traits that had means between 1 and less than 4 were considered to be on the positive side and traits that had mean-weights 4 or above were considered in negative side. Table 17 shows that the participants generally perceived all components on the positive side. However, the degree of perception of the components showed slight differences between participants.

Table 17: The mean scores for the responses to the scale components

Groups	Components	Mean for responses
<b>Teachers</b>	Cognitive traits	2.05
	Personal traits	2.05
	Social and leadership traits	2.08
	Traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts	3.07
<b>Parents</b>	Cognitive traits	2.14
	Personal traits	1.81
	Social and leadership traits	1.95
	Traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts	2.97

In cognitive traits, the mean average of the responses of teachers was ( $M = 2.05$ ) compared to ( $M = 2.14$ ) for parents. This indicated that teachers perceived the traits of this component on the positive side, and were in, or very close to, the position that perceived these traits “strongly” on the study scale. The parents also perceived the characteristics of this component on the positive side, but it seemed as though their perception was a bit closer to the position “strongly.” Figure D traced the perceptions of groups and found that the difference of perceiving this component between groups was quite small. Among the parents group, the difference in perceiving the cognitive traits of gifted children was very small while a small difference was found between teachers of gifted and teachers of non-gifted children. This means that the total of the mean score on this component when comparing teachers' and parents' perceptions was more influenced by the perceptions of teachers of gifted children. To examine whether there is any statistical difference between teachers' and parents' perceptions toward any traits of gifted children listed in the cognitive traits component, an independent-sample t-test was conducted comparing the means of teachers and parents regarding each trait of gifted children it was found that the only significant difference found between the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding cognitive traits was in (Confronts problems/Avoids problems) (See Table CA, Appindix, C-4). This significance showed that teachers ( $M = 2.37$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ ), compared to parents  $M = 2.90$ ,  $SD = 1.79$ ;  $t(537) = -3.77$ ,  $P < 0.01$ , significantly associated this trait of gifted children.

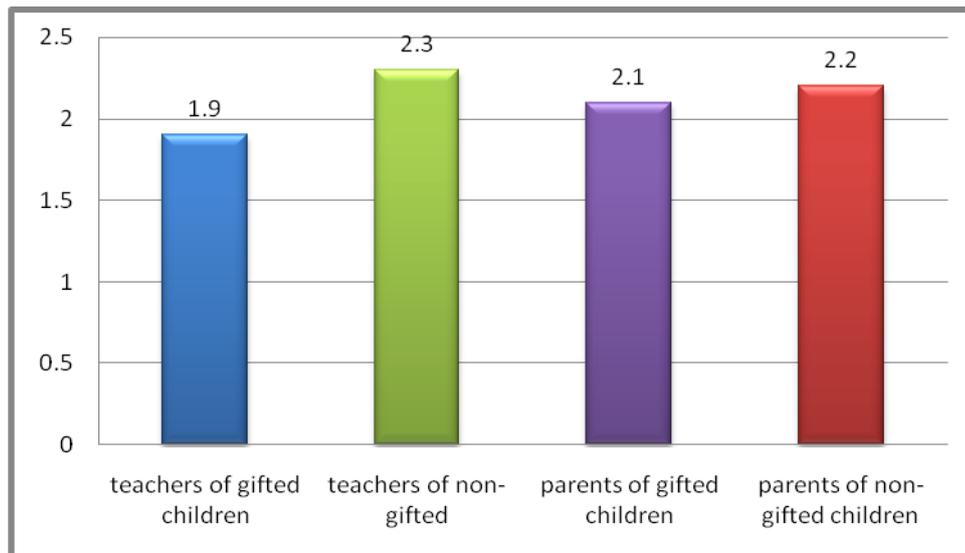


Figure D: Teachers' and parents' mean scores on cognitive traits

In personal traits, the mean average scores of the responses of the teachers and parents were ( $M = 2.05$  and  $M = 1.81$ ) respectively. An observation of the means of the responses of teachers and parents indicated a difference between them. Most parents perceived the content of this component more positively compared to the teachers. Figure E affirmed the difference between teachers and parents in perceiving the personal traits. It shows that parents of children agreed in perceiving this component in the position "very strongly", whereas the majority of the teachers considered this component in the position "strongly." To examine whether there is any statistical difference between teachers' and parents' perceptions, an independent-sample t-test was conducted comparing the means of teachers and parents regarding the traits of gifted children listed in the personal component. The analysis showed that parents more strongly associated most of the personal traits with gifted children (See Table CB, Appendix, C-5). Parents ( $M = 1.99$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ );  $t(533) = 4.409$ ,  $P < 0.001$ , compared to teachers ( $M = 2.49$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ), statistically perceived obedience in gifted children. Another significance was found between parents ( $M = 1.88$ ,  $SD = .93$ ) and teachers ( $M = 2.20$ ,  $SD = .99$ ) with  $t(537) = 3.805$ ,  $P < 0.001$ , showed that parents statistically associated fairness with gifted children. Statistical difference was also found between parents  $M = 1.88$ ,  $SD = .97$ ;  $t(534) = 3.935$ ,  $P < 0.001$  and teachers ( $M = 2.27$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) in perceiving the carefulness trait. This significance explains that parents significantly considered gifted children as careful. In addition, the result showed that parents,  $M = 1.69$ ,  $SD = .96$ ;  $t(538) = 4.855$ ,  $P$

<0.001 compared to teachers ( $M = 2.14$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ) significantly perceived gifted children as lovable.

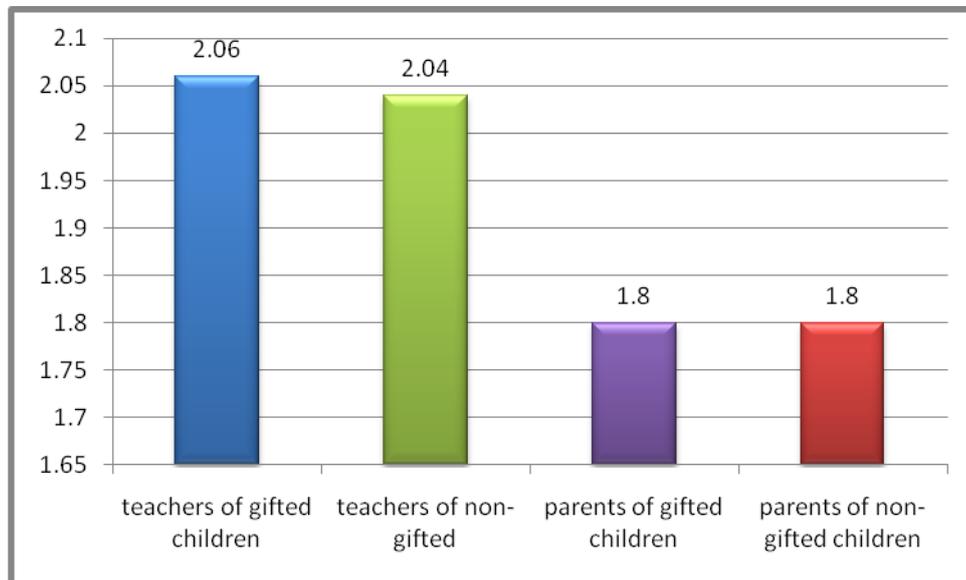


Figure E: Teachers' and parents' mean scores on the personal traits

In social and leadership traits, the mean average score of the responses of teachers was ( $M = 2.08$ ), and for parents was ( $M = 1.95$ ). This indicated that teachers and parents perceived all traits included in this component on the positive side. However, parents tended somewhat to perceive these traits in the position “very strongly”, as compared to teachers (See Figure F). In order to investigate whether if there is any significant difference found between the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the traits of gifted children listed in the social and leadership component, an independent t-test was also used ((See Table CC, Appendix, C-6).). The analysis showed that the only significant statistical difference between the perceptions of teachers ( $M = 2.24$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ) and parents  $M = 1.95$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ;  $t(539) = 4.533$ ,  $P < 0.001$  was in perceiving the sociability trait. The parents significantly associated the trait with gifted children.

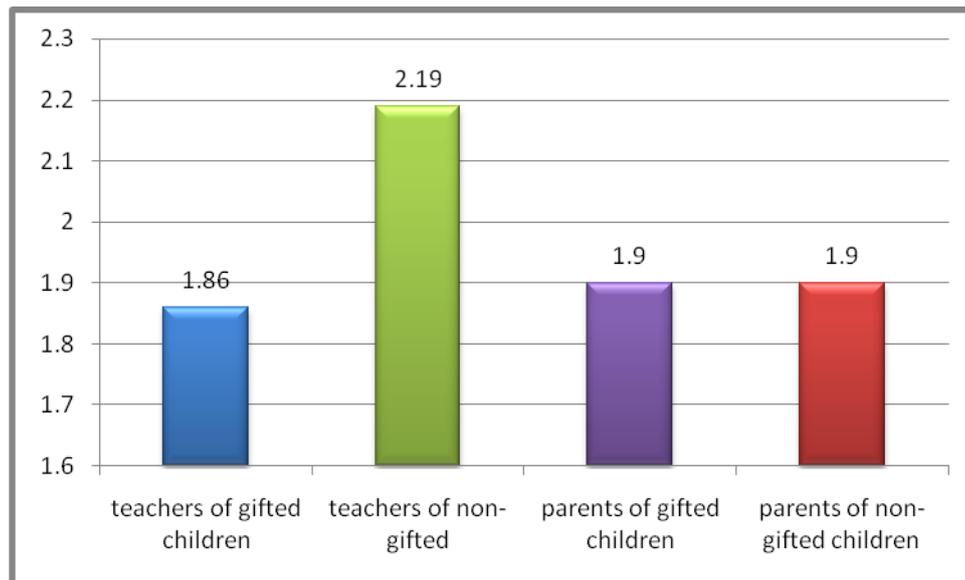


Figure F: Teachers' and parents' mean score on social and leadership traits

In the traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts, the teachers with a mean of ( $M = 3.07$ ) and the parents with a mean of ( $M = 2.97$ ) “slightly” agreed to associate the content of this component with the characteristics of gifted children. Figure G shows that the difference between the participants in perceiving this component was very small. In order to investigate whether if there is any significant difference between the two groups and their perceptions toward the traits of gifted children listed in this component, the analysis using an independent sample t-test shows that there were significant differences in the means between teachers and parents in their perceptions regarding some items listed in traits perceived within the religious and cultural component (See Table CD, Appendix, C-7). It was found that parents  $M = 2.45$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ,  $t(538) = 3.695$ ,  $P < 0.001$  compared to teachers ( $M = 2.97$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ) significantly associated quietness with gifted children. Another significance difference was also found between teachers and parents in perceiving whether gifted children follow rules or not. Parents  $M = 2.09$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ,  $t(538) = 1.173$ ,  $P < 0.01$  compared to teachers ( $M = 2.51$ ,  $SD = 1.51$ ) significantly perceived that gifted children follow rules. However, teachers  $M = 3.13$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ ,  $t(537) = -2.916$ ,  $P < 0.05$ , compared to parents ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 1.82$ ) significantly perceived gifted children as having exceptional drawing skills.

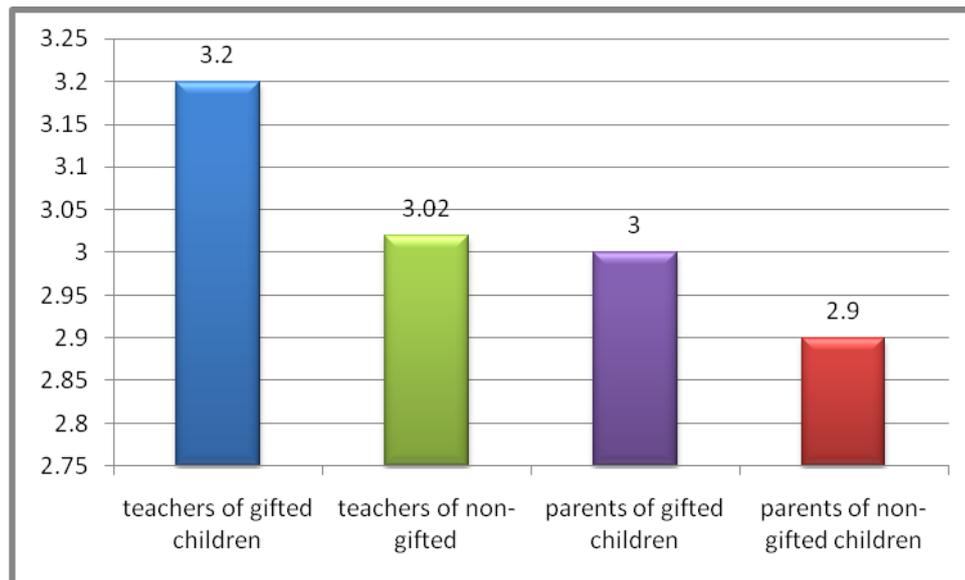


Figure G: Teachers' and parents' mean score on traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts

To determine which traits were perceived as most or least important, the values of means and the standard deviations were calculated. The top three ranked items for each component were selected to represent the characteristics perceived as most important by the participants, and the bottom three ranked items were chosen to represent the characteristics perceived as least important by the respondents. A lower value mean indicates a trait of higher importance and a higher value mean indicates a characteristic of lower importance. Therefore, the means and the standard deviations of the three top and bottom traits were ranked from the lowest to the highest values. The interpretation of the three bottom ranked traits counted the last trait listed in that table as the least important trait and ranked (1). Table 18 and Table present the top and the bottom three traits in each component.

Table 18 and Table 19 show the top and the bottom ranked traits of cognitive traits. All traits included in this component were listed in the appendices (See Appendix C-4). Table 18 shows that the majority of teachers and parents strongly perceived the intellectually gifted children as those students who are “sharp” (ranked 1, with a mean-value of 1.47 for teachers and 1.41 for parents), and “attentive” (ranked 2, with a mean-value of 1.54 for teachers and 1.63 for parents). The only discrepancy between teachers and parents occurred in the third-listed traits. A comparison between teachers and parents in these traits showed that the teachers strongly considered gifted children as those who are “precise” (ranked 3, with a

mean-value of 1.74), while the parents strongly perceived gifted children as those who are “bright in achievement tests” (ranked 3, with a mean-value of 1.64).

Table 18: Main and standard deviation ranking of cognitive traits (highest ranked traits)

Teachers			Parents		
Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sharp/ Dull	1.47	.76	Sharp/ Dull	1.41	.87
Attentive/ Distracted	1.54	.90	Attentive/ Distracted	1.63	.95
Precise/ Imprecise	1.74	.99	High achiever/ Underachiever	1.64	.97

Table 19 presents the bottom three ranked cognitive traits of gifted children. As mentioned above, the lower mean-weights for the responses of the participants to the items, the more important they are. The agreement of the teachers' and parents' perceptions was recorded on the perceptions “has large vocabulary” (with a mean-value of 2.39 for teachers and 2.63 for parents) and “outstanding reader” (with a mean-value of 2.44 for teachers and 2.80 for parents). Most teachers perceived “likes writing” (with a mean-value of 2.57) as the least important trait for intellectually gifted children. To contrast, parents considered “confronts problems” (with a mean-value of 2.90) as the least important trait among the other cognitive characteristics of gifted children. However, although this trait ranked in as the least important compared to the others listed in the cognitive component, the result found above showed that parents compared to teachers significantly associated this trait with gifted children. This result may lead us to say that, although some traits may be perceived to be at a lower level and considered as the least important compared to other traits in this component, it does not mean that these traits were perceived as unconnected to giftedness.

Table 19: Main and standard deviation ranking of cognitive traits (lowest ranked traits)

Teachers			Parents		
Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Has large vocabulary/ Has limited vocabulary	2.39	1.26	Has large vocabulary/ Has limited vocabulary	2.63	1.46
Outstanding reader/ ordinary reader	2.44	1.24	Outstanding reader/ ordinary reader	2.80	1.70
Likes writing/ Hates writing	2.57	1.14	Confronts problems/ Avoids problems	2.90	1.79

Table 20 and Table 21 show the top and the bottom ranked traits of personal traits. All traits included in this component were listed in the appendices (See Appendix C-5). Table 20 shows the mean and the standard deviation of the top three ranked personal traits of gifted children that were mentioned by teachers and parents. The “reliable” trait (ranked 1, with a mean-value of 1.77) was the first priority of teachers. In contrast, the most important personal trait of gifted children for parents was “loyal” (ranked 1, with a mean-value of 1.65). The loyalty trait was also mentioned by the teachers as one of the most important personal characteristics of gifted children. However, the teachers ranked this trait third (with a mean-value of 1.85). The teachers and parents strongly agreed to associate the logic trait with the personal characteristics of gifted children. They ranked it as the second most important trait among other personal traits (with a mean-value of 1.84 for teachers, and 1.69 for parents). The trait “lovable” (with a mean-value of 1.69) was only mentioned by the parents, and ranked third in the order. It was found above that examining the significance between groups regarding this trait showed that parents significantly perceived gifted children as lovable.

Table 20: Mean and standard deviation ranking of personal traits (highest ranked traits)

Teachers			Parents		
Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Reliable/ Unreliable	1.77	1.04	Loyal/ Disloyal	1.65	.83
Logical/ Illogical	1.84	1.03	Logical/ Illogical	1.69	.88
Loyal/ Disloyal	1.85	.915	Lovable/ Unlovable	1.69	.83

Again, the mean-weights of these traits showed that the perceptions of the participants still strongly considered these traits to be on the positive side on the scale. For example, although the analysis using an independent *t*-test showed that parents significantly associated fairness with the traits of gifted children, it was not ranked among the most important traits.

Table 21 shows the personal traits that were perceived as the least important according to both teachers and parents. It appeared that the participants both listed the same traits. However, the order of most ranked traits did not agree. The participants ranked the “careful” trait (with a mean-value of 2.27 for teachers, and 1.88 for parents) in the same order as each other. However, searching for the

significance shows that parents compared to teachers significantly perceived that carefulness is part of gifted children's traits. The teachers ranked "organized" (with a mean-value of 2.32) as the second least important personal trait, while this trait was ranked by parents in the first least important position (with a mean-value of 2.13). The teachers ranked "obedient" (with a mean-value of 2.49) as the least important personal trait of gifted children, whereas this trait was perceived by parents as the second least important personal trait (with a mean-value of 1.99). This result is consistent with the significance found earlier in the perceptions of parents regarding obedience. Again, the mean-weights of these traits showed that the perceptions of the participants still strongly considered these traits to be on the positive side on the scale. For example, although the analysis using an independent *t*-test showed that parents significantly associated fairness with the traits of gifted children, it was not ranked among the most important traits.

Table 21: Mean and standard deviation ranking of personal traits (lowest traits)

Teachers			Parents		
Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Careful/ Careless	2.27	1.32	Careful/ Careless	1.88	.97
Organized/ Disorganized	2.32	1.41	Obedient/ Disobedient	1.99	1.17
Obedient/ Disobedient	2.49	1.44	Organized/ Disorganized	2.13	1.34

Table 22 presents the content of the social and leadership traits component. There were only five items included in this component, so the top two ranked traits and the bottom two ranked traits were used to compare the perceptions of teachers and parents. The participants ranked "confident" (with a mean-value of 1.63 for teachers and 1.65 for parents) as the first most important social and leadership trait of gifted children. The participants also agreed upon "leader" as the second most important characteristic (with a mean-value of 1.96 for teachers, and 1.90 for parents). "Courageous" was perceived by teachers as one of the two bottom ranked traits (with a mean-value of 2.24). This trait was also mentioned by parents and ranked the least important trait among the social and leadership traits. "Outgoing" (with a mean-value of 2.08) was one of the bottom two traits mentioned by parents. Teachers paid little attention to "sociable," and ranked it as the least important trait (with a mean-value of 2.42). However, although parents did not rank sociable as the first or second most important trait, an investigation for significance mentioned above showed that parents compared to teachers significantly perceived sociality as a trait of gifted

children. Examination of the mean-values for these traits showed that they were still perceived by teachers and parents to be on the positive side on the scale.

Table 22: Mean and standard deviation ranking of social and leadership traits (highest/ lowest traits)

Teachers			Parents		
Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Confident/ Unconfident	1.63	.79	Confident/ Unconfident	1.65	.86
Leader/ Follower	1.96	1.04	Leader/ Follower	1.90	1.07
Outgoing/ shy	2.14	1.30	Sociable/ Unsociable	1.95	1.14
Courageous/ Cowardly	2.24	1.14	Outgoing/ shy	2.08	1.29
Sociable/ Unsociable	2.42	1.29	Courageous/ Cowardly	2.20	1.16

In the traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts, the participants shared a similar perception regarding the top three listed traits (See Table 23). Teachers ranked “not persistent” as the first of the top three important traits (with a mean-value of 2.47). The mean of this trait indicated that the teachers tended to perceive it in the “slightly” position. The parents placed this trait on the last degree of the top three ranked traits (with a mean-value of 2.45). The mean of the parents’ responses to this trait indicated that the parents also placed it in the “slightly” position. The trait “follows rules” (with a mean-value of 2.51) was perceived by the teachers’ group to be close to the “slightly” position, and ranked as the second most important characteristic. The parents (with a mean-value of 2.09) “strongly” felt that gifted children tend to “follow rules,” and ranked it first of the top three important traits. Moving back to the significant difference between teachers and parents regarding this trait showed that this trait was significantly associated with gifted children by parents. In addition, the third most important ranked trait in the teachers’ group was “quiet” (with a mean-value of 2.97); while it was ranked in the parents’ group as the second most important trait (with a mean-value of 2.45). It was found that this trait was significantly associated with gifted children by parents (See Table, 20).

Table 23: Main and standard deviation ranking of traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts (highest traits)

Teachers			Parents		
Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Persistent/Not persistent	2.47	1.49	Follows rules/ does not follow rules	2.09	1.46
Follows rules/ does not follow rules	2.51	1.56	Quiet / Talkative	2.45	1.58
Quiet / Talkative	2.97	1.68	Not persistent / Persistent	2.45	1.62

Table 24 shows the bottom three ranked traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts. The participants strongly agreed to mention the same characteristics in this list. The perceptions of the majority of the participants concerning the listed traits ranged from “slightly” to “neutral”. However, an examination for significance showed that teachers significantly associated the exceptionality in drawing with gifted children.

Table 24: Main and standard deviation ranking of traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts (lowest traits).

Teachers			Parents		
Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
An exceptional drawer/ An ordinary drawer	3.13	1.38	Likes singing/ Dislikes singing	3.54	1.75
Likes singing/ Dislikes singing	3.61	1.51	An exceptional drawer/ An ordinary drawer	3.54	1.82
Enjoys music/ hates music	3.62	1.55	Enjoys music/ hates music	3.68	1.75

In order to expand our understanding of the perceptions of the participants in regarding their perceptions toward the characteristics of gifted children, a decision was made to answer this question qualitatively. The following section focuses on data gathered using a qualitative approach.

### Focus group interviews

A series of focus interviews was conducted to investigate qualitatively the perceptions of the participants toward the characteristics of gifted children included in the four factors of the study scale. Moreover, the results found in Study One (See

Chapter 4), regarding the impact of religious and cultural elements upon the perceptions of the participants with respect to their appreciation of music and visual arts activities or perceiving leadership in Saudi girls seemed an essential factor in determining the acceptance of these activities in Saudi society. Therefore, focus interviews also aimed to investigate in depth the interplay of religion and participants' perceptions concerning the acceptance of these issues. The selection of participants, data collection, data analysis, and results are described below.

## **Participants**

Consent letters seeking volunteers to participate in the interview were attached to the mailed surveys. The participants who were willing to be interviewed filled out the consent forms and attached them to the surveys. Out of a total of sixteen participants who agreed to be interviewed, twelve participants finally did attend their interview appointments. Six teachers: two male teachers and one female teacher of gifted children and one male teacher and two female teachers of non-gifted children agreed to be interviewed. In addition, two fathers and one mother of gifted children and two fathers and one mother of non-gifted children were interviewed. Selected participants were contacted and the purpose of the study explained. They were informed that all information they provided would be used only for the purposes of this study. It was also stressed that confidentiality would be maintained.

## **Data collection**

A similar method used in the focus groups (See Chapter 3) was employed for the data collection in this study from the teachers and parents. The interviewers arranged a time and location for the interviews, which were conducted at schools. Two schools, one for boys and the other for girls, were selected as sites for the focus interviews. The plan required that the researcher interview male participants at the boys' school and that his female colleague interview female participants at the girls' school. The researcher and his colleague contacted the participants to find out their willingness to come to the selected schools, and all participants responded positively. All interviews were conducted in the morning. Demographic information was

gathered at the beginning of each interview. The participants were then asked to respond to questions regarding their perceptions of gifted children's characteristics. Each interview was recorded with two tape recorders to ensure that the interview was taped accurately and to avoid the loss of data. Finally, all information was transcribed and prepared for analysis.

### **Analysis**

Similar methods to those used in Study One (See Chapter 3) were used in this study. The qualitative study aimed to investigate in depth the findings of quantitative data, therefore, the analysis of the interview followed the categories found on the scale. These categories were a) cognitive traits, b) personal traits, c) social leadership traits, and d) traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts. Each interview was summarized and each statement, word, and/or phrase referring to teachers' and parents' perceptions regarding the characteristics of gifted children were coded and clustered under the related categories.

### **Results**

The findings of this study were collected from four groups: teachers of gifted children, teachers of non-gifted children, parents of gifted children, and parents of non-gifted children. Prior to the interviews, the participants were asked to provide information about their backgrounds. Table 25 and Table 26 show the demographic information for teachers and parents, respectively.

Table 25: Description of teacher groups (N = 6)

Teachers of gifted children (N = 3)		Teachers of non-gifted children (N = 3)	
Characteristics	N	Characteristics	N
<b>Gender</b>		<b>Gender</b>	
Male	2	Male	1
Female	1	Female	2
<b>Age</b>		<b>Age</b>	
21-30	2	21-30	1
31-40	1	31-40	2
<b>Highest level of education</b>		<b>Highest level of education</b>	
Bachelor	3	Bachelor	3
<b>Number of years as teacher</b>		<b>Number of years as teacher</b>	
4-6 years	2	4-6 years	1
8-10 years	1	8-10 years	2
<b>Number of years teaching gifted children</b>		<b>Number of years teaching gifted children</b>	
1-3 years	1	1-3 years	1
4-7 years	2	4-7 years	2
<b>Subject areas</b>		<b>Subject areas</b>	
Gifted education	81	Islamic studies	1
		Arabic	1
		Math	1
<b>Number of recommended children for gifted programs by teachers</b>		<b>Number of recommended children for gifted programs by teachers</b>	
10 or above	3	Zero child	1
		4-6 children	2

Table 26: Description of parent groups (N = 6)

Parents of gifted children (N = 3)		Parents of non-gifted children (N = 3)	
Characteristics	N	characteristics	N
<b>Gender</b>		<b>Gender</b>	
Male	2	Male	2
Female	1	Female	1
<b>Age</b>		<b>Age</b>	
21-30	1	31-40	3
31-40	2		
<b>Highest level of education</b>		<b>Highest level of education</b>	
Bachelor	3	Bachelor	1
		Doctorate	2
<b>Number of children identified in family</b>		<b>Number of children identified in family</b>	
1-3 children	1	4-6 children	3
4-6 children	2		
<b>Number children identified as gifted in family</b>			
One child	2		
Two children	1		
<b>Identified child(ren) for gifted programs</b>			
Yes	3		

Interview data were grouped based on the factors already identified in the study scale. These factors are as follows: a) cognitive traits, b) personal traits, c) social and leadership traits, and d) traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts. Each factor represented a category for a specific area of the characteristics of gifted children. The results of the first, second, and third components are presented in tables (See Tables 31, 32 & 33). This followed with the results found in component four. The response of the participants in respect to these traits was designed as follows: agreement in perceiving this trait in gifted children, disagreement in perceiving this trait in gifted children, or no information. If the participants did agree or disagree, a right tick was placed in the appropriate cell under the related group. If the participants did not comment on any listed traits, the response to the group was left

blank. The results are reported starting with traits that were agreed on among groups, followed by other disagreed on traits.

In order to answer the research question, the participants were asked to provide their perceptions regarding two groups of questions. The first group focused on gathering information about the three identified categories: cognitive, personal, and social and leadership traits. The following questions were asked:

- What perceptions come to mind when you are talking about the characteristics of gifted children?
- What are the cognitive, personal, social and leadership traits that should be associated with the characteristics of gifted children?
- Could you explain how you determine giftedness in children?

The second group of questions was designed to answer the fourth category, traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts. These questions aimed to investigate in depth the impact of religion upon the perceptions of participants with respect to the appreciation of music and visual arts in Saudi culture:

- Do you think the valuation of music and musicians in Saudi society is influenced by religious judgments?
- What are your perceptions regarding singers? If you perceive them as gifted, do you think other Saudis share your view as to whether they are gifted?
- Who is more appreciated in Saudi culture: singers without instruments or singers accompanied by musical instruments? Why?
- What are your perceptions toward the visual artists? And what is the visual art form that is more appreciated among Saudis than others?

It was found that all teachers agreed that the first thing that comes to their minds when talking about giftedness is that those students have exceptional abilities which do not exist in other ordinary students who share their age and grade level.

Table 27 shows that teachers of gifted/non-gifted children and parents of gifted/non-gifted children all associated traits such as sharpness, independence, having advanced language ability, having a large vocabulary, and fluency with

intellectually gifted children's characteristics. It was found that in the results discussed in quantitative investigation teachers and parents mentioned most of the above traits as manifestations of giftedness. The analysis showed that there was no significant difference between the perceptions of the two groups toward these traits, though an examination of the mean-values indicated that teachers' group perceived these traits in more strongly positive way. The only significant difference found in quantitative investigation which was not mentioned by groups in this investigation was about the "confronts problems" trait. This was perceived only by teachers as a trait of gifted children. Following up the perceptions of the participants using a qualitative approach showed that statements such as "gifted children are very smart compared with other ordinary children" were repeatedly mentioned throughout all group discussions. This trait was ranked by the two groups as the most important trait of gifted children. Another trait that was frequently mentioned by the groups was independence. One father of gifted children described his son as an independent learner. He said, "My child is interested in getting information by himself. Sometimes when he does not get any satisfactory answer from me or his mum, he takes responsibility and searches for the answer for his questions". The teachers also believed that these children prefer to work independently. One teacher of gifted children said, "I spend less time with gifted children explaining to them some points related to their homework, whereas ordinary children take me longer". Interestingly, the independence trait was not given a significant order by teachers in quantitative investigation. The results also revealed another interesting finding. In quantitative investigation, teachers and parents ranked language and issues related to it to be at a lower level and considered them as the least important traits compared to other cognitive traits. However, in focus group discussions, the two groups stressed the importance of these traits. Both teachers and parents observed a high level of language ability among children they considered gifted. Most participants linked language ability to extensive vocabulary and fluency. One teacher of gifted children said, "those children attract you with their words and the way they express themselves". Another teacher of non-gifted children described gifted children by saying, "They have expressive language which allows them to be nominated by their classmates to be class speakers". The parents also perceived these children as being exceptional in language ability and as having a large vocabulary. The mother of a gifted child made a comparison between her children:

“I have four children. The youngest one has already been identified as gifted. I observed that she has a high level of language ability compared with her brothers and sister. When she expresses herself or describes objects, she uses sophisticated language and attractive words and puts them in fantastic contexts”.

Gifted children were also perceived as being curious. Again, this trait was not given a significant order in quantitative study by either teachers or parents. In the current investigation, this trait was explicitly mentioned by teachers' groups and parents of gifted children, while the parents of non-gifted children did not specifically mention it. One teacher of gifted children stated that these children always display a great level of curiosity to understand new things. They have strong tendencies toward exploring unusual issues. A teacher of non-gifted children reported that “a gifted child tends to explore everything. He always bothers his teachers with his endless questions about things that attract his attention”. The parents of gifted children also emphasized the curiosity trait as a component of intellectually gifted children. One father of a gifted child said of his son: “he raises many questions about many things”.

The discrepancy in the way that the participants perceived intellectually gifted children was recorded when discussing whether or not gifted children are high achievers. While teachers of non-gifted children and parents of gifted/non-gifted children perceived those children as high achievers, teachers of gifted children did not. A female teacher of gifted children argued:

“I am completely against the use of achievement test criterion to determine giftedness. It is possible to find underachieving students and at the same time they significantly make valuable contributions to their schools and societies”.

The above result seemed consistent with the result found in quantitative investigation. It was found that only parents ranked this trait as one of the top cognitive traits.

Another significant disagreement among the groups was about writing ability. It was found that this was ranked by teachers as the least important trait for

intellectually gifted children. Examining this result in greater depth showed that teachers and parents of gifted children did not require exceptionality in writing to determine giftedness. They argued that among gifted children, some of them write usual paragraphs or stories. In contrast, the parents and teachers of non-gifted children thought that gifted children like writing, especially when writing about something they love. One father of non-gifted children, who is also a teacher, observed that gifted children use high-level writing structures when they write about something related to their interests.

Gifted children were perceived differently by different groups in respect to memory. Although teachers responding to the study scale did not give this trait a high ranking among the most important cognitive traits, teachers in focus group discussions perceived gifted children as those who have exceptional memories. For example, one teacher of gifted children described one gifted child:

“He is an amazing child. He can remember every single word given to him in class. He is also able to remember long lists of phone numbers, dates, places ... sometimes I depend on him to remind me about something related to the lesson or class ... he is really an outstanding boy!”

Parents, on the other hand, perceived this ability in both gifted and non-gifted children. One father of gifted children stated, “Although my son is identified as gifted, I do not trust him with matters that need recalling. Interestingly, I trust his older brother who is not gifted”.



When discussing which personal characteristics can be associated with gifted children, the participants mentioned a variety of perceptions toward this topic (See Table 28). The groups all agreed that traits such as reliability and loyalty can commonly be displayed by gifted children. In addition, the groups perceived helpfulness in these children. The groups described these children as the ones who take action for others' problems and are willing to lend a helping hand. In addition to this agreement, all groups also agreed with associating the logic trait with gifted children's personal characteristics. One teacher of gifted children stated, "a gifted child seems argumentative when trying to perceive sense in objects ... they usually reject others' opinions if it does not fit with their understanding or conviction". Another teacher of non-gifted children confirmed this view and indicated that "gifted children are very convincing to others, so they do not accept other arguments unless they see the point in their discussions". The parents of gifted and non-gifted children shared a similar view and believed these children are logical. One father of gifted children said, "my son sometimes argues about doing something. It does not mean that he does not respect me. Rather, he is just trying to catch the meaning of the work I asked him do". The participants also showed significant agreement when discussing the trait of carefulness. All agreed that these children are aware of their future plans and often seem to worry about their progress and results. In addition, these children were perceived as reliable throughout all focus group discussions.

Comparing the above results with others found in the quantitative study showed that except for carefulness there was no significant difference between the perceptions of groups in perceiving the above traits. It was found that parents compared to teachers statistically perceived gifted children are careful. However, although there was no significant difference between the perceptions of groups regarding reliability, loyalty, helpfulness and logic, some of them were given a different order by teachers and parents. For example, while reliability trait was the first priority of teachers, the most important personal trait of gifted children for parents was loyalty.

A distinction between the participants' perceptions regarding the children's personal characteristics was recorded concerning the organization trait. Teachers and parents of gifted children agreed that these children are disorganized. For example, one teacher of gifted children described one gifted child by saying, "he randomly draws some shapes on his books' margins ... he often forgets his ruler or pencil". One father of gifted

children did not observe organized behaviour in his son. He described his cupboard or his bag: "his bag is usually filled with junk stuff ... he is a messy boy". In contrast, a mother of non-gifted children, who is also a teacher, thought these children are very organized. She mentioned one gifted girl: "I like the way she organizes her classroom stuff".

Whether gifted children are lovable or not was perceived a bit differently among the groups. However, in the quantitative study, parents showed significant perceptions toward this trait. They significantly associated this trait with gifted children. Examining this view in focus group discussions showed that only teachers of gifted children felt that gifted children do not love each other. One teacher of gifted children explained this by saying, "they always tend to want perfection. It may cause sensitivity between them ... every one of these children always tries to be the best one in the class". In contrast, teachers of non-gifted children and parents of gifted and non-gifted children perceived these children as lovable by others. Statements such as, "these children are loved by their peers and teachers" were mentioned by the participants.

Perceiving obedience in gifted children seemed inconsistent between groups. This trait was only mentioned by teachers of gifted/non-gifted children and parents of gifted children. It was found that teachers of gifted and non-gifted children agreed that gifted children were obedient. One teacher of gifted children pointed out that these children are well-mannered and obedient. Another teacher of gifted children confirmed that and said these children always respect their teachers and rarely neglect their instruction. However, obedience in gifted children was not perceived by parents of gifted children. One father said, "My son is very active and noisy compared with his brothers and sister". The father continued by saying, "This may make him a bit disobedient, and he does not listen to my commands". This result seemed to be consistent with another found in quantitative investigation. There was significance difference between the perceptions of teachers and parents toward obedience. However, the views of parents participating in quantitative study were not consistent with other parents participating in qualitative study. While parents in quantitative investigation significantly perceived gifted children obedient, parents here did not. Another trait that was significantly perceived by parents as a trait of gifted children was fairness. In focus group discussions this trait was not discussed clearly.



Table 29 shows most of the social and leadership traits as reported by most participants. All groups agreed that gifted children “can dominate group, are sociable, are asked for ideas and are outgoing”. Linking this result to others found in quantitative study showed that teachers and parents shared a similar view of social and leadership traits with others participating in focus group discussions. However, although all participants in the group discussions associated sociality with the gifted, only the parents in the quantitative study significantly perceived this quality in gifted children. Tracing the views of parents regarding other traits of sociality showed that only parents of gifted children perceived shyness in gifted children. They admitted that some gifted children may be outgoing, but not all of them. A father of gifted children explained this point: “I know some gifted children who are bright in other specific performance areas of giftedness and, at the same time, they are shy and cannot interact freely with others”. In contrast, other participants thought that gifted children are outgoing. This trait was linked to social and leadership elements. Teachers of gifted children perceived these children as friendly. One teacher of gifted children said, “If we consider gifted children as sociable and as having the ability to lead others, I assume they are outgoing, too”. In addition, teachers of non-gifted children considered them cheerful persons who can interact easily with others.

All participants believed that gifted children are leaders and can make strong relationships with their peers. One teacher of gifted children said, “They are friendly and can easily establish relationships with others”. He continued by saying, “successful relationships help them to be the leader of their group”. Teachers of non-gifted children also agreed that gifted children are capable of dominating a group. In addition to this agreement, parents of gifted and non-gifted children emphasized leadership aspects, such as dominating groups and always being at the centre of others’ attention when seeking solutions. A mother of gifted children described her daughter: “She is amazing. She is able to start conversations with others even if she just met them. Children always follow her instructions. She organizes playing stuff and can convince and satisfy others”.

The perception that most female groups perceived leadership in Saudi girls increased the interest to understand these views in greater investigation. Therefore, the participants were asked to discuss their views regarding this issue. As mentioned above, all participants agreed to associate leadership with gifted children. Whether they perceived leadership in both boys and girls seemed controversial. Most male participants thought that for religious

reasons women are not allowed to lead a nation. The male participants presented into their arguments some evidences from the Quran and *hadith*. Most male participants argued that from a religious point of view, a man is responsible to protect and maintain a woman. In addition, statements such as “women, for religious reasons, are not allowed to participate with male strangers”, was significantly agreed amongst male groups. One male participant explained this statement and said that “The limitation of a woman’s participation with other male strangers does not allow her to be a leader”. In contrast, female groups thought that Islam perceives women and males equally. One female argued and said that “The responsibility of males in Islam means that a man is responsible in regard of expenditure matters”. Another female explained that and said “The responsibility of man does not mean a woman is not able to be a leader. Female groups referred to the position of woman in Islam and illustrated a number of successful Muslim women such as Ayshah, the wife of the prophet Mohammed, and Al-Khansa, one of the greatest Muslim poets.

Table 29: The agreements and disagreements on social and leadership traits as perceived among teachers and parent

Traits	Teachers of gifted children		Teachers of non-gifted children		Parents of gifted children		Parents of non-gifted children		Total	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Can dominate group	√		√		√		√		4	
Are sociable	√		√		√		√		4	
Are asked for ideas	√		√		√		√		4	
Are outgoing	√		√			√	√		3	1
Are confident	√		√						2	
Are courageous	√		√						2	
Can organize others					√				1	
Can give clear instructions					√				1	

Gifted children may demonstrate some characteristics that to be troubling others. In the study scale, traits such as persistence and talkativeness, not following rules, liking music, liking singing, and being an exceptional drawer were grouped together. This increased the interest to investigate further the perceptions of participants regarding traits that may be perceived negatively by participants.

Most teachers of gifted children agreed some traits such as talkativeness or interrupting were perceived as undesirable traits by others. However, when describing their perceptions regarding these traits, most of them rejected these traits for religious and cultural reasons. One teacher of gifted children argued that "The instructions of religion and the rules of culture do not accept people who are talkative"

Parents of gifted/non gifted children also affirmed this view. Most of the participants in parent groups took into account religious and cultural acceptance of these aspects. One mother of gifted children admitted that gifted children may be talkative or persistent but "such behaviours are not accepted in Saudi culture" Another father of non-gifted children said that "children who are quiet and willing to hear the instructions of their teachers and parents are more accepted than others"

Investigating the impact of religion and culture upon the perceptions of participants regarding some traits such as music and visual arts was intentionally deferred to the end of the interviews. These topics are considered sensitive among Saudis, so it is helpful to discuss delicate issues when researchers have had the chance to make sure the participants feel free to participate sufficiently (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1996). The position of religion and culture concerning the acceptance of music and visual arts activities as part of gifted children's traits is the focus here. Three main issues were considered: singing with musical instruments, singing without musical instruments, and drawing animated or inanimate objects,

All of the participants were asked to provide their perceptions of music and whether they perceived outstanding musicians as gifted. There was an obvious significant difference between the way participants valued music and the religious judgment regarding this issue. Most participants admitted that music is a wonderful activity and that persons who display outstanding talent in music are absolutely gifted. However, religion played an important role when the participants made their conclusions. They all agreed playing music

is not accepted in Islam, so their perceptions as Muslims must agree with their religion. One teacher of gifted children stated:

“In my view music is part of giftedness, but the real judgment in this case should not overlook the perception of society. In Saudi society music is perceived negatively. This is because music is prohibited in the Holy Quran. In addition, the prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) cautioned Muslims about listening to music and singing”.

Another teacher of gifted children confirmed the fact that music is perceived as valuable in some cultures, but in Saudi Arabia it may not be perceived as such. He argued the need to consider the values of the nation in regard to who might be gifted. He stated that:

“The value of activities should be evaluated based on societies' and people's beliefs. Music may be positively perceived in Western religions. This view is not held in Islamic societies. The instructions of Islam have been built to encourage Muslims to practice useful activities. Music is considered in Islam to be a useless activity. Therefore, it is not surprising to find a level of rejection of music and musicians among Muslims”.

A teacher of non-gifted children argued, “Music may be considered valuable in some cultures. So if Saudi children do not show exceptional performance in music, it does not mean that they are not considered gifted”. When confronted with the fact that musical parties are popular in Saudi Arabia and the question why this activity was thus not appreciated, he said:

“I understand some people have a double standard in judging things. However, our religion shows Muslims the right path to Allah and gives them the responsibility to decide where they want to stand. I think people who attend these musical parties know they are sinning”.

One father of gifted children emphasized the decision of religion regarding this issue. He completely rejected music and thought, “Music is accepted among younger people and they will give it up when they realize it is sin”. Parents of non-gifted children did not differ in their perceptions toward music. They personally accepted it, but framed their final perceptions with religious and cultural views. One father of non-gifted children stated, “Music is not included in the curricula. It is not only unacceptable in the educational system, but it is also not acceptable among Saudis for religious and cultural reasons”. The

mother of non-gifted children said, “according to religious and cultural perceptions, music is a useless activity so it is banned in Islam. It is perceived by Saudis as a pointless activity”.

The agreement between the participants' and religion's perceptions was marked when discussing singing without musical instruments. All participants agreed that songs that were performed without musical instruments are accepted in religion and among Saudis. The only condition that was perceived to be based on religious instructions was that songs must not include any sexual meaning. One teacher of gifted children appreciated outstanding singers who have an attractive voice and believed that songs that have purposeful words that encourage morality are appreciated in Saudi Arabia. Another teacher of gifted children confirmed this view and gave an example to prove his perspective: “there was a singer. When he began singing, he sang romantic songs. Later on, he switched his interest to Islamic songs and abandoned musical instruments. Consequently, within a few years he became a very popular singer among Saudis”.

Other groups, teachers of non-gifted children and parents of gifted and non-gifted children significantly affirmed the acceptance of singers without musical instruments and considered them as welcome among Saudis. Some of their comments are listed below:

A teacher of gifted children said, “I accept only singers who sing for Islamic conquests or encourage morality. Romantic songs that touch the instincts and arouse erotic desires are not accepted among Muslims”. One father of gifted children stated:

“Singers who have a beautiful voice and perform songs without musical instruments are appreciated among Saudis. The appreciation obviously appears in religious activities such as reading the Holy Q-uran. I'll give an example, one of the main factors to be nominated as a muezzin is an outstanding voice”.

One father of non-gifted children divided the perception of singers into two perspectives. He said the first perspective is linked to religious people who do not accept songs and singers. The second view, he said, was related to liberal people who enjoy songs. He pointed out:

“In the second view, people who are not conservative may like and enjoy singing. However, despite the fact that a number of Saudis appreciate

music and singers, the acceptance of these singers in Saudi Arabia seems a very complicated matter”.

Another father of non-gifted children argued that recitation is accepted from a religious point of view. He illustrated a number of Saudi singers who perform recitations and confirmed that those singers are widely accepted among Saudis. He stated that:

“Recitation or that which may be known as a lyric is accepted in Saudi culture. However, this recitation should not include obscenity or rude words not allowed according to our religious instructions or cultural rules. The content of singing plays an important key in the acceptance of singers”.

The participants were also asked to discuss their perceptions toward artists. None of the participants denied that an outstanding drawer is considered gifted. However, what type of objects he or she draws was interpreted according to religious and cultural views. For example, one teacher of gifted children said:

“I think drawing is accepted in Saudi Arabia. We have professional institutions for drawing. Regarding the judgment of Islam about drawing, Islam does not allow drawing human beings and animals. If there is necessity to draw or photograph them, drawers are ordered to cross out the faces”.

Another teacher of gifted children confirmed this point and pointed out:

“Drawing is accepted in Saudi Arabia with some conditions. These conditions are linked to Islamic instructions. Drawing animated shapes is banned in our religion, so whether we appreciate this activity depends on our religion. I presume that if we had two galleries—one presenting human portraits and the other showing landscapes and seascapes—people, for religious reasons, would prefer to attend the traditional display”.

This view was shared by teachers of non-gifted children and parents of gifted children. For instance, one teacher thought drawing was appreciated in Saudi Arabia and was taught in Saudi schools and public institutions. The only concern she raised was about the connection between drawing shapes and religious instructions. She said, “drawing inanimate objects is accepted in our religion”. Parents did not ignore these opinions. They admitted that outstanding drawing cannot be overlooked in the human sense. In addition,

one father of gifted children shaped his perception with his religious view. However, his perception was a bit more flexible than those of others. He had witnessed some contemporary religions that made an exception for the acceptance of animate objects. He stated:

“I would say the main point here is the perception of religion regarding activities such as visual arts. Religion considers drawing any animated pictures as sinful. On the other hand, some contemporary religious scholars consider drawing or taking photos as not being banned. Consequently, many Saudis follow this religious interpretation and accept animate photographs”.

A distinction in views regarding drawing was recorded among the group of parents of non-gifted children. One father said, “Drawing is officially taught and included in curricula. If it did conflict with religious rules, it would not be included and considered as a compulsory subject in our schools”. These participants did not specify any kind of drawing. Rather, they perceived drawing as appreciated in Saudi Arabia regardless of whether it involved animate or inanimate objects. The group of parents of non-gifted children criticised the professional schools for drawing because of their focus on commercial matters rather than on improving the drawers' skills. One father said, “I understand that in Saudi Arabia we have some institutions that look after artistic persons, but these institutions focus only on commercial goals rather than educational purposes”.

### **Quantitative analysis**

In this section, the perception of the groups was investigated using a various statistical procedures. This includes, using an independent-sample t-test to examine if there was any significant difference between the main groups (teachers and parents), and the sub-groups (teachers of gifted/non-gifted children and parents of gifted/non-gifted children), and their perceptions toward the four components. In addition, Multivariate analysis (MANOVA) was also used to examine the relationship between the demographic variables background of the participants and their perceptions regarding the four components.

*Research Question 2:* Are there any significant differences between teachers and parents in their perceptions regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

An independent-sample t-test was conducted comparing the means of teachers and parents regarding the total scores of the four components. Table 30 shows that there were no significant differences between teachers' and parents' means in respect of cognitive traits, social and leadership traits, and traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts. The only significant difference between teachers ( $M= 22.50$ ,  $SD= 7.13$ ) and parents ( $M= 19.93$ ,  $SD= 6.78$ ) with  $t(4.167)$ ,  $P < 0.001$ , was found in the personal traits component. The degree of the difference in the means between teachers and parents (mean difference = 2.6,  $\eta^2 = .03$ ) moderately affected the perception of the participants concerning this component. According to the results mentioned above, the parents more strongly associated the personal characteristics included in the component on personal traits with gifted children compared to teachers.

Table 30: Comparison of Teachers' and Parents' Mean perceptions Scores on the Scale

Totals of components	Teachers <i>M (SD)</i>	Parents <i>M (SD)</i>	Mean Difference	<i>t</i>	$\eta^2$
Cognitive traits of gifted children	36.92 (10.65)	38.49 (12.37)	-1.6	-1.484	.004
Personal traits of gifted children	22.50 (7.13)	19.93 (6.78)	2.6	4.167***	.03
Social and leadership traits of gifted children	10.41 (4.28)	9.74 (3.98)	.67	1.866	.007
Traits perceived within religious/ cultural contexts	18.43 (5.26)	17.80 (5.57)	.64	1.326	.003

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$

*Research Question 3:* Are there any significant differences between teachers of gifted children and teachers of non-gifted children in their perceptions regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

The means and the standard deviation for the total four factors for both teachers of gifted/ non-gifted children were conducted. An independent sample- t-test was, then, used to investigate if significant differences were found between the perceptions of the participants regarding the four total scores. Table 31 shows that there were no statistical differences between the groups' mean perceptions in the components: cognitive traits,

personal traits, and traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts. However, although, the analysis of the participants' perceptions on the component of cognitive traits did not show any significant difference between them, an examination of the mean and standard deviation of teachers of gifted children ( $M= 38.28, SD = 10.68$ ) and teachers of non-gifted children ( $M= 34.20, SD = 10.13$ ) revealed that their perceptions were relatively different. In addition, the effect size of (the mean difference = -4.074) lay between the values of a small and moderate effect ( $\eta^2 = .03$ ). The teachers of gifted children tended to associate most cognitive traits included in this component positively with gifted children's characteristics compared to teachers of non-gifted children.

The only statistical difference between the perceptions of teachers of gifted children ( $M= 9.31, SD= 3.91$ ) and teachers of non-gifted children ( $M= 10.94, SD= 4.37$ );  $t (-2.831)$ ,  $P <0.05$  was in the total score of the social and leadership component. The teachers of gifted children compared to teachers of non-gifted children significantly associated the traits of this component with gifted children.

Table 31: Comparison of Teachers' of gifted and teachers of non-gifted children and Mean perceptions Scores on the Scale components

Totals of components	Teachers of gifted children <i>M (SD)</i>	Teachers of non-gifted children <i>M (SD)</i>	Mean Difference	<i>t</i>	$\eta^2$
Cognitive traits of gifted children	34.20 (10.13)	38.28 (10.68)	-4.074	-2.725	.03
Personal traits of gifted children	22.67 (7.74)	22.42 (6.83)	.250	.249	.002
Social and leadership traits of gifted children	9.31 (3.91 )	10.94 (4.37 )	-1.627	-2.831*	.01
Traits perceived within religious/ cultural contexts	19.09 (5.98)	18.10 (4.83 )	.991	1.372	.008

\* $p < 0.05$

*Research Question 4:* Are there any significant differences between parents who have a child identified as gifted and parents who have a child not identified as gifted in their perceptions regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

The analysis using an independent sample t-test shows that there were no significant differences in the means between parents of gifted children and parents of non-gifted children in their perceptions toward all four components. The magnitude for the differences in means of all four components was very small (See Table 32).

Table 32: Comparison of parents' of gifted and parents of non-gifted children and Mean perceptions Scores on the Scale components

Totals of components	parents of gifted children <i>M (SD)</i>	parents of non-gifted children <i>M (SD)</i>	Mean Difference	<i>t</i>	$\eta^2$
Cognitive traits of gifted children	38.12 (13.18)	38.85 (11.58)	-.734	-.481	.0008
Personal traits of gifted children	19.75 (7.07)	20.10 (6.51)	-.357	-.441	.0006
Social and leadership traits of gifted children	9.52 (4.02)	9.95 (3.95)	-.431	-.917	.002
Traits perceived within religious/cultural contexts	17.93 (5.59)	17.68 (5.56)	.244	.369	.0004

*Research question 5a:* Is there any relationship between the perceptions of teachers of gifted children and their demographic background regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

Multivariate analysis (MANOVA) was conducted with cognitive traits, personal traits, social and leadership traits, and traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts as dependent variables and with seven demographic factors as independent variables. These independent variables are as follows: gender, age, highest level of education completed, the number of years of teaching experience, the number of years teachers have been teaching students identified as gifted, subject areas and number of students that teachers had recommended for testing for gifted programs. The follow-up of the results using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .0125 showed no statistical relationship between the perceptions of teachers of gifted children and their background regarding the characteristics of gifted children.

*Research question 5b:* Is there any relationship between the perceptions of teachers of non-gifted children and their demographic background regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

Analysis of the relationship between the same independent and dependent variables mentioned in question 5a was conducted using MANOVA. Follow-up of the results indicated that only one significance reached the adjusted alpha significance used in this analysis, .0125. In Table 33, this significance showed a statistical relationship between the cognitive traits variable and the gender of the participants ( $F = 11.9, p = .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .459$ ). An examination of the mean scores indicated that female teachers of non-gifted children ( $M = 36.38, SD = 1.35$ ) were more positive in perceiving traits included in the cognitive traits component for gifted children compared with male teachers ( $M = 39.07, SD = 1.02$ ).

Table 33: Relationship between gender and the perceptions of teachers of non-gifted children

Totals of Components	Gender	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>F</i>	$\eta^2$
cognitive characteristics of gifted children	Male	39.07 (1.02)	11.90***	.459
	Female	36.38 (1.35)		
Personal traits of gifted children	Male	22.85 (.966)	2.63	.158
	Female	22.97 (1.28)		
Social and leadership traits of gifted children	Male	11.39 (.600)	.133	.009
	Female	9.65 (.792)		
Traits perceived within religious/cultural contexts	Male	18.78 (.521)	4.85	.256
	Female	16.74 (.687)		

\*\*\* $p < 0.000$

*Research question 6a:* Is there any relationship between the perceptions of parents of gifted children and their demographic background regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

MANOVA was conducted to investigate the relationship between the four dependent variables—cognitive traits, personal traits, social and leadership traits, and traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts—and the six demographic variables for parents—gender, age, highest level of education completed, number of children in family, whether parents of gifted children had a child or children who has/have been nominated for gifted

programs, and how many of their children had been identified as gifted. The results showed no statistical differences along demographic lines between the perceptions of parents of gifted children toward the characteristics of gifted children and their background.

*Research question 6b:* Is there any relationship between the perceptions of parents of non-gifted children and their demographic background regarding the characteristics of gifted children?

MANOVA was also conducted with the four dependent variables mentioned above and with four demographic variables as independent variables—gender, age, highest level of education completed, and number of children in family. The results revealed no significant association between the total scale scores and the four independent variables.

### **Summarizing the teachers' and parents' perceptions**

The participants' perceptions were examined using quantitative and qualitative approaches. In quantitative investigation, the participants were requested to articulate their perceptions of a number of characteristics of gifted children included in a semantic differential scale. The scale covered four aspects of giftedness: cognitive traits, personal traits, social and leadership traits and traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts. A seven-point rating was used to measure the participants' responses. The response 1 "very strongly," 2 "strongly," and 3 "slightly" indicated that the participants perceived the specified traits on the positive side. The response 7 "very strongly," 6 "strongly," and 5 "slightly" indicated that the participants perceived traits on the negative side. The number 4 position, "Neutral", meant that the specified traits the participant was not sure to decide whether the trait could be associated with the gifted.

In qualitative investigation, the participants involved in the focus group discussions were encouraged to respond to a number of questions related to the content of the study scale. This approach was used to investigate the implicit beliefs of the participants toward the characteristics of gifted children. In addition, it was used to investigate some issues related to the Saudi context in greater depth. These issues were grouped under the fourth aspect of giftedness listed above.

The analysis used in quantitative investigation focused first on the means of the main groups (teachers and parents) regarding their perceptions toward all four aspects. The results showed that, except for the traits grouped under the fourth component of giftedness, teachers and parents perceived traits as "very strongly" or "strongly" positive. Subsequently, ranking of the traits from the most to the least important was used to understand which traits were perceived most/less important by teachers and parents. The results showed that for all traits included in all four aspects teachers and parents shared a roughly similar perception in ranking these traits. In order to locate any statistical differences that might have occurred in the perceptions of the main groups (teachers and parents) or sub-groups (teachers of gifted/non-gifted children and parents of gifted/non-gifted children) regarding the characteristics of gifted children, an advanced analysis was used. The analysis showed that parent groups more significantly associated personal traits with the characteristics of gifted children when compared with teacher groups. Another

significant difference showed that teachers of gifted children compared to teachers of non-gifted children strongly associated the traits included under the social and leadership component with the characteristics of gifted children. Examining the relationship between the perceptions of all participants and their backgrounds revealed only one statistical difference. This difference was between male teachers and female teachers of non-gifted children, regarding their perceptions toward the traits included under the cognitive traits aspect. The analysis showed that female teachers of non-gifted children perceived traits included in the cognitive component more positively than male teachers.

A comparison of quantitative and qualitative results showed that most traits included in the study scale were also mentioned by the participants of focus groups. However, a degree of agreement and disagreement was noticed between teachers and parents in perceiving some of these traits.

With regard to cognitive traits, the main agreement between participants was about perceiving gifted children as smart, independent, curious, fluent and advanced in language ability and vocabulary. Considering gifted children as high achievers was only stressed by parent groups. This result confirmed the perceptions of parents found in quantitative investigation that thought that gifted children are high achievers. Responses on strong writing ability in gifted children were inconsistent. While teachers and parents of gifted children did not associate exceptional writing skills with gifted children, parents and teachers of non-gifted children believed that gifted children had exceptional writing skills. This result confirmed the perceptions of teachers found in quantitative investigation that ranked exceptional writing skills as the least important trait.

Regarding personal traits, all teachers and parents perceived gifted children as helpful, careful, loyal, logical and reliable. However, the participants showed a degree of disagreement regarding other traits such as organization and obedience. All groups, except mothers of non-gifted children, agreed that gifted children were disorganized. Gifted children were also perceived by teachers of gifted and non-gifted children as very obedient, while parents of gifted children thought they were disobedient.

As for social and leadership traits, all groups agreed that gifted children tend to be able to lead and dominate others. In addition, most groups perceived them to be sociable, friendly, and cheerful. The groups disagreed when discussing whether gifted children are

outgoing. Teachers of gifted and non gifted children felt that gifted children were outgoing, whereas parents of gifted children did not.

Finally, with regard to traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts, all participants agreed that exceptional musicians, singers, and artists should be classified as gifted. However, they felt that, due to religious and cultural factors, these areas compared with other areas of giftedness such as cognitive or leadership traits are not appreciated among Saudis.

## **Discussion**

The current study aims to investigate teachers' and parents' perceptions of the characteristics of gifted children in Saudi Arabia. A total of 542 teachers and parents were surveyed, and 12 participants were interviewed. The participants in quantitative and qualitative investigations were divided into eight groups: male and female teachers of gifted children, male and female teachers of non-gifted children, fathers and mothers of gifted children and fathers and mothers of non-gifted children. This thesis focused only on teachers who were employed in public primary schools and parents who have children enrolled in these schools. In addition, the study only investigated the perceptions of teachers and parents in Riyadh City. Due to the fact that Saudi Arabia is a big country which may represent diverse customs and traditions, it is recommended to replicate the study using other participants drawing from rural sectors as perceptions of rural participants may differ significantly from their counterparts in urban areas.

As mentioned above, teachers' and parents' perceptions of gifted children were examined through quantitative and qualitative methods. The findings gained through quantitative investigation sought to answer the study research questions. In addition, the findings of focus group discussions played a key role in explaining and clarifying the perceptions of the participants toward the characteristics of gifted children. This technique helped to understand the participants' perceptions of each aspect discussed, which may facilitate drawing a clear conclusion regarding the perceptions of teachers and parents toward the characteristics of gifted children in Saudi Arabia.

### **Perceptions of cognitive traits**

It was found that teachers and parents relatively shared similar views on most of the traits included in this component. They all perceived all cognitive traits positively. The agreement between teachers and parents in perceiving positively the traits included in the cognitive traits component may be because the fact that the majority of these traits related somehow to children's academic success. It was found that when the issue related to the success of children at school or in the future, teachers and parents shared similar concerns (Strip & Hirsch, 2001).

However, an examination of the mean-values of these traits showed that teachers seemed to emphasize cognitive traits a bit more strongly. It could be argued that the success of teachers is measured through the outcomes of their students. If we agreed on this notion, the tendency of teachers to emphasize cognitive traits is understandable. It has been found in another study that when teachers were asked to describe the potential of gifted children, they paid much attention to traits related to intellectuality or scholastic environment than personal traits (Endepohls-Ulpe & Ruf, 2006).

Most teachers and parents perceived most traits of gifted children listed in this component positively. However, searching for significance showed that a strongly significant difference in perceptions was found in the ability of gifted children to perceive problems (See Table CA, Appendix, C-4). It was found that teachers compared to parents participating in this study significantly thought that gifted children have ability to point out and confront problems (Brighton et al., 2007). It may be justifiable that the chance of teachers to observe the reaction of their students through school environment, classroom activities, homework and school examinations may have led them, compared to parents, to stress this trait as a part of gifted children's characteristics. In addition, teachers and parents mentioned almost similar traits as the most/least important traits of intellectually gifted children. They all agreed in ranking two traits, sharpness and attentiveness, at the top three of the most important traits. Similarly, they all agreed in ranking two traits, possession of a large vocabulary and outstanding reading ability, as amongst the three least important traits. Other research on the least important cognitive traits as perceived by the participants showed that these traits were commonly associated with the characteristics of gifted children (Brighton et al., 2007; Copenhaver & Mc Intyre, 1992; Rohrer, 1995; Snowden & Christian, 1999; Wright, 2000). The results of focus group discussions, however, showed that the participants all agreed on emphasizing the importance of language tasks. Moreover, examining the mean-values of the least important traits, such as outstanding reading ability and possession of a large vocabulary (See Table 18) showed that most of these traits fell under "strongly" positive. This would suggest that these traits are still important, though teachers and parents had listed them at the bottom of the most important traits.

It was also found that while the perceptions of cognitive traits seemed relatively similar for parents of gifted/non-gifted children and teachers of gifted/non-gifted children,

a strong significant difference in perception was noticed between teachers of non-gifted children. The results showed that female teachers of non-gifted children had a strong positive tendency toward cognitive traits compared to teachers of non-gifted children. It could be argued that qualified teachers of gifted children, who are knowledgeable of the potential of the gifted, are in a unique position to observe and identify the characteristics of gifted children (Clark, 1988; Davis & Rimm, 2004). However, being qualified for teaching gifted children may not be the only factor affecting teachers' ability to identify the characteristics of gifted children. Mills (2008) reported that teachers who are not qualified to teach gifted children but have a strong background in their area of expertise may be more effectively able to deal with gifted children than teachers who are qualified to teach gifted children. However, although the expertise of teachers in their academic disciplines was not examined, positive perceptions of female teachers of non-gifted children toward cognitive traits may relate to the strong background they had in their areas of expertise.

### **Perception of personal traits**

The results showed that teachers and parents all perceived the traits included in this component positively. However, parents more strongly considered the traits within this component to be part of the personality of gifted children than teachers did. The results found in the previous component, cognitive traits, showed that teachers and parents all agreed to perceive all cognitive traits positively, but that teachers perceived these traits even more positively. All participants also perceived all personal traits positively, but parents more strongly emphasized these traits. Parents significantly associated traits such as fairness, carefulness, reliability and obedience with gifted children (See Table CB, Appendix, C-5). However, examining the results provided by parents in focus group discussions showed that only parents mentioned that their children are disobedient. Bearing in mind that not all parents stated that gifted children are disobedient and also not all of them said the opposite may put us closer to understand these ambivalent views. It could be argued here that parents who participated in focus groups discussions were part of other parent groups who perceived gifted children disobedient in the quantitative investigation. From the Islamic and Saudi cultural point of view, disobedient individuals are not appreciated. As a native Saudi, I presume that parents who perceived their children as disobedient wish that they are not and parents who perceived their children are obedient want them to display this trait always. Interpreting this result in terms of school and home

requirements would allow us to consider other issues that may be pre-existing beliefs for teachers and parents concerning this trait. It could be argued that teachers may think that students who do their homework or meet classroom requirements are obedient. Parents, on the other hand, may still be worried about their children, even if they do their homework on time and are well-behaved at school. Parents may interpret as disobedience children refusing to go to bed early, playing with naughty children, or going to places which are perceived by parents as harmful. Parents in general are concerned about the personality of their children and think that a good personality assures their children's success in life (Wright, 2000).

The discrepancy of interest between teachers and parents concerning cognitive and personal traits was consistent with those of some previous studies. While teachers participating in a study conducted by Busse et al. (1986) mentioned a number of cognitive and personal traits of gifted children as important traits, they thought that cognitive traits were the most important. In a similar manner, parents participating in a study conducted by Wright (2000) were asked to describe their children's potential and provided their opinions on numerous traits of their gifted children. They significantly emphasized the importance of personal traits such as justice, loyalty, honesty and fairness.

### **Perception of social and leadership traits**

The results of this study showed that teachers and parents of gifted children associated some social aspects such as sociability and friendship with the children. Teachers' and parents' perceptions of social skills seemed consistent with previous findings (Galloway & Porath, 1997). However, examining the different views between the two groups showed that parents significantly associated sociality with gifted children (See Table CC, Appendix, C-6). Comparing this result with the results found in focus group discussions affirmed the views of parents. It was found that the interpretation of some related manifestations of sociality, such as shyness, seemed to vary between participants in the current study. While teachers thought that gifted children were shy, parents thought that their children were outgoing. The perceptions of teachers seemed consistent with those of teachers in other studies. For example, most teachers studied by Brighton et al. (2007) thought that gifted children had poor social skills. Most of them believed that gifted children were shy.

Concerning leadership, teachers and parents generally perceived their children to have leadership qualities. They all thought that gifted children were capable of dominating and leading others. This finding was similar to those of other studies (Chan, 2000; Gross as cited in Harrison, 2004; Snowden & Christian, 1999; Wright, 2000). In addition, it was found that teachers of gifted children compared to teachers of non-gifted children more strongly associated the traits related to social and leadership with gifted children. This result seemed inconsistent with the results of the study by Brighton et al. (2007), which showed that teachers who participated in their study paid little attention to leadership.

However, a more in-depth investigation of teachers' and parents' perceptions of leadership revealed a degree of inconsistency in respect of perceiving leadership in girls. Male groups perceived leadership only in males and female groups assumed that leadership can be perceived in both genders. The argument of the two groups was derived from religion and culture. From an Islamic perspective, men and women are equal (Al-Qaradawi, 2001). Al-Qahtani (2008), a specialist in Islamic studies, argues for allowing women in Saudi to officiate in leading positions in all specialist areas. He encourages the decision makers in Saudi Arabia to prepare and train women to be ready to participate in all social activities. More information regarding the views of religion and culture of perceiving leadership in women will be discussed in the following chapter.

In a study conducted by Louis and Lewis (1992) parents were asked to rank the characteristics of gifted children from the most important to the least important. Of 118 participants, 58 parents had a female child. The results showed that parents of children with higher IQ ranked leadership as the least important. The disparity between the perceptions of Saudi parents and those of the parents in the study above may be attributed to the need for Saudi females to be more involved in social areas which may not be a big deal in other countries. This result would suggest that leadership in females is perceived by female groups as having the same degree of importance as in Saudi males.

### **Perception of traits related to the Saudi context**

It was found that except for quietness, following rules and exceptionality in drawing traits, there were no significant differences between the perceptions of the participants toward the characteristics of gifted children within this component. The results that showed that parents significantly perceived that gifted children are quiet and follow rules may be

attributed the nature of the nurturing of children in Saudi Arabia. For religious and cultural considerations naughty or talkative children or who do not follow rules are not accepted among Saudis. Thus, parents try to instil quietness and obedience in their children from an early age. To be quiet in Saudi culture does not mean to be an isolated or unsociable person. Rather, it means to be polite and respectful. Linking this result with another found in the social and leadership component that showed that parents described their gifted children as sociable and outgoing, may affirm this notion. If this is the case, it could be questioned why the teachers did not perceive gifted children as such? In the school environment and for teaching requirements, teachers are responsible for taking care of a large number of children for a specific time (Strip & Hirsch, 2001). Therefore, teachers may overestimate the behaviours of children. It may be that children are quiet but for the previous reason their teachers did not perceive them so. Regarding the perceptions of exceptionality in drawing, it was found that teachers significantly perceived this in gifted children. In the Saudi curriculum, drawing lessons are included in the educational system. Students are given at least one session per week by qualified teachers. Therefore, perceiving this trait by teachers is not surprising. Teachers have an opportunity to observe the potential of gifted children in drawing during the lesson which is not available to most parents at home. The kind of drawing that is appreciated by teachers will be discussed in the end of this section.

Most of the top and bottom-ranked traits were rated similarly by each group. However, examining the mean-values of the three top and the three bottom ranked traits showed that the appreciation of these traits as perceived by the participants was different. For example, the means of the top three listed traits “not persistent/persistent,” “follows rules/does not follow rules,” and “quiet/talkative” showed that these traits were perceived as positive, although they had not been accorded the same importance as cognitive, personal and social and leadership traits. In addition, except for the mean value of “an exceptional drawer/an ordinary drawer,” as mentioned by teachers, the means of the bottom three listed traits “likes singing/dislikes singing,” and “enjoys music/hates music” showed that these traits were perceived to be irrelevant to the characteristics of gifted children, though their means fell in the positive range of the study scale.

The results explained that most participants feel uncomfortable to consider talkativeness, persistence, or rejecting rules. This perception seemed inconsistent with other views found in the international literature. In the literature, it is common to find views of gifted children as persistent, talkative or reluctant to follow rules (Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Morawska & Sanders, 2008; Sankar-DeLeeuw, 2004; Silverman, 1993). It was found that the participants did not appreciate performing music or drawing animate objects, though other research indicates the common agreement that exceptionality in music, singing or drawing indicates giftedness (Busse et al., 1986; Evans et al.; Gaither, 2008; Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Louis & Lewis, 1992; Porter, 2005). The disparity between the perceptions of the participants and other previous study prompted the need to find the reasons behind this discrepancy. Examining the findings of the focus groups discussion showed that the presence and the impact of religious and cultural factors were noticed when discussing these issues. Most participants agreed that being talkative or persistence against the agreement of other Muslim groups are accepted neither in local culture nor in Islam.

Religious views also influenced the perceptions of the participants when discussing the acceptance of music, singing and visual arts. The impact of religion and culture seemed obvious in discussions of music, singing and drawing. All participants agreed with the fact that songs accompanied by musical instruments are prohibited in Islam (bn Baz, 1987). However, religious interpretation permits songs to be performed without musical instruments, such as recitations, and this seemed to be accepted by Saudis (Al-Qaradawi, 2001). Some participants clearly stressed that songs that do not include obscenity or any content which may refer to sexual matters are not prohibited in Islam.

However, although the impact of religion was also presented when discussing the legitimacy of drawing, the participants explained that the permissibility of drawing was not as restricted as for music and singing. They justified this view saying that beauty is appreciated in Islam and the instruction of religion excludes only drawing animate objects. Most participants argued that drawing inanimate objects (i.e., mountains, trees, or cars) is permitted in Islam. This result allows us to conclude that the participants in this study thought that music performance or exceptionality in drawing animate objects are not appreciated among Saudis. As a result, these aspects are not associated with Saudi gifted children.

In summary, most of the participants regarded the characteristics investigated in this study positively. Generally, the perceptions of the participants could be classified under one of the two categories. The first related to the perception of traits from a perspective similar to that of the literature. This included cognitive traits, personal traits and most traits under the sociability and leadership category. The participants seemed to agree about some traits and disagree about others. There was no major difference between the perceptions of teachers and parents toward these traits. The slight differences that emerged between the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding some cognitive or personal traits could be attributed to the kind of responsibilities they have toward their children.

The second category related to the perception of traits within a Saudi context. Most traits such as music, singing, and drawing were perceived by the participants as being related to religious and cultural contexts. Keeping in mind that most Saudis are religious, and are happy to follow interpretations that prohibit music may explain why most participants in this study did not appreciate musical ability in children, in comparison to the other traits under other components. Drawing was also perceived through the lens of religious doctrine, although it seemed to be more appreciated by participants than music.

It can be concluded that the perceptions of participants regarding the characteristics of gifted children included in this study are classified into two views. The first was relatively consistent with previous findings reported in the literature. This view applies to some traits included in Factors One, Two, and Three. The second view was related to the uniqueness of Saudi contexts. It includes the impact of religion and culture upon the perceptions of participants toward gifted children. Traits that were rooted in the precepts of religion and culture were clustered together in Factor Four.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter focused on the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the characteristics of gifted children in response to the study research questions. This chapter will focus on issues related to the perceptions of teachers and parents. These include common views of gifted children as well as religious and cultural views of giftedness. The conclusions derived from the perceptions of teachers and parents are presented. Finally, suggestions for further studies are offered.

#### **Overview**

The main purpose of conducting this research was to investigate the perceptions of Saudi teachers and parents regarding the characteristics of gifted children. To achieve this, the researcher carried out three studies. Due to the fact that the Saudi context may be considered from Saudi (AlFahaid, 2002; Al-Asmari, 2008) and non-Saudi points of view (Burkhart & Goodman, 1998; Slackman, 2008) as a conservative culture, the investigation required the development of a tool based on the views of Saudis toward gifted children. This was achieved by conducting an exploratory study of the perceptions of giftedness held by Saudis (See Chapter 4). The findings of that exploratory study led to the identification of traits that could be associated with gifted children based on Saudi points of view. Consequently, a long list of gifted children's traits was extracted. In order to develop the scale, the researcher conducted a pilot study (See Chapter 5). The findings of that study revealed that four factors of giftedness can be identified in this research. For giving an appropriate name to each identified factor, a panel group discussed the content of each factor based on previous findings found in the literature as well as on how giftedness fits in Saudi culture. Consequently, the four areas of giftedness were termed: a) cognitive traits, b) personal traits, c) social and leadership traits, and d) traits perceived within a religious and cultural context. The scale was designed and several focus group interviews were

conducted to investigate the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the characteristics of gifted children (See Chapter 6). The findings of that study revealed that teachers and parents share a similar perception of giftedness. Most participants perceived most of the traits of gifted children included in the study scale positively. The majority of the participants seemed uncomfortable about associating traits such as talkativeness, persistence and rejecting rules with the characteristics of gifted children. In addition, the perceptions of most participants tended to be negative when discussing issues such as music, singing and drawing. However, the participants disagreed on their perceptions of leadership as a trait. While male participants, for religious reasons, perceived leadership only in males, female participants believed that girls are able to be successful leaders, and gifted girls as having such a trait. Female participants argued that perceiving leadership as a male quality is related to the nature of Saudi culture rather than religious instruction.

The findings of the studies conducted provide insight into understanding the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the characteristics of gifted children, and help to identify the main issues related to these perceptions. This includes the degree of awareness teachers and parents have regarding the gifted. Another issue is that the findings revealed that the perceptions of the participants seemed influenced by some outsider and insider views of giftedness. Therefore, much attention is given to these factors in this chapter.

### **Teachers' and parents' perceptions**

Since the expansion of the conceptions about giftedness in the middle of the last century, many researchers have stressed considering the perceptions of teachers and parents as a unique source that has valuable information regarding the potential of their children (Clark, 1988; Davis & Rimm, 2004; Strip & Hirsch, 2001). The results of the current study showed that the participants shared some similar views of giftedness with others found in the literature (e.g., Brighton et. al., 2007; Chan, 2000; Distin, 2006; Endepohls-Ulpe & Ruf, 2006; Morawska & Sanders, 2008; Renzulli, 1978; Sankar-Deleeuw, 2004; Silverman et al., 1986; Snowden & Christian, 1999; Van Tassel-Baska, 1998; Wright, 2000). The discrepancies between the participants and others, which will be discussed later in this chapter, were related to some aspects such as talkativeness,

persistence and rejecting rules as well as the acceptance of music, visual arts and leadership within the Saudi context. However, it would be safer to report that teachers and parents overlooked many of the commonly identified traits of gifted children in the literature. For example, traits such as humour, creativity, high level of motivation (Chan, 2000), and has large information about emotion, has high level of self-awareness and/or has advanced level of morality (e.g., Chuska 1989; Clark 2002; Silverman 2000), were not clearly discussed or mentioned by the participants. This result may convey that the construction of giftedness as perceived by teachers and parents who participated in this study stuck mainly on the traits mentioned in cognitive component, personal component, social and leadership component and in the component of traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts. Another possibility may be attributed to the fact that the field of giftedness in Saudi Arabia is still new. Considering this possibility may allow us to assume that the whole picture of giftedness or the characteristics of children who might be considered gifted in Saudi Arabia is still incomplete. Nonetheless, the participants provided us with knowledge and information of giftedness that deserve our attention and consideration.

It was found that there was a degree of agreement and disagreement between teachers and parents regarding their views of the characteristics of gifted children. While teachers and parents all perceived all cognitive and personal traits positively, teachers emphasized cognitive traits more strongly, and parents were more interested in personal traits (Busse et al., 1986; Endepohls-Ulpe & Ruf, 2006; Wright, 2000). It could be argued that this discrepancy could be attributed to the nature of the responsibilities of teachers and parents (Strip & Hirsch, 2001). The discrepancy between teachers and parents in emphasizing some specific areas or traits of gifted children can be understood if we keep the roles of teachers and parents toward their children in mind. It is agreed that teachers and parents all want good things for their children (Strip & Hirsch, 2001), but the responsibilities of teachers and parents in helping children succeed may be different. Teachers and parents are responsible for teaching children and providing them with all of the information and knowledge that will help them to be successful at school or in life. In addition, they are responsible for instilling values and morality in their children. However, if a child fails in his or her studies, the first person responsible is considered to be the teacher. If a child behaves undesirably, even at school, the first person to be blamed is his or her parent. Thus, if we acknowledge these delicate responsibilities of teachers and

parents toward their children, it is understandable that the results found in this study showed that parents paid more attention to personal traits than teachers.

The teachers and parents also provided us with great insight into the meaning of giftedness in Saudi culture. This includes the perceptions of Saudis toward aspects such as music and visual arts. In Saudi Arabia, we know that music and visual arts, which are commonly included in the lists of gifted children's traits, have been excluded for religious and cultural reasons. Investigating the perceptions of teachers and parents gives us an excellent opportunity to understand the explicit and implicit views regarding the perceptions of Saudis toward music and visual arts. As mentioned earlier, music performance and drawing animate objects are banned in Islam and are not appreciated in Saudi Arabia. These views are generally consistent with the exclusion of music and visual arts from the instrument used to identify gifted children in Saudi Arabia. However, examining the perceptions of the participants regarding the acceptance of these areas showed that most participants appreciated persons who have a wonderful voice and an extraordinary ability in drawing inanimate objects. They all grounded their perceptions on religious and cultural interpretations. So, if this is the case, it could be argued that instead of excluding music and visual arts, it may be useful to replace them with aspects such as recitation or *nashed* (a poem performed as a song) or having exceptional ability in drawing allowed objects in Islam (e.g., mountains, trees or cars). This modification may give children who are gifted in these areas an excellent opportunity to develop their abilities.

In sum, the perceptions of teachers and parents seemed to be influenced by two elements, one related to the literature and the other related to the Saudi context. The task of the following sections is to discuss these issues.

## Elements influencing teacher and parent perceptions

As mentioned above, the findings of the study revealed that the perceptions of Saudi teachers and parents regarding the characteristics of gifted children discussed in this study seemed influenced by outsider and insider views of giftedness (See Figure H). These views provide a background for discussing the perceptions of the participants.

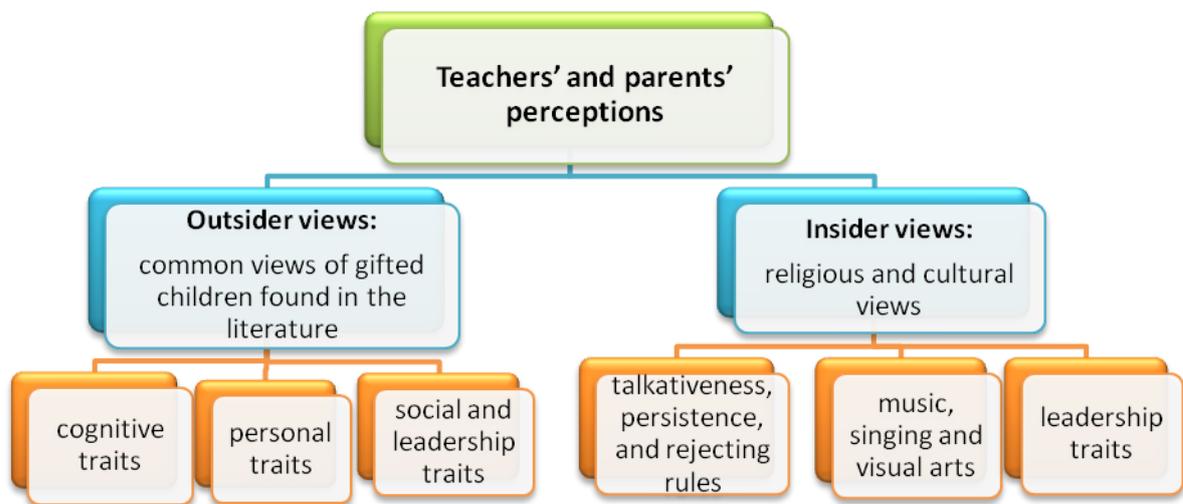


Figure H: Elements influencing teacher and parent perceptions

### Outsider elements: Common views of giftedness

A new interest in caring for gifted children in Saudi Arabia has required adapting a number of existing theories and views of giftedness found in the literature. This includes psychometric views (i.e. the WISC-R test for intelligence and the Torrance test for creativity), lists of characteristics of gifted children (i.e. the scales for rating the behavioural characteristics of superior students [SRBCSS]), and Marland's definition of giftedness (AlFahaid, 2002). Most of these adapted views in general describe gifted children as those who have exceptionality in areas related to cognitive tasks. This includes intelligence, imagination, creativity, advanced language ability, problem solving, and excellent memory. In addition, these views recognize that these children display altruism, honesty, loyalty, fairness, sociality, and leadership. These traits in general are commonly appreciated globally. The vast majority of studies investigating the characteristics of gifted

children have associated most of these traits with the gifted (e.g., Busse et al., 1986; Copenhaver & Mc Intyre, 1992; Endepohls-Ulpe & Ruf, 2006; Hunsacker, 1994; Rohrer, 1995; Sankar-Deleeuw, 2004; Snowden and Christian, 1999). Therefore, it is not surprising to find agreement between the perceptions of teachers and parents in the current study and those found in the literature with regard to giftedness.

### **Insider elements: Religious and cultural views**

The participants seemed to be uncomfortable to associate traits such as talkativeness, persistence and rejecting rules with gifted children. In addition, the participants did not consider children who are outstanding in performing music or drawing animate objects as gifted. However, ambivalent views between the participants were noticed when discussing leadership.

Being conservative for aspects related to cultural heritage and national values is often noticed within indigenous cultures. For example, Baarda (1990), (as cited in Gibson & Vialle, 2007) compared Aboriginal culture with White Australian culture and found many differences between them. The results showed that Aboriginals valued sharing resources together, whereas White Australians preferred competition to locate resources. Changing the law for reasonable reasons can be accepted by White Australians, while Aboriginal culture was conservative against changing the rules. In addition, Aboriginals believed that some kinds of knowledge can only be held by certain persons. In contrast, White Australians believed that knowledge is available to everyone.

The discrepancy between the perceptions of cultures in the way that they perceive life and individuals has led Sternberg (2007) to stress to researchers that cultural factors should be taken into account when studying giftedness. He argued against the belief that relying on the same psychometric criteria to identify gifted children could work everywhere. Adopting this notion would help in understanding the implicit views of people toward giftedness and identifying who might be considered as gifted based on the values and the beliefs of their cultures. Reviewing beliefs found within indigenous cultures regarding giftedness showed that these cultures determined giftedness through some specific criteria related to their values, tradition, and customs (Ngara & Porath, 2007). Bevan-Brown (2005) reported that the interpretation of some aspects of giftedness such as leadership, creativity or exceptionality in visual arts also differs from one culture to

another. For example, Bevan-Brown classified the perceptions of leadership in the Maori culture under three aspects. Two aspects “up-front” leadership and “leadership by example” are consistent with other views found in the literature. Another aspect, “a behind-the-scenes genre where the leader provides emotional support, guidance and inspiration in a quiet, unassuming way”, is related to the uniqueness of the Maori culture (p. 151). In a similar manner, in Puluwat culture, people who are able to deal with the environment, such as possessing the ability to identify the correct path through the bush, are highly valued in their culture (Gladwin, as cited in Sternberg, 2007).

Based on the above summary of views of giftedness found in some indigenous cultures, it could be argued that if we acknowledge that the meaning of giftedness may differ between nations (Cole et al., 1971; Sternberg, 2007), the views of Saudis that do not appreciate talkativeness, persistence and rejecting rules or music and visual arts is understandable. In Saudi Arabia, the acceptance of these aspects is not only determined by culture but also by religion. The inseparability of religion and culture, which was not noticed among the indigenous cultures included in the abovementioned research, may strongly impact the perceptions of Saudis to be more conservative against aspects that may conflict with their beliefs. Indeed, in line with other research (Tarakeshwar et al., 2003), this study found that religion is considered as a very important factor which impacts people’s perceptions toward their existence and the meaning of their lives.

Concentrating on the fact that Saudis are in general religious would help to understand the views of the participants toward these aspects. Actually, persistence and rejecting rules are not accepted in Arab culture or in Islamic instruction. Arabs appreciate unity and believe that the more agreement they have the stronger they are. The proverb proclaiming that in unity there is strength is highly appreciated in the heritage of Arabs. Moreover, many verses in the Quran emphasize concurrence and commend Muslims to be united against their enemies. Allah says:

“And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah’s favour on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love” (Al-Quran, A-Imran, 103).

The prophet Mohammed emphasized the unity of Muslims. He likens the person who is persistent against the agreement of other Muslim groups or who rejects the rules of

unity to an irregular person who deserves hell for showing this unacceptable behaviour. Concerning talkativeness, it is widely agreed among Arabs that talkative people are not appreciated. There are many proverbs rejecting talkativeness. For example, the best talk is brief and meaningful. Another saying holds that speech is silver, but silence is golden. Taking into account the meaning of these terms in religious and cultural contexts may contribute insight into our knowledge and help us to understand the reasons that led the participants to not appreciate these traits.

Pertaining to music, singing and visual arts, the issue seems more complicated than the above. The complexity here is not related to the interpretation of the perceptions of the participants who participated in this study, but rather to the diversity of doctrines within this religion. The diversity of interpreting subsidiary issues such as performing music, singing and drawing has resulted in music and singing being the topic of much debate for a long time. Consequently, the acceptance of music and singing seems inconsistent among religious scholars. The debates about the permissibility of music and singing are grounded on the interpretation of the Quran and *hadith*. Two main religious views have been found concerning these issues. The first one perceives music and singing except that with sexual innuendo, aggressive talk or debauchery, as lawful. This view argues that there is no explicit verse in the Quran that mentions that performing music or singing is prohibited (Al-Qaradawi, 2001; Al-Qaradawi, 1999). Many Muslims accept this view. However, other religious scholars (e.g., Ibn Baz, 1987; Ibn Jebreen, no date) also grounded their interpretation on the Quran and considered music and singing to be unlawful. Their interpretation is widely accepted among Saudis. However, there are also some distinctions between genders along religious lines regarding the legitimacy of practising music or singing. All religious scholars, including those who prohibited music, have agreed that women are permitted to perform on the *def* (a tambourine but without the cymbals). Sheikh Abdulaziz Ibn Baz and Sheikh Ibn Jebreen have permitted women to sing and play a *def* on wedding occasions.

The results of the current study showed that performing or listening to music was not accepted by the participants for religious reasons. Instead, songs without accompanying musical instruments (i.e. recitation) were appreciated among participants. Comparing this view with other Muslim views revealed a degree of discrepancy. For example, Adely (2007) conducted a study in Jordan. All participants were female. They were members of

their school musical group. Their duties were to sing and play the drum *def*. The participants were asked to discuss the legitimacy of music and whether they thought that performing music was sinful. Most participants perceived performing music and singing as lawful. They explained that they used music to perform national songs, and presented to their argument a number of religious scholars' views who permit practising music in this way (Al-Qaradawi, 1999). In a similar manner, Berglund (2008) interviewed a female music teacher and asked her to explain her perception regarding music. She explained that she taught her students *nasheed* (a poem performed as a song), which is usually performed accompanied by instrumental music. She argued that many religious scholars (e.g., Al-Gazzali; Ibn Hazm *nasheed*) permitted *nasheed* (Al-Qaradawi, 2001).

Permission for women to sing and play *def* would justify the perceptions of the participants found in the study of Adely and Berglund. This view was also permitted by the Saudi religious scholars (e.g., Ibn Baz, 1987; Ibn Jebreen, no date). However, the main disagreement between the participants of the current study and other Muslims included in this review was about listening to or playing musical instruments. While most participants of the current study agreed that playing or listening to music is prohibited, the participants in Adely's and Berglund's studies all agreed to accompany musical instruments with the songs they performed. Accordingly, it could be argued that the discrepancy between the perceptions of the participants and other perceptions in this matter may relate to the diversity of interpreting the permissibility of music in Islam.

As for drawing, most religious scholars feel comfortable to base their interpretation on the *hadith* (a record of sayings of the prophet), narrated by Said bin Abu Al-Hasan. This *hadith* explains that:

“While I was with Ibn 'Abbas a man came and said, "O father of 'Abbas! My sustenance is from my manual profession and I make these pictures." Ibn 'Abbas said, "I will tell you only what I heard from Allah's Apostle. I heard him saying, 'Whoever makes a picture will be punished by Allah till he puts life in it, and he will never be able to put life in it.' "Hearing this, that man heaved a sigh and his face turned pale. Ibn 'Abbas said to him, "What a pity! If you insist on making pictures I advise you to make pictures of trees and any other unanimated objects." ” (Sahih al Bukhari, *hadith* No. 2090).

According to this *hadith*, most Islamic scholars specify that prohibitions on drawing only extend to animate objects such as human and animals (e.g. Al-Qaradawi, 2001, Al-Qaradawi, 1999; Iben Baz, no date, Ibn Jebreen, no date). Drawing inanimate objects such as trees or mountains is permitted by these interpretations of Islam.

In the current study, all participants agreed that exceptional artists could be classified as gifted. However, the participants frequently referred to the legitimacy of drawing in Islam. It can be argued here, that although participants in the current study seemed to have all agreed to accept drawing and considered exceptional drawers as gifted, the acceptance of artists is still framed by religious perspectives. This result would present a view explaining that the criteria used to assess exceptionality in visual arts in Saudi Arabia seemed relatively different from those used in the West. It could be concluded that artists who break Islamic rules and draw animate objects cannot be appreciated as much as those who possess extraordinary abilities to draw magnificent objects and at the same time follow the religious rules.

Controversy was apparent when discussing leadership. It was found that most male participants perceived leadership ability only in males. In contrast, all female groups thought that this ability is perceived in both males and females. The participants based their arguments on religious and cultural interpretations. While male participants thought that for religious reasons women are not allowed to lead nations, female participants did not attribute this conservative interpretation to religion. Rather, it was attributed to the belief and the acceptance of Saudi culture about the participation of women in social activities.

Discussing the position of women in Islam is beyond the aim of this study. However, presenting some information regarding the perceptions of Islam about women may help to clarify this argument. Except for the presidency position or leading military positions, women are allowed to take part in most social activities. These exceptions do not mean that Islam humiliates women. Rather, it means that Islam understands the nature of women which does not allow them to face some of the difficulties associated with presidential duties or war tragedies.

Women in Islam are highly appreciated. One of the Quran's *suras* (i.e. chapters) is named 'Women'. In addition, they are given a very delicate position in Islam. For example,

Ayshah, the wife of the prophet Mohammed, was considered to be a very important resource for Islamic instruction. The prophet Mohamed (peace be upon him) encouraged Muslims to ask Ayshah about their religious queries. She is also considered the second narrator of the *hadith*.

This brief review of the perception of religion toward women would suggest that the rejection by male participants to perceive leadership abilities in women for religious reasons may relate to their personal perceptions. Therefore, it could be argued that this rejection may be attributed to Saudi culture rather than an Islamic view. As mentioned earlier, Saudis are conservative and cannot accept new ideology easily (AlFahaid, 2002). However, currently, there has been a significant change in the position of Saudi women. Al-Mflah (2009) has reported in the Al-Riyadh newspaper, in a section referring to the success of Saudi women, that the Saudi woman has achieved remarkable progress in her involvement in social activities. The author summarized the achievements of Saudi women, saying that 12 women were nominated to be members of the *Shura* (i.e. the council for discussing major issues of Saudi nation). In addition, it was decided to nominate a Saudi woman to be vice chairman to Jeddah's mayor for general administration of information technologies. This position is considered to be the highest position assigned to a woman in the Jeddah municipality.

In addition to the above significant participations of Saudi women, it was recently decided to nominate a woman to be under-secretary to the Minister of Education. It is the first time in Saudi Arabia that a woman has been assigned to this position. Connecting the perceptions of the participants regarding the ability of girls to be leaders with the above summary of the involvement of Saudi women in social activities would confirm that this rejection of perceiving leadership ability in girls is mainly rooted to the acceptance of the culture regarding this matter. As a native Saudi, I have known that if the issue relates to the values of culture, it takes time to be accepted by Saudis. It could be argued that the acceptance of leadership to be perceived in girls as it is perceived in males has caused inevitable openness to the world.

In the early years of this century new technologies, such as access to satellites and the Internet have become available in each home in Saudi Arabia, even in remote areas. The availability of these means allowing Saudis, including females, to compare their duties

with others around the world. As a result, many are now arguing against cultural restriction which limits women's participation in life. These include, for example, restrictions on driving, practising sports and being nominated for leading positions. Whether they are right to be rebellious against the conservatism found in their culture is beyond the scope of this study. The reason for presenting this information here is to explain the female groups' emphasis on aspects such as leadership, which in Saudi Arabia is commonly accepted as a male preserve. Taking this change into account may clarify this result.

## **The construction of giftedness in Western cultures Vs Saudi Arabia**

According to the findings of the current study, there are both similarities and differences between Western and Saudi cultures in their views regarding the construction of giftedness. The early interest for caring about and identifying giftedness in the West has given that culture an opportunity to establish and identify several theories and lists of gifted children's traits. The growing interest in gifted children's education has resulted in there being a degree of disagreement between the West's researchers regarding who might be gifted. However, most views of giftedness in the literature have agreed on the potential of gifted children. They all agreed in general that gifted children have exceptional abilities that are not found in ordinary children who are of the same age and school grade level. The discrepancy between researchers is about the construction of giftedness. It was found that Renzulli (1978) constructed giftedness as a combination of three clusters: above average general abilities, high level of task commitment, and high level of creativity. Sternberg (2003) considered giftedness as a synthesis of intelligence, creativity, and wisdom. Another construction was found in Gardner's (1998) theory. He thought that giftedness consists of eight intelligences: "linguistic, logical mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, personal intelligences and naturalist" (p. 22). The above views are widely adapted and used to recognize giftedness not only in Western cultures but also elsewhere (Chan, 2004). Thus, the impact of Western culture's views of giftedness upon the views of indigenous cultures is undeniable. It was found that the construction of giftedness in Aboriginal culture perceives cleverness as a component of giftedness (Gibson, 1997). In addition, exceptionality in arts and performing music are appreciated in Maori culture (Bevan-Brown, 2005). However, bearing in mind the fact that each culture has its own perspective regarding who might be gifted (Sternberg, 2007) has resulted in there being a degree of distinction about the construction of giftedness between cultures. For example, a comparison between the white Australian culture and the Aboriginal culture showed a stark controversy in their views of giftedness (Baarda, as cited in Gibson & Vialle, 2007). It found thirteen differences between the two cultures. Among them that while white Australian culture proposed "knowledge for anyone", Aborigines believed that "knowledge belongs to certain people". In addition, white Australian culture believed in "challenging learning situations", Aborigines wanted "supportive learning situations" (p. 207). Furthermore, Bevan-Brown (2005) declared that some traits of gifted children found

internationally such as emotional and intrapersonal intelligences are not necessarily considered as such in Maori culture.

Saudi Arabia, the target of the current study, is perceived from both the insider's view (AlFahaid, 2002) and the outsider's view (Slackman, 2008) as a conservative culture. Conservatism here explains why Saudis have a unique culture which may result in there being a degree of distinction from others regarding the construction of giftedness. According to the findings of the study, it was found that teachers and parents shared similar views of giftedness with others in the West and at the same time they showed a degree of discrepancy with them. It was found that except for music, visual arts and perceiving leadership in girls, the construction of giftedness seemed similar to others found in the literature. This distinction led to the discussion of the construction of giftedness in Islam. In Islamic heritage exceptionalism in demonstrating the uniqueness of Islamic culture is highly appreciated. This exceptionalism can be demonstrated in many ways. It can be through the people who are able to reconcile and resolve problems between tribes. In addition smartness and fluency are considered exceptional abilities for people. Muslims also consider leadership, intuition, courage, wisdom and eloquence as aspects of intelligent people. Memory is also considered one of the most important elements of smart people. Generally, superiority is appreciated in Islamic thought. For example, Allah appreciates people who use their mind to understand the meaning of their lives. Allah says that "Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?" (Al-Quran, Al-Zumar, 9). The prophet Mohammed emphasizes the appreciation of learning. He taught that if anyone travels the road of knowledge, Allah will reward him by allowing him to travel on one of the roads of heaven.

In Islamic instructions, Muslims are encouraged to participate in any useful activities. According to some religious scholars, performing music, drawing animate objects or women officiating in leading positions (e.g., presidency position) are prohibited (Ibn Baz, 1987; Ibn Jebreen, no date). Although there are many religious scholars who believe that the above activities are permitted, the interpretation that banned them is widely accepted among Saudis. Saudis are considered a religious people (AlFahaid, 2002). Therefore, the discrepancy between teachers and parents participating in the current study with others in Western cultures in the way they perceived the above activities is understandable. One of the interesting findings, as mentioned earlier, was about perceiving

leadership in women. Although discussing the permissibility of perceiving leadership in women, based on Islamic or Saudi cultural views, was beyond the scope of the study, shedding light on the perceptions of leadership in Saudi contexts may help to understand the construction of giftedness in Saudis' thoughts in general and how to perceive leadership in Saudi Arabia compared to others in particular. In the current study, it was found that there was no difference between the groups and Western people regarding the perceptions of leadership as a quality of gifted people. However, the main differences were between teachers and parents concerning whether this trait can be perceived in the two genders. Attributing the perception of leadership in males, as perceived by male groups, to religious reasons seemed conservative. In Islam, except for the presidency position and leading the military, women are permitted to officiate in any other leading position (Al-Qaradawi, 2004). This exclusion is not because women are perceived differently in Islam. Rather, it is attributed to the nature of women. Hasan (2005) pointed out that the presidency position requires the president to travel from region to region and to meet strangers. In addition, leading the military requires special requirements such as strong emotion which may not be available in women. Gradually these exclusions have been expanded to other areas of human activities. This expansion may be attributed to the interpretation of some religious scholars regarding the duties of women (Ibn Baz, 1987; Ibn Jebreen, no date), or may be due to the impact of cultures upon the participations of women which are different from one culture to another. In the past, the only job available for Saudi women to participate in social activities was in teaching in girls' schools. Nowadays, Saudi women have showed significant involvements in participation in social activities. Al-Mflah (2009) reported that Saudi women are now nominated to officiate in a number of important positions such as membership in *Shura* or vice chairman. Al-Qahtani (2008) declared that there is no clash between allowing women to take part in social activities and the perception of religion. He argued that the complexity of life requires us to rethink the utility of the participation of women in our social activities.

Based on the above brief discussion, it is observed that there is a significant change toward the participation of Saudi women. However, comparing this to other views in the literature shows that Women in the West have been allowed to participate in many important positions in life for centuries. Taking this difference into account may allow us to conclude why the perception of leadership in women is significantly different between Western and Saudi women. It may be safer to mention that claiming that there is a

difference in the perceptions of leadership between the two cultures does not mean that Saudi women are perceived as useless or that the perceptions of the West should be adopted by Saudi Arabia. Rather, it is included here to provide a base to non-Saudi researchers to understand the role of religion and culture and their views toward this area.

## **Conclusion**

The current study aimed to investigate the perceptions of Saudi teachers and parents regarding the characteristics of gifted children. A number of issues were taken into account when examining these views. First, the latest interest in caring for gifted children in Saudi Arabia has led the Ministry of Education to adapt many theories and views of giftedness from the West. Second, Saudi society is considered as a conservative culture which may show a degree of resistance to accepting new ideologies, especially if they conflict with the values of their religion and culture. To the extent that the adapted views of giftedness and views related to religious and cultural context influence the perceptions of the participants, they were used as key findings to describe the perceptions of the participants.

The findings revealed that the teachers and parents who participated in this study shared many similar views of giftedness with others found in the literature. The agreements seemed apparent when describing traits of gifted children related to cognitive, personal and most of the social and leadership aspects. It can be concluded that the traits included in these domains are perceived by Saudis in the same way they are perceived in the literature. This concurrence may be because the traits included in these components are appreciated everywhere, or due to the fact that the foundations of caring for gifted children in Saudi are mainly designed on the findings established in the literature. To support this assumption, it may be appropriate to mention that all the experts of giftedness in Saudi Arabia had studied in the West. These experts are responsible for designing programs for gifted children as well as training teachers to identify these children. The previous experience and the understanding of the experts in giftedness, as taught in the West, may have influenced the perceptions of teachers toward the gifted.

However, the perceptions of the participants seemed inconsistent with others found in the literature when discussing issues related to gifted children's behaviours or music and visual arts. This inconsistency illustrated clearly that the participants have evaluated views that perceived gifted children as talkative, persistent, having a tendency to reject rules, musically talented, or exceptional in drawing animated objects within religious and cultural perspectives. Concentrating on the results that showed that the participants, because of religious and cultural considerations, did not appreciate these aspects, helped to understand the perceptions of the participants regarding this matter. Although the perceptions of the

participants seemed in general consistent with the official views of giftedness in Saudi that excluded music and visual arts from all theories and instruments used for identifying gifted children, the participants specified the elements that should be excluded from these areas. The participants from religious and cultural perspectives argued that songs without musical instruments and drawing inanimate objects are allowed in Islam. This result would expand the definition of giftedness in Saudi Arabia to include these areas. This would give a great opportunity to those children who have an outstanding voice or exceptional abilities to be included in gifted children programs. This would help them to develop and maintain their giftedness.

The findings of the current study revealed that parents provided useful information regarding the gifted. They shared many similar views with the teachers who participated in this study and with other views of giftedness found in the literature. Moreover, they contributed to clarifying our understanding of some traits of gifted children, such as personality, which were not detailed by the teachers. It could be concluded that ignoring the perceptions of parents regarding the ability of their children would neglect valuable information.

The findings of the current study indicated that there was some misunderstanding of the interpretations of religion and culture concerning the perceptions of leadership in girls. It was found that male participants did not associate this trait with gifted girls for religious reasons. On the contrary, female groups thought that there was no evidence in religion indicating that this trait is exclusively perceived in males. Examining these ambivalent views from religious and cultural perspectives showed that except for some sensitive positions such as the presidency or leading military positions, women are allowed to participate in all social activities. This exclusion, from the religious perspective, takes into account the nature of women that does not allow them to face these heavy duties. From a cultural perspective, Saudis in general are conservative. For decades Saudi women have been restricted to specific jobs such as teaching. However, Saudi women have made, in recent times, significant changes in their participation in social activities. They are now being assigned to several important positions which were occupied by males in the past. This result would suggest that the perceptions of giftedness in Saudi should consider leadership in girls. This would be achieved by designing special programs for those gifted girls who display the ability of leadership.

## **Implications and Recommendations**

In this section, the implication of this research for the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the characteristics of gifted children are considered. In addition, the place of religion and culture as influential elements acting upon the perceptions of teachers and parents toward the gifted is discussed. Recommendations for considering the views of teachers and parents when studying the potential of gifted children as well as suggestions for future research are provided.

### **Implications for the perceptions of teachers and parents of gifted children**

Many researchers believe that teachers and parents know valuable information about the potential of gifted children (Chan, 2000; Davis & Rimm, 2004). Chan (2000) claimed that they have valuable information to describe gifted children not easily obtained by using IQ tests. In addition, parents are a useful source to evaluate abilities such as leadership, creativity and persistence which may not be observable at school. The combination of teachers' and parents' views regarding who might be gifted not only provides us with the level of awareness teachers and parents have towards the gifted, but also allows us to capture several traits of gifted children as they are perceived by the closest observers of these children. Huijun et al. (2008) stated that teachers can provide information regarding the progress of gifted children in the classroom and parents can describe the behaviours of their children in a way that may not be described at school.

The scope of the current study was mainly focused on the perceptions of teachers and parents toward the traits of gifted children in the public schools. However, it is widely known that giftedness is also found in dual-gifted children. Thus, it is recommended to investigate the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the traits of these students. In addition, to specify the traits of gifted children, it would be useful to investigate the perceptions of the participants regarding both traits of gifted and non-gifted children. Doing this may help to nominate the traits of gifted children sufficiently. Since this issue was not investigated in the current study, it is recommended to consider it for future

research. Including the above issues will allow non-Saudi researchers to understand the whole picture of Saudi teachers' and parents' perceptions toward the gifted.

The findings of the current study revealed that most of the participants have positive perceptions regarding the investigated traits. The participants shared similar views with regard to traits related to intellectual abilities, personality and most of the social and leadership aspects. However, in the current study, examining the perceptions of teachers and parents on the using scale showed some differences between them towards investigated traits. For example, the results of the study showed that teachers perceived intellectual traits more positively compared to parents. In addition, parents were more interested to associate personal traits with gifted children. Actually, this discrepancy of interest between the participants shows that teachers and parents can each provide useful information about giftedness identified from the environment with which they are familiar. Strip and Hirsch (2001) provided an example to explain the difference between teachers' and parents' views toward their children. They stated that:

“at home, a child may be allowed to move freely from activity to activity, leaving a wealth of papers, crayons, markers, glue, glitter, and other materials in his or her wake. While at school, the teacher's classroom management style may emphasize a routine and order” (p. 27).

The flexibility of parents may allow them to observe their children's behaviour and personality. It could be argued that allowing children to play freely would allow parents to observe spontaneous reactions of their children. This observation may benefit parents to understand the nature of the personality of their children accurately. Consequently, it was found in previous research, that parents paid much attention to personal traits compared to other aspects of giftedness (Wright, 2000). Teachers often have shared a similar perspective of the importance of the personality of gifted children. However, they seem to be more interested in observing and appreciating traits related to the intellectuality of gifted children (Busse et al., 1986). This result was also noticed in the current study. It was found that although teachers shared similar views with parents and acknowledged most of the investigated traits, they were more positive about appreciating cognitive traits. It could be argued that this result does not mean that personality or social and leadership traits were not important to teachers. Rather, it means that teachers showed a high level of interest in the area with which they are familiar. In class, teachers are required to provide students

with information and knowledge which often needs thinking, brainstorming or searching for references. Bearing in mind that teachers “are concerned with contributing to the success of every child they teach” (Strip and Hirsch, 2001, p. 27), would justify the fact that teachers always appreciate the intellectuality domain.

Accordingly, it was found that both teachers and parents have great insight into the characteristics of gifted children. Currently, in Saudi Arabia, teachers have only been allowed to express and provide their perceptions in regard of who might be gifted. According to the findings of the current study, allowing teachers to give their opinions about gifted children is recommended. They proved that they were capable of describing the potential of gifted children like other teachers did in the literature. However, the findings of the study revealed that most teachers did not have adequate insight into some of the traits of gifted children. For example, the results of the study showed that most teachers perceived gifted children as obedient and quiet. This view was inconsistent with the perceptions of parents of gifted children. In previous research, many researchers associated traits such as disobedience, activeness or disturbance with the gifted (e.g., Strip & Hirsch, 2001; Morawska & Sanders, 2008). It could be argued that considering the perceptions of parents would expand our knowledge of the potential of gifted children which may increase the accuracy of recognising gifted children in our schools.

Understanding the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding giftedness and gifted children may be meaningless, unless we consider elements such as religion and culture. In the following, the implications of religion and culture and their impact on the participants’ perceptions are discussed.

### **Implications for religion and culture**

Prior research has shown that teachers’ and parents’ conceptions of giftedness influence their perceptions towards the gifted (Rohrer, 1995). In addition, some researchers (e.g., Copenhaver & McIntyre, 1992) found that the number of courses or workshops teachers have had and the beliefs of parents about giftedness (Louis & Lewis, 1992) significantly influence their perceptions toward the gifted. However, the impact of religious factor upon teachers’ and parents’ perceptions toward the gifted has not been addressed. Tarakeshwar, Stanton and Pargament (2003) argued that "religion has been

found to be a strong predictor of the important life domains among individuals all over the world" (p.2). In addition to this, the place of culture and its impact upon the perceptions of people toward the gifted is still limited. Recently, Sternberg (2007) argued for considering culture when studying the perceptions of giftedness. He argues that ignoring culture would miss "children who are gifted and may identify as gifted children those who are not" (p. 160).

The findings of the study contribute some interesting results to the field of giftedness. These results may add other views to the construction of giftedness in the literature. It was found that music and drawing animate shapes are considered qualities of gifted children in the West (e.g., Clark, 1997; Porter, 2005; Silverman, 1993). Moreover, perceiving these activities was also found among indigenous cultures (Bevan-Brown, 2005). In addition, it was found that while leadership is perceived a quality of gifted children (Chan, 2000); it was perceived by male groups in the current study as an area of gifted boys. It may be assumed that performing music, drawing animate objects or perceiving leadership in females are not appreciated in Saudi Arabia, could be surprising to some non-Saudis. However, exploring and discussing these issues in the current study would explain that the construction of giftedness found in Western culture does not necessarily fit with the construction of giftedness in Saudi Arabia.

The findings of the study revealed that the impact of religious and cultural elements upon the perceptions of the participants was influential. It was found that the participants, for religious and cultural reasons, did not appreciate talkativeness, persistence and rejecting rules. In addition, singing that was accompanied with musical instruments and drawing animate objects (i.e. human and animals) were not appreciated. However, the participants seemed more comfortable to appreciate singing without musical instruments (i.e. recitation) and drawing inanimate objects such as trees or mountains. Another interesting finding related to perceiving leadership qualities in women. The results showed that male participants (not female) thought that this trait is perceived as a male quality.

These above views were not consistent with other views of giftedness found in the literature. It is common to find that gifted children are talkative or persistent (Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Morawska & Sanders, 2008; Sankar-DeLeeuw, 2004; Silverman, 1993), have exceptional ability in performing musical instruments and/or exceptionality in the arts (Busse et al., 1986; Evans et al.; Gaither, 2008; Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Louis & Lewis,

1992; Milbrath, 1998; Porter, 2005), and acknowledging leadership in girls (Chan, 2000; Snowden & Christian, 1999; Wright, 2000). The divergent views of the participants compared to others illustrated that considering cultural factor when investigating the potential of gifted children is important (Sternberg, 2007). In addition, the findings of the study would raise an interest in considering the place of religion and its impact on the perceptions of giftedness.

The findings of the study also allow other researchers in the field of giftedness, especially non-Saudi researchers, to understand the context of Saudi Arabia. It could be argued that without the present study's investigation of the impact of religious and cultural elements upon the perceptions of the participants toward the gifted, views that did not associate talkativeness and persistence or that did not appreciate performing music and drawing animate objects, may be not reasonable. In addition, the findings showed that singing without musical instruments and drawing inanimate objects were accepted by the participants. However, considering the talent of children who have an exceptional voice or who have extraordinary abilities in drawing inanimate objects are still overlooked in gifted children's programs in Saudi Arabia. It could be argued that the majority of religious scholars allowed people to perform songs that do not include sexual innuendo, aggressive talk or debauchery and to draw inanimate objects (Al-Qaradawi, 2001; Iben Baz, no date, Ibn Jebreen, no date). If this is the perspective of religion, plans and programs for gifted children in Saudi Arabia should include these areas of giftedness. It is hoped that the current findings would contribute to considering the exceptionality in recitation and drawing permitted objects such as trees, cars, mountains etc. It is recommended for further research to investigate, in greater depth, the permissibility of religion of accepting these activities based on the Saudi context.

Another issue that was discussed within the religious context was the permissibility of perceiving leadership qualities in women. It was found that most male participants did not associate leadership with gifted girls. The ambivalent views of male and female participants in perceiving leadership qualities in girls opens the window for several interesting research possibilities. Religiousness, women are allowed to practice any social activities except for the presidential position or leading military positions (e.g., Al-Qahtani, 2008; Al-Qaradawi, 2004; Hasan 2005; Ibn Baz, no date). In addition, nowadays, Saudi women are given chances to be nominated for several leading positions (Al-Mflah, 2009). Considering the views of religion and the new trend of allowing women to participate in

leading positions in Saudi Arabia would convey the idea that the views of male participants who did not perceive leadership qualities in girls may be related to the conservatism of Saudi culture rather than religion. Accordingly, it is recommended to investigate the perceptions of Saudis regarding the acceptance of perceiving leadership qualities in women. Further investigations should include a large sample of male and female subjects. In addition, to validate the results of these studies, it is strongly recommended to include religious scholars.

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## **APPENDICES A**

### **DOCUMENTS OF STUDY ONE**

*Appendix A-I: Permission letters*



MONASH University

Prof Dennis Moore  
Faculty of Education  
Clayton Campus

16 November 2006  
2006/943LIR - Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers and parents perception

Dear Researchers,

Thank you for the information provided in relation to the above project. The items requiring attention have been resolved to the satisfaction of the Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH). Accordingly, this research project is approved to proceed.

**Terms of approval:**

1. This project is approved for five years from the date of this letter and this approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
2. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all information that is pending (such as permission letters from organisations) is forwarded to SCERH, if not done already. Research cannot begin at any organisation until SCERH receives a letter of permission from that organisation. You will then receive a letter from SCERH confirming that we have received a letter from each organisation.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by SCERH.
4. You should notify SCERH immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. Amendments to the approved project: Changes to any aspect of the project require the submission of a Request for Amendment form to SCERH and must not begin without written approval from SCERH. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. Future correspondence: Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. Annual reports: Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. Please provide the Committee with an Annual Report determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. Final report: A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. SCERH should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. Monitoring: Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by SCERH at any time.

11. Retention and storage of data: The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

All forms can be accessed at our website  
[www.monash.edu.au/research/ethics/human/index.html](http://www.monash.edu.au/research/ethics/human/index.html)

We wish you well with your research.

Mrs Lyn Johannessen

Acting Human Ethics Officer (on behalf of SCERH)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وفقه الله

سعادة مدير عام الإدارة العامة لرعاية الموهوبين

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته،

أفيدكم بأنني طالب لمرحلة الدكتوراة -جامعة موناش، أستراليا- وأعكف حالياً على دراسة بحث في مجال رعاية الموهوبين. تضم عينة الدراسة التي أقوم بدراستها المجموعات التالية:

1- معلمي ومعلمات الطلاب الموهوبين بالمرحلة الابتدائية- الرياض

2- معلمي ومعلمات الطلاب العاديين بالمرحلة الابتدائية - الرياض

3- آباء وأمهات الطلاب الموهوبين بالمرحلة الابتدائية -الرياض

4- آباء وأمهات الطلاب الموهوبين بالمرحلة الابتدائية -الرياض

تشير خطة جمع البيانات من العينات المشار لها إلى توزيع مقياس الدراسة وعمل بعض المقابلات مع بعض المتطوعين من الجنسين. ولخصوصية المجتمع السعودي والذي قد يجعل من الصعب على الباحث عمل لقاءات مباشره مع عينة المعلمات وأمهات الطلاب الموهوبين/العاديين، آمل من سعادتكم تكليف أحد الاخصائيات بإدارة رعاية الموهوبات-الرياض- بمساعدتي بجمع البيانات وعمل اللقاءات مع العينة المشار لها. علما بأنني قد أعددت ملفاً متكاملأ مرفق معه أسطوانة "CDs" يوضح خطة التطبيق وطريقة جمع البيانات وكذلك بعض التوجيهات المتعلقة بإدارة اللقاءات. شكرا لتعاونكم وامل في حالة أي وجود أي أستفسار حول الدراسة الاتصال على أي من الباحثين الموضحة عناوينهم أدناه:

Prof Dennis Moore  
Faculty of Education  
Clayton Campus  
[dennis.moore@education.monash.edu.au](mailto:dennis.moore@education.monash.edu.au)  
(+61 3 99050706)

Dr Umesh Sharma  
Faculty of Education  
Clayton Campus  
[umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au](mailto:umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au)  
(+61 3 99054388)

Student :Saad Alamer  
Faculty of Education  
Clayton Campus-building 6  
[smala1@student.monash.edu](mailto:smala1@student.monash.edu)  
(+61 3 99052819)

## بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وزارة التربية والتعليم.  
سعادة الوكيل المساعد- المشرف على الدراسات والبحوث التربوية  
وفقه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته،

أفيد سعادتكُم بانني حاليا أدرس لمرحلة الدكتوراة -جامعة موناش- أستراليا- وفي صدد تطبيق بحث الدراسة والذي يتناول وجهات نظر المعلمين و أولياء الأمور (الأباء والامهات) حول الطلاب الموهوبين في المملكة العربية السعودية. وحسب طبيعة الدراسة فإن البحث المرجو تطبيقه سوف يمر بمرحلتين: المرحلة الأولى، عقد لقاءات مع عدد من المهتمين بمجال الموهبة ( خبراء في الموهبة، معلمين، أولياء أمور). وسوف يكون الهدف الرئيسي لهذه المرحلة هو جمع أكبر قدر من المعلومات حول خصال الطلاب الموهوبين وذلك بغرض بناء مقياس الدراسة. المرحلة الثانية\*، توزيع المقياس على شريحة واسعة من المعلمين والمعلمات وأولياء أمور الطلبة في مدينة الرياض. إضافة إلى ذلك عقد عدد من المقابلات مع عينة عشوائية من المعلمين وأولياء الأمور. وأود الإشارة بأني أرفقت لكم الأوراق التالية:

-خطاب موافقة الجامعة على تطبيق البحث المشار له،

-صورة من أصل الأسئلة التي سوف تناقش مع العينة المستهدفة.

أمل من سعادتكُم بالتوجيه لإدارة رعاية الموهوبين بالرياض بالتكريم بتسهيل مهمتي في الحصول على العينة المستهدفة، وتقبل خالص التقدير. أرجو في حال أي تساؤلات حول بحث الدراسة أرجو الاتصال على أي من العناوين التالية:

Prof Dennis Moore  
Faculty of Education  
Clayton Campus  
[dennis.moore@education.monash.edu.au](mailto:dennis.moore@education.monash.edu.au)  
(+61 3 99050706)

Dr Umesh Sharma  
Faculty of Education  
Clayton Campus  
[umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au](mailto:umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au)  
(+61 3 99054388)

Student :Saad Alamer  
Faculty of Education  
Clayton Campus-bulding 6  
[smala1@student.monash.edu](mailto:smala1@student.monash.edu)  
(+61 3 99052819)

\*سوف يتم تزويد إدارة البحوث بصورة من ادوات تطبيق المرحلة الثانية حال الانتهاء من إعدادها

14-AUG-2006 14:08 DRAFT 014021154 P-01

شؤون الحرم الحرم

المركز السعودي للتربية والتعليم  
وزارة التربية والتعليم  
مركز التطوير التربوي  
الدراسات والبحوث التربوية

الرقم: ٢٨٨٣٦٤  
التاريخ: ١١٢٧١٤  
المهنت: جون

سعادة الأستاذ / سعد ال عامر  
جامعة موناش - أستراليا

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد !!

إشارة إلى خطاب سعادتكم بشأن تطبيق أدوات الدراسة الخاصة  
ببحثكم لمرحلة الدكتوراه.

أفيد سعادتكم أنه لأمانع لدينا مبدئياً من تطبيق أدوات بحثكم وذلك  
وفق الأنظمة المتبعة في هذا الشأن .

وتقبلوا وافر التحية و التقدير !!!

الوكيل المساعد  
المشرف على الدراسات والبحوث التربوية  
د.علي بن صالح الخبيزي

١٤٢٧  
١٤

٢٠٠٦

**Appendix A-2: Invitation letters**

18<sup>th</sup> of Sep. 2006

**Experts' Group: invitation letter****Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions**

This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is Saad Al-Amer and I am conducting a research project with Dennis Moore a professor in the Department of Education, and Umesh Sharma a lecturer in the Department of Education at Monash University towards a PhD degree. This means that I will be writing a thesis.

I currently study in the area of giftedness in Saudi Arabia, specifically, the perceptions that are held by teachers and parents about gifted children. A copy of the permission letter from the Saudi Ministry of Education to conduct the study and the invitation letter will be directly mailed to the director of your institution. You have intentionally been selected because I think you have valuable information concerning giftedness issues. I would be very grateful if you could participate in a discussion with other experts to help me identify the perceptions of teachers and parents toward gifted children in elementary schools.

The purpose of the discussion is to generate plentiful information about teachers' and parents' perceptions of giftedness. This information will be used to construct the study's survey in order to investigate a large number of teachers' and parents' perceptions of giftedness. It is hoped that the findings of the current study will assist policy-makers and other people responsible for gifted children's education to understand the actual perceptions of teachers and parents and design appropriate programs that are more effective in dealing with gifted children. It will also form the basis for conference papers and possibly professional academic publications. These publications may also appear in my (Al-Amer) thesis for his PhD, which is called: *Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions*. On your request I would be very happy to provide you with the results of the study after they are collated. I can be contacted by email as indicated below.

In order to help my assessment I invite you to take part in a small focus group interview. The meeting will be conducted at the central meeting room in the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (see location details below). The discussion will take about 90 minutes. These will be tape-recorded and transcribed. No information that you say or write will be identifiable by readers and you may like to select an alternative name for any use in publications. I will keep the consent forms, transcripts, and data coding materials and audiotapes in a locked filing cabinet and password protected computer files for five years. After that, all records will be destroyed.

If you are willing to participate in my research, please use the envelope provided to return the consent form with your details so that I can arrange a time convenient for you. Please remember that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time. All you need to do is to not attend the meeting, or to let me know that you wish your information to be excluded.

Saad Al-Amer

**Location:**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity  
Al O' laya Street  
Tel. 462 9462  
Central meeting room.

**Researcher's contact details**

**Saudi Arabia**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions  
Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity.  
P.O. Box 35515 Riyadh 11488  
Phone: +96614629462  
Fax +96614623935  
smala1@student.monash.edu

**Australia**

Faculty of Education  
Building 6, Room No G33  
Phone +61399052819 Ext 55031  
Monash University, Clayton VIC 3800  
smala1@student.monash.edu

**If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:**

- 1- Prof. Dennis Moore  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone: 99050706, e-mail  
Dennis.Moore@education.monash.edu.au).
- 2- Dr. Umesh Sharma  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone 99054388, e-mail  
Umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au).

**If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research is being conducted, please contact:**

Human Ethics Officer  
Standing Committee on Ethics in Research  
Involving Humans (SCERH)  
Building 3e Room 111  
Research Office  
Monash University VIC 3800  
Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905  
1420 Email: [scerh@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:scerh@adm.monash.edu.au)



18 سبتمبر 2006

## مجموعة الخبراء: دعوة الإنضمام للدراسة

### الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية: رؤية المعلمين والوالدين

(المعلومات الواردة في هذه الدعوة لك، الرجاء الاحتفاظ بها)

اسمي هو سعد آل عامر وأقوم حالياً بتطبيق بحث للحصول على درجة الدكتوراة تحت إشراف كُلاً من البروفسور دينس مور والدكتور أوميش شرما.

يهتم البحث الذي أقوم به بمجال الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية، تحديداً رؤية المعلمين والوالدين للطلاب الموهوبين. سوف تجد برفق هذه الدعوة صورة من موافقة وزارة التربية والتعليم لإجراء هذه الدراسة إضافة إلى دعوتك للانضمام لهذه الدراسة والتي سوف تُرسل مباشرة لرئيسك بمقر عملك. لقد تم اختيارك قصداً لاعتقادي بأن لديك معلومات ثرية حول قضايا الموهبة. إنه لمن دواعي سروري قبلك الانضمام لهذه الدراسة برفقة خبراء آخرين والذي سوف يتمحور حديثكم حول خصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المرحلة الابتدائية.

الهدف الرئيسي لهذه اللقاءات حول جمع معلومات وفيره حول رؤية المعلمين والوالدين لخصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المملكة العربية السعودية. هذه المعلومات سوف تستخدم لبناء مقياس الدراسة والذي سوف يستخدم لاحقاً مع عينة ممثلة للمعلمين والوالدين لمعرفة وجهات نظرهم تجاه الموهبة والموهوبين. إنه لمؤمل بأن نتائج هذه الدراسة سوف تساعد صناع القرار ومن لهم علاقة بتربية الموهوبين لمعرفة الرؤية الواقعية للمعلمين والوالدين للطلاب الموهوبين والذي سوف تسهم في تصميم برامج أكثر فاعلية للتعامل مع هذه الفئات. نتائج هذه الدراسة قد تعرض في أحد المؤتمرات المتخصصة أو تُنشر في إحدى المجالات العلمية المتخصصة. ولمساعدتي في بحثي الحالي فأنت مدعو للقاء جماعي برفقة خبراء آخرين وسوف يكون في مؤسسة الملك عبدالعزيز ورجالة لرعاية الموهبة والإبداع (أنظر تفاصيل الموقع أدناه). سوف يستغرق اللقاء قرابة 90 دقيقة. وسوف يتم تسجيل اللقاء. جميع ماسوف تُدلي به أو تقوم بكتابته سوف يتم حفظه بسرية لمدة خمس سنوات قبل أن يتم إتلافة. وبما أنك أحد المشاركين فيحق لك طلب نتائج هذه الدراسة متى رغبت. كل ما عليك القيام به هو مراسلتي على الإيميل المرفق في نهاية هذه الرسالة.

إذا مارغبت في المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، أرجو منك إرسال موافقتك موضحاً فيها كامل عناوينك في الطرف المرفق مع هذه الرسالة. فضلاً تذكر بأن مشاركتك تطوعية وتستطيع رفض المشاركة أو الانسحاب من اللقاء متى ما رغبت. كل ماتحتاجه فقط هو تجاهل هذه الدعوة وعدم الحضور أو إبلاغ برغبتك بحجب المعلومات التي شاركت بها.

**Location:**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity  
Al O' laya Street  
Tel. 462 9462  
Central meeting room.

**Researcher's contact details**

**Saudi Arabia**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions  
Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity  
P.O. Box 35515 Riyadh 11488  
Phone: +96614629462  
Fax +96614623935  
smala1@student.monash.edu

**Australia**

Faculty of Education  
Building 6, Room No G33  
Phone +61399052819 Ext 55031  
Monash University, Clayton VIC 3800  
smala1@student.monash.edu

**If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:**

1- Prof. Dennis Moore  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone: 99050706, e-mail  
Dennis.Moore@education.monash.edu.au).

2- Dr. Umesh Sharma  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone 99054388, e-mail  
Umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au).

**If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research is being conducted, please contact:**

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Building 3e Room 111  
Research Office  
Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905  
1420 Email: [scerh@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:scerh@adm.monash.edu.au)



18<sup>th</sup> of Sep. 2006

### Teachers' Group: invitation letter

#### Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions

**This information sheet is for you to keep.**

My name is Saad Al-Amer and I am conducting a research project with Dennis Moore a professor in the Department of Education, and Umesh Sharma a lecturer in the Department of Education at Monash University towards a PhD degree. This means that I will be writing a thesis.

I currently study in the area of giftedness in Saudi Arabia, specifically, the perceptions that are held by teachers and parents about gifted children. A copy of the permission letter from the Saudi Ministry of Education to conduct the study and the invitation letter will be directly mailed to the principal of the Centre for Gifted Students. The principal of your institution will have given you this invitation to participate with other teachers of gifted children. You have intentionally been selected because I think you have valuable information concerning giftedness issues. I would be very grateful if you could participate in a discussion to help me identify the perceptions of teachers and parents toward gifted children in elementary schools.

The purpose of the discussion is to generate plentiful information about teachers' perceptions of giftedness. This information will be used to construct the study's survey in order to investigate a large number of teachers' perceptions of giftedness. It is hoped that the findings of the current study will assist policy-makers and other people responsible for gifted children's education to understand the actual perceptions of teachers and design appropriate programs that are more effective in dealing with gifted children. It will also form the basis for conference papers and possibly professional academic publications. These publications may also appear in my (Al-Amer) thesis for his PhD, which is called: *Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions*. On your request I would be very happy to provide you with the results of the study after they are collated. I can be contacted by email as indicated below.

In order to help my assessment I invite you to take part in a small focus group interview. The male meeting will be conducted by the researcher at the central meeting room in the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity. The female participants will be interviewed by a female colleague at female meeting room in female division (see location details below). The discussion will take about 90 minutes. These will be tape-recorded and transcribed. No information that you say or write will be identifiable by readers and you may like to select an alternative name for any use in publications. I will keep the consent forms, transcripts, and data coding materials and audiotapes in a locked filing cabinet and password protected computer files for five years. After that, all records will be destroyed.

If you are willing to participate in my research, please use the envelope provided to return the consent form with your details so that I can arrange a time convenient for you. Please remember that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time. All you need to do is to not attend the meeting, or to let me know that you wish your information to be excluded.

Saad Al-Amer

**Location:**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity.

Al O' laya Street

Tel. 462 9462

Male: central meeting room.

Female: female meeting room in female division.

**Researcher's contact details**

**Saudi Arabia**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions  
Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity

P.O. Box 35515 Riyadh 11488

Phone: +96614629462

Fax +96614623935

smala1@student.monash.edu

**Australia**

Faculty of Education

Building 6, Room No G33

Phone +61399052819 Ext 55031

Monash University, Clayton VIC 3800

smala1@student.monash.edu

**If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:**

3- Prof. Dennis Moore

Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University

Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone: 99050706, e-mail

Dennis.Moore@education.monash.edu.au).

4- Dr. Umesh Sharma

Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University

Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone 99054388, e-mail

Umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au).

**If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research is being conducted, please contact:**

Human Ethics Officer

Standing Committee on Ethics in Research

Involving Humans (SCERH)

Building 3e Room 111

Research Office

Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905

1420 Email: [scerh@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:scerh@adm.monash.edu.au)



18 سبتمبر 2006

## مجموعة المعلمين: دعوة الانضمام للدراسة

### الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية: رؤية المعلمين والوالدين

(المعلومات الواردة في هذه الدعوة لك، الرجاء الاحتفاظ بها)

اسمي هو سعد آل عامر وأقوم حالياً بتطبيق بحث للحصول على درجة الدكتوراة تحت إشراف كلاً من البروفسور دينس مور والدكتور أوميش شرما.

يهتم البحث الذي أقوم به بمجال الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية، تحديداً رؤية المعلمين والوالدين للطلاب الموهوبين. سوف تجد برفق هذه الدعوة صورة من موافقة وزارة التربية والتعليم لإجراء هذه الدراسة إضافة إلى دعوتك للانضمام لهذه الدراسة والتي سوف تُرسل مباشرة لمدير مدرستك. لقد تم اختيارك قصداً لاعتقادي بأن لديك معلومات ثرية حول قضايا الموهبة. إنه لمن دواعي سروري قبلك الانضمام لهذه الدراسة برفقة معلمين آخرين والذي سوف يتمحور حديثكم حول خصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المرحلة الابتدائية.

الهدف الرئيسي لهذه اللقاءات جمع معلومات وفيره حول رؤية المعلمين والوالدين لخصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المملكة العربية السعودية. هذه المعلومات سوف تستخدم لبناء مقياس الدراسة والذي سوف يستخدم لاحقاً مع عينة ممثلة للمعلمين والوالدين لمعرفة وجهات نظرهم تجاه الموهبة والموهوبين. إنه لمؤمل بأن نتائج هذه الدراسة سوف تساعد صناع القرار ومن لهم علاقة بتربية الموهوبين لمعرفة الرؤية الواقعية للمعلمين والوالدين للطلاب الموهوبين والذي سوف تسهم في تصميم برامج أكثر فاعلية للتعامل مع هذه الفئات. نتائج هذه الدراسة قد تعرض في أحد المؤتمرات المتخصصة أو تُنشر في إحدى المجلات العلمية المتخصصة. ولمساعدتي في بحثي الحالي فأنت مدعو للقاء جماعي برفقة معلمين آخرين للطلاب الموهوبين وسوف يكون في مؤسسة الملك عبدالعزيز ورجالة لرعاية الموهبة والإبداع. سوف يتم لقاء المعلمين بواسطة الباحث في غرفة الاجتماعات الرئيسية، بينما مجموعة المعلمات سوف يتم مقابلتهن بواسطة زميلة متعاونه مع الباحث في غرفة الاجتماعات الخاصة بالسيدات في المؤسسة (أنظر تفاصيل الموقع أدناه). سوف يستغرق اللقاء قرابة 90 دقيقة. وسوف يتم تسجيل اللقاء. جميع ماسوف تُدلي به أو تقوم بكتابته سوف يتم حفظه بسرية لمدة خمس سنوات قبل أن يتم إتلافه. وبما أنك أحد المشاركين فيحق لك طلب نتائج هذه الدراسة متى رغبت. كل ما عليك القيام به هو مراسلتي على الإيميل المرفق في نهاية هذه الرسالة.

إذا مارغبت في المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، أرجو منك إرسال موافقتك موضحاً فيها كامل عناوينك في الطرف المرفق مع هذه الرسالة. فضلاً تذكر بأن مشاركتك تطوعية وتستطيع رفض المشاركة أو الانسحاب من اللقاء متى ما رغبت. كل ماتحتاجه فقط هو تجاهل هذه الدعوة وعدم الحضور أو إبلاغي برغبتك بحجب المعلومات التي شاركت بها.

**Location:**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity  
Al O' laya Street  
Tel. 462 9462  
Central meeting room.

**Researcher's contact details**

**Saudi Arabia**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions  
Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity  
P.O. Box 35515 Riyadh 11488  
Phone: +96614629462  
Fax +96614623935  
smala1@student.monash.edu

**Australia**

Faculty of Education  
Building 6, Room No G33  
Phone +61399052819 Ext 55031  
Monash University, Clayton VIC 3800  
smala1@student.monash.edu

**If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:**

3- Prof. Dennis Moore  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone: 99050706, e-mail  
Dennis.Moore@education.monash.edu.au).

4- Dr. Umesh Sharma  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone 99054388, e-mail  
Umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au).

**If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research is being conducted, please contact:**

Human Ethics Officer  
Standing Committee on Ethics in Research  
Involving Humans (SCERH)  
Building 3e Room 111  
Research Office  
Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905  
1420 Email: [scerh@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:scerh@adm.monash.edu.au)



27<sup>th</sup> of Sep. 2006

## Parents' Group: invitation letter

### Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions

#### **This information sheet is for you to keep.**

My name is Saad Al-Amer and I am conducting a research project with Dennis Moore a professor in the Department of Education, and Umesh Sharma a lecturer in the Department of Education at Monash University towards a PhD degree. This means that I will be writing a thesis.

I currently study in the area of giftedness in Saudi Arabia, specifically, the perceptions that are held by teachers and parents about gifted children. A copy of the permission letter from the Saudi Ministry of Education to conduct the study and the invitation letter will be directly mailed to the principal of the Centre for Gifted Students. The principal will have given you this invitation to participate with other parents of gifted children. You have intentionally been selected because I think you have valuable information concerning giftedness issues. I would be very grateful if you could participate in a discussion to help me identify the perceptions of parents toward gifted children in elementary schools.

The purpose of the discussion is to generate plentiful information about parents' perceptions of giftedness. This information will be used to construct the study's survey in order to investigate a large number of parents' perceptions of giftedness. It is hoped that the findings of the current study will assist policy-makers and other people responsible for gifted children's education to understand the actual perceptions of parents and design appropriate programs that are more effective in dealing with gifted children. It will also form the basis for conference papers and possibly professional academic publications. These publications may also appear in my (Al-Amer) thesis for his PhD, which is called: *Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions*. On your request I would be very happy to provide you with the results of the study after they are collated and analysed. I can be contacted by email as indicated below.

In order to help my assessment I invite you to take part in a small focus group interview. The male meeting will be conducted by the researcher at the central meeting room in the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity. The female participants will be interviewed by a female colleague at female meeting room in female division (see location details below). The discussion will take about 90 minutes. These will be tape-recorded and transcribed. No information that you say or write will be identifiable by readers and you may like to select an alternative name for any use in publications. I will keep the consent forms, transcripts, and data coding materials and audiotapes in a locked filing cabinet and password protected computer files for five years. After that, all records will be destroyed.

If you are willing to participate in my research, please use the envelope provided to return the consent form with your details so that I can arrange a time convenient for you. Please remember that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time. All you need to do is to not attend the meeting, or to let me know that you wish your information to be excluded.

Saad Al-Amer

**Location:**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation Giftedness and Creativity.  
Al O' laya Street  
Tel. 462 9462  
Male: central meeting room.  
Female: female meeting room in female division.

**Researcher's contact details**

**Saudi Arabia**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity.  
Al O' laya Street.  
P.O. Box 35515 Riyadh 11488  
Phone: +96614629462  
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18 سبتمبر 2006

## مجموعة الوالدين: دعوة الانضمام للدراسة الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية: رؤية المعلمين والوالدين

(المعلومات الواردة في هذه الدعوة لك، الرجاء الاحتفاظ بها)

اسمي هو سعد آل عامر وأقوم حالياً بتطبيق بحث للحصول على درجة الدكتوراة تحت اشراف كل من البروفسور دينس مور والدكتور أوميش شرما.

يهتم البحث الذي اقوم به بمجال الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية، تحديداً رؤية المعلمين والوالدين للطلاب الموهوبين. سوف تجد برفق هذه الدعوة صورة من موافقة وزارة التربية والتعليم لإجراء هذه الدراسة إضافة إلى دعوتك للانضمام لهذه الدراسة سوف تُرسل مباشرة لمدير مدرسة ابنك/ ابنتك. وسوف يقوم مدير المدرسة بإرسال هذه المرفقات لكم. لقد تم اختيارك قصداً لاعتقادي بأن لديك معلومات ثرية حول قضايا الموهبة. إنه لمن دواعي سروري قبولك الانضمام لهذه الدراسة لمساعدتي على التعرف على خصال الطلاب الموهوبين

الهدف الرئيسي لهذه اللقاءات جمع معلومات وفيره حول رؤية الوالدين لخصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المملكة العربية السعودية. هذه المعلومات سوف تستخدم لبناء مقياس الدراسة والذي سوف يستخدم لاحقاً مع عينة ممثلة للوالدين لمعرفة وجهات نظرهم تجاه الموهبة والموهوبين. أنه لمؤمل بأن نتائج هذه الدراسة سوف تساعد صناع القرار ومن لهم علاقة بتربية الموهوبين لمعرفة الرؤية الواقعية للوالدين تجاه الطلاب الموهوبين والذي سوف تسهم في تصميم برامج أكثر فاعلية للتعامل مع هذه الفئات. نتائج هذه الدراسة قد تعرض في أحد المؤتمرات المتخصصة أو تُنشر في إحدى المجلات العلمية المتخصصة. ولمساعدتي في بحثي الحالي فأنت مدعو للقاء جماعي برفقة أولياء أمور آخرين وسوف يكون في مؤسسة الملك عبدالعزيز ورجالة لرعاية الموهبة والإبداع.

سوف يتم لقاء الأباء بواسطة الباحث في غرفة الاجتماعات الرئيسية، وسوف يتم لقاء الأمهات بواسطة زميلة متعاونة مع الباحث في الغرفة المخصصة للقاء السيدات بالمؤسسة (انظر تفاصيل الموقع أدناه). سوف يستغرق اللقاء قرابة 90 دقيقة. وسوف يتم تسجيل اللقاء. جميع ماسوف تُدلي به أو تقوم بكتابته سوف يتم حفظه بسرية لمدة خمس سنوات قبل أن يتم إتلافه. وبما أنك أحد المشاركين فيحق لك طلب نتائج هذه الدراسة متى رغبت. كل ما عليك القيام به هو مراسلتي على الإيميل المرفق في نهاية هذه الرسالة.

إذا مارغبت في المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، أرجو منك إرسال موافقتك موضعاً فيها كامل عناوينك في الظرف المرفق مع هذه الرسالة. فضلاً تذكر بأن مشاركتك تطوعية وتستطيع رفض المشاركة أو الانسحاب من اللقاء متى ما رغبت. كل ماتحتاجه فقط هو تجاهل هذه الدعوة وعدم الحضور أو إبلاغي برغبتك بحجب المعلومات التي شاركت بها.

**Location:**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity  
Al O' laya Street  
Tel. 462 9462  
Central meeting room.

**Researcher's contact details**

**Saudi Arabia**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions  
Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity  
P.O. Box 35515 Riyadh 11488  
Phone: +96614629462  
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Faculty of Education  
Building 6, Room No G33  
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Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone: 99050706, e-mail  
Dennis.Moore@education.monash.edu.au).

6- Dr. Umesh Sharma  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone 99054388, e-mail  
Umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au).

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Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905  
1420 Email: [scerh@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:scerh@adm.monash.edu.au)

*Appendix A-3: Consent letters*



18<sup>th</sup> of Sep. 2006

**Experts' group: Consent letter**

**Title: *Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' perceptions***

I agree to take part in the research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that I am requested to give my perspective about:

- The perceptions of giftedness in Saudi Arabia,
- The characteristics of gifted children in Saudi elementary schools,
- How these children are perceived by their teachers and parents.

I understand that all information I contribute to the discussion will be used for the purpose of research. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

1. be involved in a discussion group with other experts,
2. allow discussion to be audio-taped,
3. allow the data to be used for the construction of a survey,
4. allow the data to be used (in de-identified form) for academic publication.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the focus group for use in published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

**Participant's name:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Contact details:**

**Tel.:**

**E-mail:**



18 سبتمبر 2006

### مجموعة الخبراء: الموافقة على المشاركة

العنوان: الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية

إنني أوافق على المشاركة في الدراسة الموضح عنوانها بعالية. لقد سبق لي قراءة الشروحات المتعلقة بالدراسة وأفهم بأنني مُناشد بإعطاء وجهة نظري حول النقاط التالية:

- رؤية الموهبة بالمملكة العربية السعودية
- خصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المدارس الابتدائية
- رؤية المعلمين والوالدين للطلاب الموهوبين

إنني أعلم بأن المعلومات التي سوف أدلي بها سوف تستخدم فقط في أغراض بحثية. وأعلم بأن موافقتي على الانضمام لهذه الدراسة يعني بأنني أوافق على النقاط التالية:

- سوف يكون النقاش بصحبة خبراء آخرين
- سوف يتم تسجيل اللقاء
- هذه اللقاءات تهدف لجمع معلومات لبناء مقياس الدراسة
- المعلومات التي قد أدلي بها قد تنشر ضمن نتائج البحث في إحدى المجالات المتخصصة مع عدم الإشارة لأسماء المشاركين.

إنني أعلم بأن مشاركتي تطوعية، تسمح لي بأن أرفض المشاركة أو أنسحب منها وقتما أشاء دونما أدنى مسؤولية.

أسم المشارك:

التوقيع:

التاريخ:

معلومات الاتصال:

الهاتف:

الإيميل:



### **Teachers' group: Consent letter**

#### ***Title: Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' perceptions***

I agree to take part in the research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that I am requested to give my perspective about:

- The perceptions of giftedness in Saudi Arabia,
- The characteristics of gifted children in Saudi elementary schools,
- How these children are perceived by their teachers.

I understand that all information I contribute to the discussion will be used for the purpose of research. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

5. be involved in a discussion group with other teachers
6. allow discussion to be audio-taped
7. allow the data to be used for the construction of a survey
8. allow the data to be used (in de-identified form) for academic publication.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the focus group for use in published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

**Participant's name:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Contact details:**

**Tel. :**

**E-mail:**



18 سبتمبر 2006

### مجموعة المعلمين: الموافقة على المشاركة

العنوان: الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية

إنني أوافق على المشاركة في الدراسة الموضح عنوانها بعالية. لقد سبق لي قراءة الشروحات المتعلقة بالدراسة وأفهم بأنني مُناشد بإعطاء وجهة نظري حول النقاط التالية:

- رؤية الموهبة بالمملكة العربية السعودية
- خصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المدارس الابتدائية
- رؤية المعلمين والوالدين للطلاب الموهوبين

إنني أعلم بأن المعلومات التي سوف أدلي بها سوف تستخدم فقط في أغراض بحثية. وأعلم بأن موافقتي على الانضمام لهذه الدراسة تعني بأنني أوافق على النقاط التالية:

- سوف يكون النقاش بصحبة معلمين آخرين للطلاب الموهوبين
- سوف يتم تسجيل اللقاء
- هذه اللقاءات تهدف لجمع معلومات لبناء مقياس الدراسة
- المعلومات التي قد أدلي بها قد تنشر ضمن نتائج البحث في إحدى المجالات المتخصصة مع عدم الإشارة لأسماء المشاركين.

إنني أعلم بأن مشاركتي تطوعية، تسمح لي بأن أرفض المشاركة أو أنسحب منها وقتما أشاء دونما أدنى مسؤولية.

أسم المشارك

التوقيع

التاريخ

معلومات الاتصال:

الهاتف:

الإيميل:



### **Parents' group: consent letter**

#### **Title: *Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' perceptions***

I agree to take part in the research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that I am requested to give my perspective about:

- The perceptions of giftedness in Saudi Arabia,
- The characteristics of gifted children in Saudi primary schools,
- How these children are perceived by their parents.

I understand that all information I contribute to the discussion will be used for the purpose of research. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- be involved in a discussion group with other parents
- allow discussion to be audio-taped
- allow the data to be used for the construction of a survey
- allow the data to be used (in de-identified form) for academic publication.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the focus group for use in published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

**Participant's name:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Contact details:**

**Tel.:**

**E-mail:**



18 سبتمبر 2006

### مجموعة الوالدين: الموافقة على المشاركة

العنوان: الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية

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- رؤية الوالدين للطلاب الموهوبين

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- سوف يكون النقاش بصحبة والدي الطلاب الموهوبين
- سوف يتم تسجيل اللقاء
- هذه اللقاءات تهدف لجمع معلومات لبناء مقياس الدراسة
- المعلومات التي قد أدلي بها قد تنشر ضمن نتائج البحث في إحدى المجالات المتخصصة مع عدم الإشارة لأسماء المشاركين.

إنني أعلم بأن مشاركتي تطوعية، تسمح لي بأن أرفض المشاركة أو أنسحب منها وقتما أشاء دونما أدنى مسؤولية.

أسم المشارك

التوقيع

التاريخ

معلومات الاتصال:

الهاتف:

الإيميل:

**Appendix A-4: Focus groups questions**

- What is the first thing that comes to mind about your experience with gifted children? What do gifted children mean to you? How are gifted children perceived by teachers and parents?
- What are the characteristics that are associated with gifted children? What are the most important of these characteristics? What is the level of language that gifted child(ren) usually use to express their thoughts? What are the kinds of books or stories that he/she prefers? What is his/her interest compared with other children in the same grade level? What sorts of issues do gifted children discuss with you? What is his/her achievement level? How do gifted children deal with difficult materials?
- How do gifted children achieve their own works? What is the level of assistance that he/she seeks to do their homework? What is his/her learning style? How much time do they spend on their own projects? How do gifted children organize their own stuff compared with other children? What is his/her attitude toward studying issues? What is his/her reaction toward routine tasks?
- How do gifted children perceive problems? What is the value of the solutions that he/she suggests to resolve problems? How does he/she express their imaginations or thoughts? How does he/she feel concerning sensitive issues? What is the level of obedience that gifted children offer about illogical issues compared with your other usual children?
- What is the response of gifted children to schools and social activities? How do gifted children deal with other people? How does he/she receive instructions from others? What is his/her role when involved in activities?
- How are musical and visual arts activities perceived by Saudi people? What is your reaction when your child(ren) display exceptional level of dancing or visual arts?
- There are a number of famous singers such as, Mohammed Abduh, Talal Madah, Abdulmajed Abdulah, Khaleed Abdulrahman..... Can we name them as gifted?
- There are a number of famous players such as, Saleh Al-neamh, Majed Abdulah, Yousf Althonean.... Can we consider them as gifted persons?

**Appendix A-5: part of experts' interview**

Experts' interview

**What is the first thing that comes to mind about your experience with gifted children?**

**Exp.1** Saudi's people have general assumptions about giftedness or any appreciated field. This assumption has affected Saudi parents' perceptions toward giftedness. For example, people who have lived in Qasem appreciate some skills which may not be perceived by people who live at Wadi Al-Dwaser. Therefore, we have to be aware about these distinctions between Saudi's perceptions in respect to defining gifted children. However, now the awareness of parents is increasing. Most of them have access to the internet and are searching on Google some forums on giftedness and they have more understanding concerning giftedness. In conclusion, the first thing that comes to my mind when talking about giftedness is the differences between Saudi's societies about its definition.

**Exp.3** From my perspective, the first thing that comes to mind about gifted children is their intelligence and their mental abilities. In addition, gifted children are independent learners and committed.

**Exp. 2** The first thing that I think about gifted children is the external characteristics which lead to identifying them as gifted children, specifically, independence, commitment, imagination and intelligence which appear in their expressions or in humour.

**Exp.4** I do not have further information than my colleagues.

**How are gifted children perceived by their teachers and parents?**

**Exp.1** According to my experience in gifted children's identification; we use teachers' recommendations to identify gifted students and I have observed that teachers usually focus on achievement tests and some class skills such as organization and obedience. These aspects dominate teachers' perceptions of giftedness.

**Exp.2** [He agreed with exp.4 and added that as well, people in society perceive gifted children as just high achievers]. I think this is a mistake and must be fixed.

**Exp1 and Exp3** we do not have further information.

What are the characteristics that are associated with gifted children? What are the most important of these characteristics?

**Exp.1** Gifted children's parents have rather too much confidence in the existing research and actually, this is one of problems we face in Saudi Arabia. For example, one criterion which has used in Saudi Arabia to identify gifted students is Renzulli's gifted children behavior characteristics scale. Most Saudi researchers did their best to interpret these characteristics and administer them to gifted children's parents. The problem here is not about putting the parents in the picture about these characteristics, but that some parents perceive this list (Renzulli's list) as being the best model of gifted children characteristics. We tried to explain to parents that there are other Saudi gifted children's characteristics which are not translated and not included in Renzulli's scale. We need to explain to parents that it is good to observe any gifted children's characteristics which are included in Renzulli's scale or other lists but they are not all the characteristics of Saudi gifted children. And about the second part of this question, important characteristics in my view are centered on learning and education style. Currently, it is observed that we are going to make major changes in some educational styles, for example, some skills such as memorizing and perfectionism which were in the past considered as the major aspects of giftedness are not perceived now as having the same level of importance. Saudi parents have now changed their perceptions toward giftedness and gifted children, specifically, since the King Abdulaziz's and his Companions Foundation for the Gifted has established its own prize for science creativity. This prize is given to anyone who contributes original thoughts in respect of society's problems. Curiously, most winners of this prize are not possessing high levels of education. This fact makes gifted children's parents aware that academic qualifications are not the only thing to determine giftedness.

**Exp2.** Externally observable characteristics play an important job to identify gifted children. These characteristics such as, memorizing, imagination quick responses, leadership and poetry writing are considered valuable in Saudi Arabia.

**Exp.4.** It is a problem to name particular characteristics, I assume. To classify gifted traits you should know first the relationship between these aspects. accuracy, quick response, memorizing and remembering ... (he stops and continues ... Leadership, for example, is a remarkable trait not only in a school environment but also in the whole Saudi society.

**Exp3.** The important characteristics in my view are: intuition, accuracy, divergent thinking, originality, fluency and flexibility.

**What is the level of language that gifted child(ren) usually use to express their thoughts?**

**Exp2.** The sense of language exists in gifted children. It differs based on the sort of giftedness he or she holds. For example, children who are smart in mathematics maybe show weakness in verbal tasks.

**Exp1.** It depends on the sort of giftedness he or she holds. It is not precise to assume that there is a relationship between giftedness and language intelligence. I met some fluent students and they are not gifted.

**Exp3. and Exp4.** No more information.

**What are the kinds of books or stories that he/she prefers?**

**Exp2.** The type of preferred books and stories can be chosen by gifted children themselves or by us. These books and stories usually relate to their giftedness.

**Exp3.** No further information.

**Exp.4** No further information.

**Exp1.** The sort of books and interests of gifted children is impacted on by certain factors. The problem here is not the sort of these books or stories but it is an economical matter. Some parents sometimes are not able to supply their children with preferred books.

**What sorts of issues do gifted children discuss with you?**

**Exp4.** It also depends on the sort of giftedness he or she shows. Gifted child usually ask and discuss around the areas he prefers. He/she is often imaginative. He/she amazes you with some strange questions which are much more mature than would be expected for his age. At the same time you get him/her to give you wonderful solutions for discussed problems.

**Exp2.** Young gifted children sometimes participate with people who are older than them. They discuss some issues such as environmental issues or social and family problems.

**Exp3.** Gifted children usually discuss issues of freedom. It may be because of restrictions and limits at home or school, as well as school rules and routines.

**Exp.1** In the classroom, students deal respectfully with their teachers. This behavior may mean that Saudi students are unable to express their thoughts and ideas freely. Furthermore,

the volume of curriculum does not allow the teacher to listen patiently to students. Similarly, at home obedience and the respect toward parents means that children are unable to reveal what comes to their minds to their parents.

**How do gifted children deal with difficult materials?**

**Exp1.** Saudi gifted children face problems when they want to deal with difficult issues. It is not because they are not able to deal with them successfully, but because of the nature of their society. If you mean by difficulties cubic toys or assembled parts, I think it is waste time. However, when teachers give students mathematics problem, the response of gifted students about this problem will be different.

**Exp3.** Some gifted children's characteristics such as, commitment, curiosity, and other factors like previous experience and surrounding culture determine the way that gifted children deal with the difficulties.

**Exp2.** Dealing with difficulties reminds me of Renzulli's rings. Gifted children pay much attention to difficult situations and prefer to stay as long as he/she can with the problem.

**Exp4.** If the difficulties are part of gifted children's interest, he/she will do his/her best and enjoy dealing with this problem. To the contrary, normal students will withdraw at the first difficulty he/ she faces.

**What is his/her achievement level?**

**Exp4.** There are students who are under-achievers but they are gifted.

**Exp2.** There is no doubt about the relationship between giftedness and achievement. [He did not explain this relationship. It seems that he perceives it positively].

**Exp3.** I agree with exp 4.

**Exp1.** No information.

**How do gifted children achieve their own work?**

**Exp3.** Gifted students achieve his/her work efficiently. He deals with his work with high motivation and accuracy.

**Exp1.** (Withdrew from meeting for a few minutes).

**Exp2.** Gifted students are faithful to their work. They work hard to achieve their tasks.

**Exp.4** Gifted students have quick achievement and with greater accuracy than normal students.

**What is the level of assistance that he/she seeks to do their homework?**

Exp4. Gifted students do not like to do prescriptive or predetermined work. He often prefers the teacher to give him some hints and to give him the opportunity to create.

Exp2. Gifted students often do not ask for assistance. They just ask for help when they feel tired.

**Exp3.** I agree with you.

**What is his/her learning style?**

**Exp2.** It depends on the sort of giftedness. Numerically gifted students prefer mathematical learning styles. Students gifted in language students prefer verbal or discussion style.

**Exp3.** I think gifted students often prefer indirect style. They do not like teachers to give them prepared answers. They want to get these themselves.

**Exp4.** I do not have further comment.

**How much time do they spend on their own projects?**

All experts said that gifted students achieve their work successfully and often seek perfection.

**How do gifted children organize their own stuff compared with other children?**

All experts agreed gifted children are not organized about their belongings. They prefer to give effort to study and doing favourite activities.

Appendix A-6: a partial sample of extracting items

<b>Exp.: Experts' participants.</b> <b>F/T: Female teachers' participants.</b> <b>F: Father's participant.</b>		<b>M/T: Male teachers' participants.</b> <b>M: Mothers' participants.</b>	
Q1	<b>What is the first thing that comes to mind about your experience with gifted children?</b>		
Exp1	Exp2	Exp3	Exp4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The differences about the definition of giftedness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ External characteristics (e.g., intelligence, independence, accuracy and commitment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Intelligence</li> <li>○ Their mental abilities.</li> <li>○ Independence</li> <li>○ commitment</li> </ul>	No discussed
M/T1	M/T2	M/T3	M/T4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Distinction</li> <li>○ Exceptional characteristics.</li> </ul> ... gifted children need qualified person to treat them successfully.			He has not attended yet.
F/T1	F/T2	F/T3	.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Exceptional ability.</li> <li>○ Creative thoughts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ They are gifted in a particular field.</li> </ul>	No discussed	.....
M1	M2	M3	.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A gift from God.</li> <li>○ Gifted children have different ability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The distinction in :                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Thinking</li> <li>● Ability</li> <li>● production</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Special ability: ... it is not perceived in other normal students.</li> </ul>	He has not attended yet.
F	.....	.....	.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Exceptional abilities.</li> </ul>	.....	.....	.....
Q2	<b>How gifted children are perceived by their teachers and parents?</b>		
Exp1	Exp2	Exp3	Exp4
No discussed.	I agree with (Exp4).	No discussed	Teachers focus on achievement

			tests. Thus, they perceive gifted students through this factor.
M/T1	M/T2	M/T3	M/T4
...seek a little assistance and give value outcomes compared with ordinary students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ As national wealth. we have look after them in order to be responsible persons in future.</li> </ul>	No discussed	He has not attended yet.
F/T1	F/T2	F/T3	.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Teachers perceive gifted children controversy:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Some teachers perceive them positively</li> <li>● Others perceive them negatively.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ They distinguish themselves in a particular field such as:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Speaking; memorizing.</li> <li>● They are not fall in mistakes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gifted children who think in different way than others think.</li> <li>○ Experienced teachers perceive gifted children positively.</li> </ul>	.....
M1	M2	M3	.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Awareness of giftedness: .. although I know that he has distinct characteristics, I deal with him as I deal with his brothers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A gift from the God. .. we should develop them for the purpose of developing our country.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ As a wealth ... we should provide them with a suitable environment.</li> </ul>	He has not attended yet.
F	.....	.....	.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wealth national. ...we should exploit and develop them in order to prepare them to participate successfully in developing their nation.</li> </ul>	.....	.....	.....
Q3	<b>What are the characteristics that are associated with gifted children? What are the most important of these characteristics?</b>		
Exp1	Exp2	Exp3	Exp4
.....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ imagination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Intuition;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Quick response;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Quick response;</li> <li>○ Leadership</li> <li>○ Curiosity</li> <li>○ Poetry writing.</li> <li>○ Good memory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Divergent thinking; imagination</li> <li>○ Originality;</li> <li>○ Fluency;</li> <li>○ Flexibility.</li> <li>○ accuracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Remembering;</li> <li>○ Leadership.</li> <li>○ Curiosity</li> </ul>
M/T1	M/T2	M/T3	M/T4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Intuitive;</li> <li>○ High achiever;</li> </ul>	<p>High motivation; High commitment; Leadership ...also, gifted children like humor and they unorganized</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Leadership. ...it is an important trait.</li> <li>○ Persistence</li> </ul>	<p>He does not attend yet.</p>
F/T1	F/T2	F/T3	.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Associated characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Leadership capacities; self-esteem; confidence; curiosity and originality.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Classification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Leadership;</li> <li>● Confidence;</li> <li>● Curiosity.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Associated characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creativity; originality; varied interests.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Classification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Leadership.</li> <li>● Interested indetails.</li> <li>● Curiosity.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Associated characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High confidence; deal with discuss well; social intelligence.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Classification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Curiosity.</li> <li>● Leadership.</li> <li>● Creativity.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>.....</p>

M1	M2	M3	.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High independence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Important characteristics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Independence</li> <li>○ Self-esteem</li> <li>○ persistence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Smartness: .... able to adapt their behavior to suit the context.</li> </ul> <p><b>Important characteristics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Social intelligence</li> <li>○ Independence</li> <li>○ High academic intelligence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Independent: ... have own perceptions; persistent; dominate group.</li> </ul> <p><b>Important characteristics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Confidence</li> <li>○ Leadership</li> <li>○ intelligence</li> </ul>	
F	.....	.....	.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Independence.</li> <li>○ Ambiguity.</li> <li>○ Intuition.</li> </ul> <p><b>Classification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Depend of the sort of their giftedness.</li> <li>○ There are a lot of traits.</li> </ul>	.....	.....	.....
Q4	<b>What is the level of language that gifted child(ren) usually use to express their thoughts?</b>		
Exp1	Exp2	Exp3	Exp4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No relationship between giftedness and language. (e.g., 'I met some fluent students and they are not gifted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It differs based on the sort of giftedness. (e.g., children who show smart in mathematics maybe show weakness in verbal tasks.</li> </ul>	No discussed	No discussed.
M/T1	M/T2	M/T3	M/T4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It depends on high mental ability: ...I disagree with my colleague, gifted children with high mental abilities have a high level of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Depends on the sort of giftedness: (e.g., there are distinguish in drawing or physical but are not different in language use)</li> </ul>	No discussed.	He has not attended yet.

language regardless of the sort of their giftedness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Saudi customs (e.g., Saudi adults, unlike other Arabic countries, do not allow children to participate with them.</li> </ul>		
F/T1	F/T2	F/T3	.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wonderful language.</li> <li>○ They attract your attention when discussing their thoughts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use high vocabulary which is higher than their age.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Adequate vocabulary.</li> <li>○ Use it effectively.</li> </ul>	.....
M1	M2	M3	.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use mature words.</li> </ul> <p>... my daughter sometimes discuss things with us using strange words. She usually watches TV and quoted these words.</p>	<p>Different language.</p> <p>... she has a lot of words and sometimes seems to be talkative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Normal words.</li> </ul> <p>..does not use any strange vocabulary. She uses the same words that we use at home.</p>	
F	.....	.....	.....
Depends on the sort of giftedness: (e.g., students who are gifted in computer have not the same level of vocabulary as those students who are orally gifted.	.....	.....	.....
Q6	<b>What are the kinds of books or stories that he/she prefers?</b>		
Exp1	Exp2	Exp3	Exp4
.....?	Related to their giftedness.	No discussed	No discussed
M/T1	M/T2	M/T3	M/T4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It depends on their interests: (e.g., some students who join mosque meeting prefer the prophets' and historical stories.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I agree! It depends on their interests:</li> </ul> <p>Students who are distinguished in electricity search about electrical books and artists are interested in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The quality of teachers' subjects.</li> </ul> <p>....I showed gifted children a film about some famous inventers. I observed that</p>	He has not attended yet.

	literature/history issues... and so on.	children were impacted and they asked many and many questions about these inventions.	
F/T1	F/T2	F/T3	.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Imaginative books.</li> <li>○ Poetry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Encyclopedias.</li> <li>○ Puzzle journals.</li> <li>○ Reading books about giftedness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Journals.</li> <li>○ Science books.</li> <li>○ Puzzle activities.</li> <li>○ Encyclopedias.</li> </ul>	.....
M1	M2	M3	.....
She reads everything (e.g., the prophets' stories, history...and so on.	Diverse interests (e.g., children's and prophets' stories or history. Gifted children have high aspirations to read more than ordinary children.	An information books (e.g., the type of books that offer their content by question and answer.	
F	.....	.....	.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read about the sort of their interests.</li> <li>○ Prefer ambiguous stories.</li> <li>○ Critical readers.</li> </ul>	.....	.....	.....
Q7	<b>What sorts of issues do gifted children discuss with you?</b>		
Exp1	Exp2	Exp3	Exp4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Children respect their teachers and parents.</li> <li>○ They often do not discuss them.</li> <li>○ Also, teachers do not allow students to raise irrelevant question to the study.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Environmental issues.</li> <li>○ Social and family problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Issues of freedom.</li> <li>○ School rules and routine.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Usually, they discuss around the area they prefer.</li> </ul>

○ Parents do not give their children a chance to reveal what come to their mind.			
M/T1	M/T2	M/T3	M/T4
○ Yes! They ask about their circumstances in future.	○ Their circumstances. ...'Are there any special programs that will look after us in subsequent grades' ○ The advantages of gifted programs.	The relationships between their study at class and what they practice in activities.	
F/T1	F/T2	F/T3	.....
They discuss about any thing is linked to their giftedness.	.....	No discussed	.....
M1	M2	M3	.....
My daughter asks about: ○ Yashmaks women and what the advantages are. ○ Freedom ○ Equality between girls and boy.	My daughter talks about: ○ Equality. ...and sometimes she raises some strange issues (e.g., why we do not have policewomen.	May daughter raises: ○ Issues of freedom. ○ The reasons of wars and disastrous.	
F	.....	.....	.....
○ Freedom of speech. ○ Independence.	.....	.....	.....
Q8	<b>How do gifted children deal with difficult materials?</b>		
Exp1	Exp2	Exp3	Exp4
○ Cubic toys are waste time	○ Pay much attention to difficult events. ○ Stay a long time with problem.	.....	○ Enjoy dealing with difficulties.

M/T1	M/T2	M/T3	M/T4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Show high commitment</li> <li>○ Fix up the problem</li> </ul>			He does not attend yet.
F/T1	F/T2	F/T3	..... .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yah! I agree, they like to discover and challenge a new thing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ They desire to deal with a new experience even if it is difficult.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prefer to deal with difficulties.</li> <li>○ They use mistakes and right style until they understand its mechanism.</li> </ul>	..... .
M1	M2	M3	..... .
..she tries to understand it first and then fix it up correctly.	My daughter prefers to deal with difficulties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ She has high curiosity. (e.g., when her father installs anything at home, she stands close him and tries to give hand.</li> </ul>	..she tries to understand it first and then fix it up correctly.	
F	.....	.....	.....
Persistent. ...'does not give up until he/she finds a solution	.....	.....	.....

**APPENDICES B**

**DOCUMENTS OF STUDY TWO**

**Appendix B-1: Preparing the study scale****The scale-first draft****Instructions**

This study aims to identify the perceptions of teachers and parents toward gifted children's characteristics in Saudi Arabia. This survey consists of three sections: (1) teachers' and parents' perceptions of gifted children's characteristics, (2) an open-ended question to list the five most important traits of gifted children for you, and (3) demographics. In the top of each section some instructions about how you should complete it are given. Please read these instructions carefully before you start the relevant section.

**Section 1****Concept: teachers' and parents' perceptions of gifted children's characteristics.**

Below are a number of antonyms to describe gifted children's characteristics. Please look through them and circle the number that, in each word pair, describes your perception regarding gifted children's traits. Here are examples about how you should complete this section:

- If you feel that one of two adjectives on a single scale is **VERY STRONGLY REPRESENTATIVE** of gifted children, please circle the number nearest the word that describes your opinion, that is, number 1 OR 7. See this example:

Leader      (1)    2      3      4      5      6      7      Follower

OR

Leader      1      2      3      4      5      6      (7)      Follower

If you feel that one of two adjectives on a single scale is **STRONGLY REPRESENTATIVE** of gifted children, circle the number as follows:

Leader      1      (2)    3      4      5      6      7      Follower

OR

Leader      1      2      3      4      5      (6)    7      Follower

- If you feel that one of two adjectives on a single scale is **ONLY SLIGHTLY REPRESENTATIVE** of gifted children, circle the number as follows:

Leader        1        2        (3)    4        5        6        7        Follower

OR

Leader        1        2        3        4        (5)    6        7        Follower

If you are not sure that both adjectives are REPRESENTATIVE of gifted children, circle the number in the middle space, that is, number 4:

Leader        1        2        3        (4)    5        6        7        Follower

IMPORTANT:        Circle the number, do not mark between numbers.

- Be sure you circle a number for every line. DO NOT OMIT ANY.
- Please DO NOT CIRCLE MORE THAN ONE NUMBER on a single scale.
- DO NOT LOOK BACK AND FORTH through the items. Do not try to remember how you responded on similar items earlier in the test. It is your first impressions, the immediate "feeling" about the items that we want.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

**A gifted child is:**

Sociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unsociable
Loyal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	disloyal
Sensitive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Insensitive
Obedient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disobedient
Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unreliable
Lovable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unlovable
Courageous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cowardly
Organised	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disorganised
Solution focused	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Problem focused
Quiet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Talkative
Leader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Follower
Dislikes routine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Likes routine
Confident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unconfident Independent

Independent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dependent
Frank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Evasive
Helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unhelpful
Smart	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dull
Accurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Inaccurate
Confronts problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Avoids problems
Likes singing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dislikes singing
Enjoys music	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hates music
Enjoys sports	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hates sports
An exceptional drawer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	an ordinary drawer
Rebellious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Follows rules
Task-committed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Uncommitted
Imaginative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unimaginative
Curious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Uninterested
High achiever	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Underachiever
Outstanding reader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Ordinary reader
Of multiple-interests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Of limited interests
Persistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not persistent
Logical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Illogical
Socialises with elders	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Socialises with same age
Precise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Imprecise
Fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unfair
Radical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Conservative
Outgoing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Shy
Hates school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Loves school
Cheerful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Grumpy
Likes reading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hates reading
Advanced Language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Age-appropriate language
Admired	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Despised
Attentive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Distracted
Has large vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Has limited vocabulary
Exceptional memory	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Forgetful
Careful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Careless

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am Saad Alamer, a PhD student at Monash University.

I have attached to your e-mail the semantic differential scale plus the purpose and the questions of my study. This scale is being designed for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the faculty of Education-Monash University.

I would appreciate it if you would look through the attachments and make comments regarding the following points:

- 1- the construction of the scale
- 2- the accuracy of the antonyms adjectives;
- 3- any suggestion for adding new items;
- 4- any suggestion for removing any irrelevant items.

I appreciate in advance your assistance. Should there be any question, you are welcome to contact the researchers:

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(+61 3 99052819)

### Experts' comments

#### A gifted child is:

I have made some slight changes to the presentation including inclusion of Upper case letters as needed in the scale.

	Very Strongly	Strongly	Slightly	Neutral	Slightly	Strongly	Very Strongly	
Sociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unsociable
Loyal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	disloyal
Sensitive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Insensitive
Obedient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disobedient
Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unreliable
Lovable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unlovable
Courageous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cowardly
Organised	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disorganised
Solution focused	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Problem focused
Quiet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Talkative
Leader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Follower
Dislikes routine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Likes routine
Confident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unconfident
Independent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dependent
Frank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Evasive
Helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unhelpful
Smart	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dull
Accurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Inaccurate
Confronts problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Avoids problems
Likes singing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dislikes singing
Enjoys music	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hates music
Enjoys sports	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hates sports
An exceptional drawer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	an ordinary drawer
Rebellious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Follows rules
Task-committed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Uncommitted
Imaginative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unimaginative
Curious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Uninterested
High achiever	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Underachiever
Outstanding reader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Ordinary reader
Of multiple-interests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Of limited interests

Modify it to be sharp.

It is repeated. Remove it.

Persistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not persistent
Logical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Illogical
Socialises with elders	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Socialises with same age
Precise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Imprecise
Fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unfair
Radical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Conservative
Outgoing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Shy
Hates school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Loves school
Cheerful	<b>Change it to critical reader.</b>				5	6	7	Grumpy
Likes reading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hates reading
Advanced Language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Age-appropriate language
Admired	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Despised
Attentive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Distracted
Has large vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Has limited vocabulary
Exceptional memory	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Forgetful
Careful	<b>This trait should be included.</b>				5	6	7	Carless
Loves writing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hates writing

**Saudi experts' comments**

الأخ الدكتور/.....المحترم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته،  
أفيدكم بانني طالب لمرحلة الدكتوراة –جامعة موناش، أستراليا-  
تتطلب الدراسة التي اقوم بها تصميم مقياس يستقصي وجهات نظر المعلمين وأولياء الأمور حول  
خصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المملكة العربية السعودية. وحيث انك أحد المختصين في المجال أمل  
تزويدي بمقترحاتك حول النقاط التالية:

1. مدى وضوح تعليمات استكمال المقياس
2. وضوح عبارات المقياس
3. الإشارة إلى أي عبارة قد ترى أنها لا تتفق مع المجتمع السعودي

أشكر تعاونك سلفاً، وفي حال أي تساؤلات حول المقياس أمل منك الاتصال على الباحثين وفق بيانات  
الاتصال الموضحة أدناه:

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## مقياس وجهات نظر المعلمين والوالدين

### نحو خصال الطلاب الموهوبين

في

### المملكة العربية السعودية

#### التعليمات

تهدف الدراسة الحالية للتعرف على وجهات نظر المعلمين والوالدين تجاه الطلاب الموهوبين في المملكة العربية السعودية. ينقسم مقياس الدراسة إلى قسمين: أولاً، وجهات نظر المعلمين والوالدين لخصال الطلاب الموهوبين. ثانياً، معلومات شخصية عامة عن المشاركين. سوف يسبق كل قسم بعض التعليمات التي سوف تساعدك على استكمالها. فضلاً ابداً بقراءة التعليمات بتأن قبل الشروع في تدوين إجابتك.

#### القسم الأول

##### وجهات نظر المعلمين والوالدين لخصال الطلاب الموهوبين.

تجدون أدناه عدداً من الصفات المتضادة والتي تصف خصال الطلاب الموهوبين. فضلاً قم بقراءتها ومن ثم ضع دائرة على واحد من الأرقام الواقعة بين كل زوجين من الصفات والذي ترى بأنه يصف رؤيتك فيما يتعلق بخصال الطلاب الموهوبين. سوف تجد هنا بعض الأمثلة التوضيحية والتي تساعدك على استكمال هذا القسم:

تجد في الأمثلة أدناه صفة وعكسها وبينهما مجموعة من الأرقام (من 1 إلى 7). اخترت لكم هنا الصفة (قائد) وعكسها (مقود) لشرح الطريقة التي سوف تقوم بها للإجابة على القسم الأول من هذا الاستبيان:

- إذا كنت ترى الصفة الواقعة على اليمين (قائد) تنطبق على الطالب الموهوب بدرجة قوية جداً، أحط الرقم (1) كمايلي:

قائد (1) 2 3 4 5 6 7 مقود

أو إذا كنت ترى بأن الصفة الواقعة على اليسار (مقود) تنطبق عليه بدرجة قوية جداً اختر الرقم (7)، كمايلي:

قائد 1 2 3 4 5 6 (7) مقود

- إذا كنت ترى الصفة الواقعة على اليمين (قائد) تنطبق على الطالب الموهوب بدرجة قوية (ولكنها ليست قوية جداً) أحط الرقم (2) كمايلي:

قائد 1 (2) 3 4 5 6 7 مقود

أو إذا كنت ترى بأن الصفة الواقعة على اليسار (مقود) تنطبق عليه بدرجة قوية (ولكن ليست قوية جداً) اختر الرقم (6)، كمايلي:

قائد 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 مقود

- إذا كنت ترى الصفة الواقعة على اليمين (قائد) تنطبق على الطالب الموهوب بدرجة قليلة أحط الرقم (3) كمايلي:

قائد 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 مقود

أو إذا كنت ترى بأن الصفة الواقعة على اليسار (مقود) تنطبق عليه بدرجة قليلة أختار الرقم (5)، كمايلي:

قائد 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 مقود

- إذا كنت غير متأكد من أنطباق أي من الصفتين على الطالب الموهوب، ضع دائرة على الرقم 4 الواقع في المنتصف:

قائد 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 مقود

#### تعليمات مهمة:

- ضع الدائرة على الرقم المختار، لا تضعها بين الأرقام.
- تأكد بأنك أحطت رقماً في جميع الصفوف، فضلاً لا تهمل أي صف.
- فضلاً لا تضع دائرة على أكثر من رقم في صف واحد.
- فضلاً أجب عن كل فقرة بشكل مستقل ولا تحاول أن تقارن بين إجاباتك السابقة واللاحقة، نحن نريد انطباعتك الأولي وشعورك اللحظي نحو هذه الصفات.

شكراً سلفاً لطيب تعاونكم.

سعد آل عامر

قوية جداً قوية قليلة لا قليلة قوية جداً  
تنطبق

	قوية جداً	قوية	قليلة	لا تنطبق	قليلة	قوية	قوية جداً	
اجتماعي	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	اجتماعي
مُخلص	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	مُخلص
حساس	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	حساس
مُطيع	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	مُطيع
يُعتمد عليه	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يُعتمد عليه
محبوب	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	محبوب
شُجاع	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	شُجاع
مُنظم	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	مُنظم
يُركز على الحلول	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يُركز على الحلول
هادي	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	هادي
قائد	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	قائد
يكره الرتابة	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يكره الرتابة
واثق	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	واثق
مُستقل	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	مُستقل
صريح	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	صريح
يُبادر بالمساعدة	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يُبادر بالمساعدة
ذكي	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	ذكي
يواجه المشاكل	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يواجه المشاكل
يُحب الغناء	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يُحب الغناء
يستمتع بالموسيقى	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يستمتع بالموسيقى
يستمتع بالرياضة	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يستمتع بالرياضة
رسام بارع	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	رسام بارع
يتبع الأنظمة	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يتبع الأنظمة
لا يلتزم بالمهمة	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	لا يلتزم بالمهمة
خيالي	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	خيالي
محب للإطلاع	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	محب للإطلاع
مُرتفع التحصيل	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	مُرتفع التحصيل
قارئ استثنائي	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	قارئ استثنائي
متعدد المواهب	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	متعدد المواهب
عنيد	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	عنيد
عقلاني	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	عقلاني
ينسجم مع الكبار	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	ينسجم مع الكبار
دقيق	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	دقيق
عادل	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	عادل
مُتفتح	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	مُتفتح

عبارة ثائر قد تُشير إلى  
نواحي سياسية أكثر من  
الإشارة لخصال

ثائر

	قوية جداً	قوية	قليلة	لا تنطبق	قليلة	قوية	قوية جداً	
متشدد	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	جريء
يبكره المدرسة	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يُحب المدرسة
مُنذمر	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	مُنشراح
قاريء غير انتقادي	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	قاريء انتقادي
لُغته ملائمة لعمره	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	مُتقدم لغوياً
مُحتقر	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يجلب الإعجاب
شارد الذهن	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	فطين
محدود اللغة	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	ثري لغوياً
كثير النسيان	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	ذاكرته استثنائية
مُستهتر	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	حذر
يكره الكتابة	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يعشق الكتابة

## القسم الثاني:

## معلومات شخصية عامة

(المعلومات أدناه تستكمل فقط من قبل المعلمين/ المعلمات)

فضلاً صف نفسك بوضع إشارة على العبارات من (1-7):

1. الجنس: ذكر \_\_\_ أنثى \_\_\_
2. العمر: 30-21 \_\_\_ 40-31 \_\_\_ 50-41 \_\_\_ +51 \_\_\_
3. الدرجة العلمية: بكالوريوس \_\_\_ ماجستير \_\_\_ دكتوراه \_\_\_ أخرى فضلاً
- حدد: .....
4. عدد سنوات خدمتك كمعلم 3-1 \_\_\_ 6-4 \_\_\_ 10-8 \_\_\_ +10 \_\_\_
5. مجموع السنوات التي درست فيها طلاب موهوبين 0 \_\_\_ 3-1 \_\_\_ 7-4 \_\_\_ 12-8 \_\_\_
6. التخصص: دراسات إسلامية \_\_\_ لغة عربية \_\_\_ رياضيات \_\_\_ علوم \_\_\_
- تربية فنية \_\_\_ أخرى: فضلاً حدد \_\_\_
7. فضلاً أشر لعدد الطلاب الذين رشحتهم لبرامج الموهوبين خلال الثلاث سنوات الماضية: 0 \_\_\_ 3-1 \_\_\_
- 6-4 \_\_\_ 10-7 \_\_\_ +10 \_\_\_

(المعلومات أدناه تستكمل فقط من قبل الوالدين).

فضلاً صف نفسك بوضع إشارة على العبارات من (1-6):

1. الجنس: ذكر \_\_\_ أنثى \_\_\_
  2. العمر: \_\_\_ 30-21 \_\_\_ 40-31 \_\_\_ 50-41 \_\_\_ +51 \_\_\_
  3. الدرجة العلمية: بكالوريوس \_\_\_ ماجستير \_\_\_ دكتوراه \_\_\_
- أخرى، فضلاً حدد:.....
4. مجموع الأبناء في عائلتي \_\_\_
  5. مجموع الأبناء الذين تم اكتشافهم كموهوبين \_\_\_
  6. هل لديك أبناء موهوبين تم ترشيحهم لبرامج الموهوبين نعم \_\_\_ لا \_\_\_

Appendix B-2: Permission letters

14-AUG-2006 14:08 DRALI 014021154 P-01

الهيئة العامة للتعليم  
الشيخ، ٢٠١٣٧٧/٤  
المنطقة: جازان

شؤون الحرم المكي  
وزارة التعليم  
MADARAH

المملكة العربية السعودية  
وزارة التعليم  
مركز التطوير التربوي  
الدراسات والبحوث التربوية

وفقه الله

سعادة الأستاذ / سعد ال عامر  
جامعة موناش - أستراليا

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد،،،

إشارة إلى خطاب سعادتكم بشأن تطبيق أدوات الدراسة الخاصة  
ببحثكم لمرحلة الدكتوراه.

أفيد سعادتكم أنه لا مانع لدينا مبدئياً من تطبيق أدوات بحثكم وذلك  
وفق الأنظمة المتبعة في هذا الشأن.

وتقبلوا وافر التحية والتقدير !!!

المستشار المساعد

المشرف على الدراسات والبحوث التربوية

د. علي بن صالح الحبيبي

١٤٢٧  
١٤

٢٠٠٦

## Appendix B-3: Invitation letters



13/ يوليو/ 2007

مجموعة المعلمين: دعوة الإنضمام للدراسة  
الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية: رؤية المعلمين والوالدين

الرجاء الاحتفاظ بهذه الورقة

المحترم

المعلم/ المعلمة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

أود في البداية أن أتقدم لك سلفاً بالشكر الجزيل على تعاونك معي في إنجاز مهمتي البحثية. كما يطيب لي أن أعرفك من خلال هذا الخطاب بنفسني وطبيعة البحث الذي أنا بصدد إنجازه. اسمي هو سعد آل عامر وأدرس حالياً مرحلة الدكتوراه في مجال رعاية الموهوبين في جامعة موناخ - أستراليا. يتولى الأشراف على هذه الأطروحة كلاً من البروفيسور "دنيس مور" والدكتور "أوميش شرما".

الهدف الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة هو عمل دراسة استطلاعية للتحقق من موثوقية ومصداقية المقياس والذي سوف يستخدم لاحقاً في دراسة مستقلة تهدف إلى استقصاء وجهات نظر المعلمين والوالدين لخصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المملكة العربية السعودية. تشتمل عينة الدراسة الحالية على مجموعتين من معلمي الطلاب الموهوبين والطلاب العاديين. صورة من موافقة الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم-الرياض - لتطبيق هذه الدراسة وكذلك دعوتكم للمشاركة فيها أرسلت لمدير/ مديرة مدرستك. ولقد تم ترشيحك بواسطة مدير/ مديرة المدرسة التي تعمل فيها.

سوف تجد من بين المرفقات المرسلة لك استبيان يتعلق باستقصاء وجهات نظر المعلمين لخصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المدارس الابتدائية بالمملكة العربية السعودية. سوف أكون ممتناً لك إذا شاركت في هذه الدراسة والتي تصب نتائجها في المقام الأول في الرقي والتقدم في مجال رعاية الموهوبين في هذا الوطن العزيز.

وفي الختام أود أن أذكرك بأن مشاركتك تطوعية ولن يترتب على رفض المشاركة فيها أي تبعات عليك ، غيري اني على ثقة بمدى حرصك واهتمامك على تطوير العملية التربوية في بلادنا والذي سوف يتمثل في قبول هذه الدعوة وتزويدي بوجهة نظرك حول الطلاب الموهوبين.

أشكر تعاونك سلفاً، تقبل خالص التقدير والتحية

تفاصيل اتصالات الباحث

المملكة العربية السعودية  
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إذا ما رغبت الاتصال بالباحثين فيما يتعلق بأي مظهر من مظاهر الدراسة فمن فضلك  
الاتصال بالمشرفين الرئيسيين حسب العناوين أدناه:

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إذا ما كان لديك أي شكوى فيما يتعلق بأخلاقيات التطبيق فضلاً اتصل  
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13/ يوليو/ 2007

مجموعة الوالدين: دعوة الإنضمام للدراسة  
الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية: رؤية المعلمين والوالدين

الرجاء الاحتفاظ بهذه الورقة

المحترم

الأب/ الأم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

أود في البداية أن أتقدم لكم سلفاً بالشكر الجزيل على تعاونكم معي في إنجاز مهمتي البحثية. كما يطيب لي أن أعرفكم من خلال هذا الخطاب بنفسي وطبيعة البحث الذي أنا بصدد إنجازه. اسمي هو سعد آل عامر وأدرس حالياً مرحلة الدكتوراه في مجال رعاية الموهوبين في جامعة موناش - أستراليا. يتولى الاشراف على هذه الأطروحة كُلاً من البروفيسور "دنيس مور" والدكتور "أوميش شرما".

الهدف الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة هو عمل دراسة استطلاعية للتحقق من موثوقية ومصداقية المقياس والذي سوف يستخدم لاحقاً في دراسة مستقلة تهدف إلى إستقصاء وجهات نظر المعلمين والوالدين لخصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المملكة العربية السعودية. تشتمل عينة الدراسة الحالية على مجموعتين من والدي الطلاب الموهوبين والطلاب العاديين. ابنتكم / ابنتكم رشح للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة بواسطة إدارة المدرسة التي يدرس بها.

صورة من موافقة الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم-الرياض - لتطبيق هذه الدراسة وكذلك دعوتكم للمشاركة فيها أرسلت لمدير/ مديرة مدرسة ابنتكم/ ابنتكم. سوف تجدون من بين المرفقات المرسلة لكم استبيان يتعلق باستقصاء وجهات نظر والوالدين لخصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المدارس الابتدائية بالمملكة العربية السعودية. سوف أكون ممتناً لكم إذا شاركتكم في هذه الدراسة والتي تصب نتائجها في المقام الأول في الرقي والتقدم في مجال رعاية الموهوبين في هذا الوطن العزيز.

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أشكر تعاونكم سلفاً، تقبلوا خالص التقدير والتحية

تفاصيل اتصالات الباحث

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**Appendix B-4: The total variance explained before removing items**

Table BA: The Total Variance Explained before removing items that have the lowest communality value (less than .3)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	13.019	28.303	28.303	13.019	28.303	28.303	8.811	19.153	19.153
2	3.359	7.301	35.604	3.359	7.301	35.604	6.423	13.962	33.115
3	2.333	5.072	40.676	2.333	5.072	40.676	2.994	6.509	39.625
4	2.029	4.411	45.087	2.029	4.411	45.087	2.512	5.462	45.087
5	1.658	3.605	48.692						
6	1.536	3.340	52.032						
7	1.414	3.074	55.105						
8	1.329	2.889	57.995						
9	1.297	2.819	60.814						
10	1.194	2.596	63.410						
11	1.087	2.363	65.773						
12	1.048	2.279	68.052						
13	.935	2.032	70.085						
14	.916	1.991	72.075						
15	.896	1.948	74.024						
16	.801	1.741	75.765						
17	.786	1.708	77.473						
18	.756	1.644	79.117						
19	.744	1.617	80.734						
20	.642	1.395	82.129						
21	.602	1.309	83.438						

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
22	.564	1.225	84.664						
23	.538	1.170	85.834						
24	.515	1.120	86.954						
25	.486	1.056	88.010						
26	.455	.989	88.999						
27	.446	.971	89.969						
28	.434	.944	90.913						
29	.408	.888	91.801						
30	.359	.780	92.581						
31	.345	.750	93.331						
32	.341	.740	94.071						
33	.298	.648	94.720						
34	.272	.591	95.310						
35	.269	.584	95.894						
36	.262	.570	96.464						
37	.220	.479	96.943						
38	.219	.476	97.419						
39	.204	.445	97.863						
40	.192	.417	98.280						
41	.166	.360	98.640						
42	.161	.349	98.990						
43	.148	.323	99.312						
44	.125	.271	99.583						
45	.112	.245	99.828						
46	.079	.172	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Appendix B-5: The Total Variance Explained after removing items**

Table BB: The Total Variance Explained after removing items that have the lowest communality value (less than .3)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	12.369	30.924	30.924	12.369	30.924	30.924	6.316	15.790	15.790
2	3.022	7.556	38.480	3.022	7.556	38.480	6.213	15.533	31.323
3	2.206	5.515	43.995	2.206	5.515	43.995	4.482	11.205	42.528
4	1.969	4.922	48.917	1.969	4.922	48.917	2.556	6.389	48.917
5	1.534	3.836	52.753						
6	1.471	3.679	56.432						
7	1.237	3.094	59.526						
8	1.106	2.764	62.290						
9	1.039	2.599	64.889						
10	1.021	2.551	67.440						
11	.965	2.412	69.853						
12	.882	2.206	72.058						
13	.833	2.082	74.140						
14	.793	1.984	76.123						
15	.774	1.936	78.059						
16	.711	1.778	79.837						
17	.640	1.600	81.437						
18	.588	1.471	82.908						
19	.562	1.406	84.314						
20	.519	1.298	85.612						
21	.503	1.259	86.870						
22	.477	1.193	88.063						

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
23	.448	1.119	89.182						
24	.423	1.058	90.240						
25	.398	.995	91.234						
26	.364	.911	92.146						
27	.348	.870	93.016						
28	.338	.844	93.860						
29	.296	.741	94.601						
30	.285	.713	95.314						
31	.272	.681	95.995						
32	.254	.634	96.629						
33	.230	.575	97.204						
34	.227	.568	97.773						
35	.192	.480	98.252						
36	.183	.456	98.709						
37	.169	.423	99.132						
38	.149	.373	99.505						
39	.117	.292	99.797						
40	.081	.203	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Appendix B-6: Final scale****Final revised scale: English version****Instructions**

This study aims to identify the perceptions of teachers and parents toward gifted children's characteristics in Saudi Arabia. This survey consists of three sections: (1) teachers' and parents' perceptions of gifted children's characteristics, (2) an open-ended question to list the five most important traits of gifted children for you, and (3) demographics. In the top of each section some instructions about how you should complete it are given. Please read these instructions carefully before you start the relevant section.

**Section 1, Concept: teachers' and parents' perceptions of gifted children's characteristics.**

In the following pages are a number of antonyms to describe gifted children's characteristics. Please read them carefully and circle the number that, in each word pair, describes your perception regarding gifted children's traits. Here are examples about how you should complete this section:

If you feel that one of two adjectives on a single scale is **VERY STRONGLY REPRESENTATIVE** of gifted children, please circle the number nearest the word that describes your opinion, that is, number 1 OR 7. For example:

Leader (1)    2    3    4    5    6    7    Follower

OR

Leader 1    2    3    4    5    6    (7)    Follower

If you feel that one of two adjectives on a single scale is **STRONGLY REPRESENTATIVE** of gifted children, circle the number as follows:

Leader 1    (2)    3    4    5    6    7    Follower

OR

Leader 1    2    3    4    5    (6)    7    Follower

If you are not sure that both adjectives are **REPRESENTATIVE** of gifted children, circle the number in the middle space, that is, number 4:

Leader 1      2      3      (4)      5      6      7      Follower

**IMPORTANT:**

Circle the number, do not mark between numbers.

Be sure you circle a number for every line. DO NOT OMIT ANY.

Please

- DO NOT CIRCLE MORE THAN ONE NUMBER on a single scale.
- DO NOT LOOK BACK AND FORTH through the items.
- Do not try to remember how you responded on similar items earlier in the test. It is your first impressions, the immediate "feeling" about the items that we want.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

**SCALE OF TEACHERS' AND PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS  
REGARDING GIFTED CHILDREN'S CHARACTERISTICS**

	Very Strongly	Strongly	Slightly	Neutral	Slightly	Strongly	Very Strongly	
Loyal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disloyal
Obedient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disobedient
Frank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Evasive
Logical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Illogical
Precise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Imprecise
Fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unfair
Carful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Carless
Cheerful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Grumpy
Attentive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Distracted
Helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unhelpful
High achiever	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Underachiever
Sharp	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dull
Exceptional memory	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Forgetful
Loves writing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hates writing
Task-committed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Uncommitted
Independent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dependent
Imaginative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unimaginative
Of multiple- interests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Of limited interests
Sociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unsociable
Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unreliable
Lovable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unlovable
Courageous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cowardly
Organised	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disorganised
Confident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unconfident
Leader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Follower
Outgoing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Shy
Admired	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Despised
Solution focused	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Problem focused
Critical reader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not critical reader
Advanced language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Age-appropriate language

Has large vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Has limited vocabulary
Outstanding reader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Ordinary reader
Curious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Uninterested
Quiet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Talkative
Confronts problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Avoid problems
Follows rules	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Does not follow rules
Persistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not persistent
Likes singing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dislikes singing
Enjoys music	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Hates music
An exceptional drawer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	An ordinary drawer

## Section 2: Demographics

### 1- Teachers

In items 1-7, please check the category that most closely describes you.

- 1- Gender: Male\_\_\_ Female\_\_\_
- 2- Age: 21-30\_\_\_ 31-40\_\_\_ 41-50\_\_\_ 51+\_\_\_
- 3- Highest degree completed:  
Bachelor\_\_\_ Masters\_\_\_ Doctorate\_\_\_ Other please specify:\_\_\_\_\_
- 4- The total number of years I have been teaching students identified as gifted is:  
0\_\_\_ 1-3\_\_\_ 4- 7\_\_\_ 8-12\_\_\_ 13-16\_\_\_ 17+\_\_\_
- 5- Number of years I have worked as a teacher:  
1-3\_\_\_ 4-6\_\_\_ 8-10\_\_\_ 10+\_\_\_
- 6- Subject areas:  
Islamic Studies\_\_\_ Arabic Language\_\_\_ Math\_\_\_ Science\_\_\_  
Art\_\_\_  
Other: please specify\_\_\_
- 7- Please indicate the number of students you have recommended for testing for gifted programs during the past three years:  
0\_\_\_ 1-3\_\_\_ 4-6\_\_\_ 7-10\_\_\_ 10+\_\_\_

**2- Parents**

**In items 1-7, please check the category that describes you.**

- 1- Gender:    Male\_\_\_                      Female\_\_\_
- 2- Age:        21-30\_\_\_    31-40\_\_\_    41-50\_\_\_    51+\_\_\_
- 3- Highest degree completed:            Bachelors\_\_\_                      Masters\_\_\_  
    Doctorate\_\_\_            Other, please specify \_\_\_
- 4- The total number of children in my family is: \_\_\_
- 5- The total number of children who are identified as gifted in my family is: \_
- 6- Do you have children(n) who are nominated for gifted programs    yes\_\_\_  
    No\_\_\_

## المقياس في صورته النماذجية: النسخة العربية

### التعليمات

تهدف الدراسة الحالية للتعرف على وجهات نظر المعلمين والوالدين تجاه الطلاب الموهوبين في المملكة العربية السعودية. يتقسم مقياس الدراسة إلى قسمين: أولاً، وجهات نظر المعلمين والوالدين لخصال الطلاب الموهوبين. ثانياً، معلومات شخصية عامة عن المشاركين. سوف يسبق كل قسم بعض التعليمات التي سوف تساعدك على استكماله. فضلاً أبدأ بقراءة التعليمات بتأن قبل الشروع في تدوين اجابتك.

### القسم الأول

#### وجهات نظر المعلمين والوالدين لخصال الطلاب الموهوبين

تجدون أدناه عدداً من الصفات المتضادة والتي تصف خصال الطلاب الموهوبين. فضلاً قم بقراءتها ومن ثم ضع دائرة على واحد من الأرقام الواقعة بين كل زوجين من الصفات والذي ترى بأنه يصف رؤيتك فيما يتعلق بخصال الطلاب الموهوبين. سوف تجد هنا بعض الأمثلة التوضيحية والتي سوف تساعدك على استكمال هذا القسم: تجد في الأمثلة أدناه صفة وعكسها وبينهما مجموعة من الأرقام (من 1 إلى 7). اخترت لكم هنا الصفة (قائد) وعكسها (مقود) لشرح الطريقة التي سوف تقوم بها للإجابة على القسم الأول من هذه الاستبيان:

- إذا كنت ترى الصفة الواقعة على اليمين (قائد) تنطبق على الطالب الموهوب بدرجة قوية جداً، أحط الرقم (1) كمايلي:

قائد (1) 2 3 4 5 6 7 مقود

أو إذا كنت ترى بأن الصفة الواقعة على اليسار (مقود) تنطبق عليه بدرجة قوية جداً اختر الرقم (7)، كمايلي:

قائد 1 2 3 4 5 6 (7) مقود

- إذا كنت ترى الصفة الواقعة على اليمين (قائد) تنطبق على الطالب الموهوب بدرجة قوية (ولكنها ليست قوية جداً) أحط الرقم (2) كمايلي:

قائد 1 (2) 3 4 5 6 7 مقود

أو إذا كنت ترى بأن الصفة الواقعة على اليسار (مقود) تنطبق عليه بدرجة قوية (ولكن ليست قوية جداً) اختر الرقم (6)، كمايلي:

قائد 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 مقود

- إذا كنت ترى الصفة الواقعة على اليمين (قائد) تنطبق على الطالب الموهوب بدرجة قليلة أحط الرقم (3) كمايلي:

قائد 1 2 (3) 4 5 6 7 مَقُود

- أو إذا كنت ترى بأن الصفة الواقعة على اليسار (مَقُود) تنطبق عليه بدرجة قليلة اختر الرقم (5)، كمايلي:

قائد 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 مَقُود

- إذا كنت غير متأكد من انطباق أي من الصفتين على الطالب الموهوب، ضع دائرة على الرقم 4 الواقع في المنتصف:

قائد 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 مَقُود

#### تعليمات مهمة:

- ضع الدائرة على الرقم المختار، لا تضعها بين الأرقام.
- تأكد بأنك أحطت رقماً في جميع الصفوف، فضلاً لا تهمل أي صف.
- فضلاً لا تضع دائرة على أكثر من رقم في صف واحد.
- فضلاً أجب عن كل فقرة بشكل مستقل ولا تحاول أن تقارن بين إجاباتك السابقة واللاحقة، نحن نريد انطباعك الأولي وشعورك اللحظي نحو هذه الصفات.

شكراً سلفاً لطيب تعاونكم.

سعد آل عامر

مقياس وجهات النظر  
تجاه  
خصال الطلاب الموهوبين

	قوية جداً	قوية	قليلة	لا تنطبق	قليلة	قوية	قوية جداً	
مخلص	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	مخلص
مطيع	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	مطيع
صريح	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	صريح
عقلاني	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	عقلاني
دقيق	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	دقيق
عادل	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	عادل
حذر	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	حذر
مُنشِرح	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	مُنشِرح
فطين	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	فطين
يبادر بالمساعدة	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يبادر بالمساعدة
مرتفع التحصيل	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	مرتفع التحصيل
ذكي	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	ذكي
ذاكرته استثنائية	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	ذاكرته استثنائية
يعشق الكتابة	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يعشق الكتابة
يلتزم بالمهمة	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يلتزم بالمهمة
مستقل	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	مستقل
خيالي	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	خيالي
متعدد الاهتمامات	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	متعدد الاهتمامات
اجتماعي	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	اجتماعي
يُعتمد عليه	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يُعتمد عليه
محبوب	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	محبوب
شجاع	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	شجاع
منظم	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	منظم
واثق	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	واثق
قائد	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	قائد
جرىء	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	جرىء
يجلب الاعجاب	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يجلب الاعجاب
يركز على الحلول	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	يركز على الحلول
قارىء انتقادي	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	قارىء انتقادي

	قوية جداً	قوية	قليلة	لا تنطبق	قليلة	قوية	قوية جداً	
متقدم لغوياً	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
ثري لغوياً	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
قارئ استثنائي	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
محب للإطلاع	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
هاىء	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
يواجه المشاكل	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
يتبع الانظمة	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
مرن	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
يحب الغناء	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
يستمتع بالموسيقى	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
رسام بارع	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	

### القسم الثاني:

#### معلومات شخصية عامة

(المعلومات أدناه تستكمل فقط من قبل المعلمين/ المعلمات)

فضلاً صف نفسك بوضع إشارة على العبارات من (1-7):

- 1- الجنس: ذكر \_\_\_ أنثى \_\_\_
- 2- العمر: 30-21 \_\_\_ 40-31 \_\_\_ 50-41 \_\_\_ +51 \_\_\_
- 3- الدرجة العلمية: بكالوريوس \_\_\_ ماجستير \_\_\_ دكتوراه \_\_\_ أخرى \_\_\_  
فضلاً حدد: .....
- 4- عدد سنوات خدمتك كمعلم 3-1 \_\_\_ 6-4 \_\_\_ 10-8 \_\_\_ +10 \_\_\_
- 5- مجموع السنوات التي درست فيها طلاب موهوبين 12 \_\_\_ 16-13 \_\_\_ +17 \_\_\_  
0 \_\_\_ 3-1 \_\_\_ 7-4 \_\_\_ -8
- 6- التخصص: دراسات إسلامية \_\_\_ لغة عربية \_\_\_ رياضيات \_\_\_ علوم \_\_\_  
تربية فنية \_\_\_ أخرى: فضلاً حدد \_\_\_
- 7- فضلاً أشر لعدد الطلاب الذين رشحتهم لبرامج الموهوبين خلال الثلاث سنوات الماضية: 0 \_\_\_ 3-1 \_\_\_  
6-4 \_\_\_ 10-7 \_\_\_ +10 \_\_\_

(المعلومات أدناه تستكمل فقط من قبل الوالدين).

فضلاً صف نفسك بوضع إشارة على العبارات من (1-6):

1. الجنس: ذكر \_\_\_ أنثى \_\_\_
2. العمر: 30-21 \_\_\_ 40-31 \_\_\_ 50-41 \_\_\_ +51 \_\_\_
3. الدرجة العلمية: بكالوريوس \_\_\_ ماجستير \_\_\_ دكتوراه \_\_\_
- أخرى، فضلاً حدد: .....
4. مجموع الأبناء في عائلتي \_\_\_
5. مجموع الأبناء الذين تم اكتشافهم كموهوبين \_\_\_
6. هل لديك أبناء موهوبين تم ترشيحهم لبرامج الموهوبين نعم \_\_\_ لا \_\_\_

**APPENDICES C**

**DOCUMENTS OF STUDY THREE**

**Appendix C-1: Permission letters****Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH)**

Research Office

Dr Umesh Sharma  
Faculty of Education  
Clayton Campus

18 July 2007

**CF07/1537 - 2007/0457: Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions**

Dear Researchers,

Thank you for the information provided in relation to the above project. The items requiring attention have been resolved to the satisfaction of the Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH). Accordingly, this research project is approved to proceed.

*Terms of approval*

1. This project is approved for five years from the date of this letter and this approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
2. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all information that is pending (such as permission letters from organisations) is forwarded to SCERH, if not done already. Research cannot begin at any organisation until SCERH receives a letter of permission from that organisation. You will then receive a letter from SCERH confirming that we have received a letter from each organisation.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by SCERH.
4. You should notify SCERH immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project:** Changes to any aspect of the project require the submission of a Request for Amendment form to SCERH and must not begin without written approval from SCERH. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. Please provide the Committee with an Annual Report determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. SCERH should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by SCERH at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

All forms can be accessed at our website [www.monash.edu.au/research/ethics/human/index.html](http://www.monash.edu.au/research/ethics/human/index.html)

We wish you well with your research.

Dr Souheir Houssami  
Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics (on behalf of SCERH)

Cc: Prof Dennis Moore, Mr Saad Alamer

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

  
 المملكة العربية السعودية  
 وزارة التربية والتعليم  
 إدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بمنطقة الرياض (بنين)  
 وحدة التخطيط والتطوير

الرقم: ..... ٥٨٦٦٢  
 التاريخ: ..... ١٤٢٨/٥/١٥  
 المرفقات: .....

إلى : مدير مدرسة  
 من : مدير عام التربية والتعليم بمنطقة الرياض " بنين "  
 بشأن: تسهيل مهمة باحث

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد :

بناء على تعميم معالي الوزير رقم ٥٥/٦١٠ وتاريخ ١٧/٩/١٤١٦هـ وخطاب وكيل الوزارة للتطوير التربوي رقم ١٥٩٤٩٢ وتاريخ ٢٢/٤/١٤٢٨هـ بشأن تفويض الإدارات العامة للتربية والتعليم بإصدار خطابات السماح للباحثين بإجراء البحوث والدراسات .

تقدم إلينا الباحث / سعد بن معيش آل عامر ، بطلب إجراء دراسة بعنوان :  
 (( الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية رؤية المعلمين والوالدين )) . استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الدكتوراه من جامعة موناش باستراليا ، وتتطلب الدراسة تطبيق أداة البحث على عينة من المعلمين والطلاب وأولياء أمورهم . ونظراً لإكمال الأوراق المطلوبة نأمل تسهيل مهمة الباحث ، مع ملاحظة أن الباحث يتحمل كامل المسؤولية المتعلقة بمختلف جوانب البحث ولا يعني سماح الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم موافقتها بالضرورة على مشكلة البحث أو على الطرق والأساليب المستخدمة في دراستها ومعالجتها .

والله يحفظكم ويرعاكم ،،،

تعاد الاستمارة إلى مركز الموهوبين،،،

د. عبدالعزيز بن محمد الديان

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الرقم : ٢٩/٢٨٥

التاريخ : ١٤/٩/٢٠١٨ هـ

المشروعات :



وزارة التربية والتعليم  
Ministry of Education

إمارة أبوظبي  
وزارة التربية والتعليم  
شؤون تعليم البنات  
إدارة التربية والتعليم بنات منطقة الرياض  
إدارة المؤهلات

حفظوا الله

إلى

من / المباحث للشئون التعليمية

بشأن: تسهيل مهمة الباحث / سحر آل عاصم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد..

إشارة إلى خطاب المرحوم محمد المدائن بالهاتف رقم ٥٨٨٣٤٥٠ بتاريخ ١٤/٩/٢٠١٨

بشأن تطبيق دراسة الباحث / سحر آل عاصم

بموضوع (تطبيقات نظرية المعنى بالعالمين نحو فضائل الصحابة المرهونين)

للحصول على درجة / الدكتوراه

عليه نأمل تسهيل مهمة الباحث بتعبئة الاستمارة المرفقة من

قبل معونات المعلم المعتمد المعوقات المرصدة / وأيضاً عدم إهمال المهام المنوطة بأولياء أمور

وإعادتها لإدارة معونات المرصدة في موعد أقصاه ١٤/٩/٢٠١٨ هـ.

كما نؤكد على ضرورة كتابة اسم الباحث على الظروف الخارجي تسهيلاً

لعملية فرز الاستمارات.

شاكرين لكم تعاونكم..

والله الموفق..

د. البندري بنت عبد الله آل سعود

من: وكالة التطوير التربوي (الإدارة العامة للتربية) - الرياض

من: التوجيه

من: المساعدة للشؤون التعليمية (بني السيد)

09/سبتمبر/2007

موافقة مدراء المدارس

المحترم/المحترمة

الأستاذ/ الأستاذة مدير/مديرة المدرسة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته،

أرسل لكم مجموعة من الاستبيانات والتي تهدف إلى استقصاء وجهات نظر معلمي ووالدي الطلاب الموهوبين حول خصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المرحلة الابتدائية. أود أن أحيطكم علماً من خلال هذا الخطاب بأن مشاركة مدرستكم ومنسوبيها هي مشاركة تطوعية ويحق لكم ولأي من منسوبي مدرستكم قبول أو رفض هذه المشاركة. كما أود أن أوضح بان المعلومات التي سوف يتم جمعها من المشاركين سوف لن تستخدم في غير الأغراض البحثية التي صممت من أجلها. وأود أن أشير بأن جميع البيانات الشخصية والمعلومات التي سوف يدي بها المشاركون سوف تكون موضع الاهتمام وسوف يقع عليّ وحدي تحمل مسؤولية حفظها وسوف لن يشار لأسم أي من المشاركين في نتائج الدراسة أو عند نشر البحث في المجالات العلمية المتخصصة.

أمل منكم في حال موافقتكم على مشاركة مدرستكم ومنسوبيها في هذه الدراسة التوقيع على هذا النموذج وإعادته مع الاستبيانات المستكملة وفق العناوين الموضحة لكم.

التاريخ / /  
الإيميل (العمل):

التوقيع  
الـتلفون (العمل):

أسم المشارك (اختياري)  
تفاصيل الاتصال:

تفاصيل اتصالات الباحث

المملكة العربية السعودية  
مؤسسة الملك عبدالعزيز ورجاله لرعاية الموهوبين  
سعد آل عامر  
ص . ب 35515 الرياض 11488  
تلفون +96614629462  
فاكس +96614623959  
smala1@student.monash.edu

أستراليا  
كلية التربية  
مبنى 6 - غرفة رقم 33  
تلفون +61399052819 تحويلة 55031  
جامعة موناش - كلايتون فيكتوريا 3800  
smala1@student.monash.edu

إذا ما رغبت الاتصال بالباحثين فيما يتعلق باي مظهر من مظاهر الدراسة  
فمن فضلك الاتصال بالمشرفين الرئيسيين حسب العناوين أدناه:

- 1- Prof. Dennis Moore  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone: 99050706, e-mail  
Dennis.Moore@education.monash.edu.au).
- 2- Dr. Umesh Sharma  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone 99054388, e-mail  
Umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au).

إذا ما كان لديك أي شكوى فيما يتعلق بأخلاقيات التطبيق فضلاً اتصل  
على:

Human Ethics Officer  
Standing Committee on Ethics in Research  
Involving Humans (SCERH)  
Building 3e Room 111  
Research Office  
Monash University VIC 3800  
Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905 1420  
Email: [scerh@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:scerh@adm.monash.edu.au)

**Appendix C-2: Invitation letters**

13<sup>th</sup> of Sep. 2007

**Teacher groups****Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions**

**This information sheet is for you to keep.**

My name is Saad Al-Amer and I am conducting a research project with Dennis Moore a professor in the Department of Education, and Umesh Sharma a lecturer in the Department of Education at Monash University towards a PhD degree. This means that I will be writing a thesis.

I am currently conducting a study in the area of giftedness in Saudi Arabia, specifically, on the perceptions that are held by teachers and parents about gifted children. According to the database of the General Department for Gifted Children in Riyadh, there are 121 schools in five geographical zones (north-south-east-west and center) under study: 69 boys' and 52 girls' schools. The teachers of children enrolled in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades represented the population of the current study. A copy of the permission letter from the Saudi Ministry of Education to conduct the study plus the explanatory (this letter), a questionnaire and separate envelope have been mailed to the principal of your school. The principal will have given you these documents with an invitation to participate in this study. I would be very grateful if you could participate in my study to help me identify the perceptions of teachers and parents toward gifted children in elementary schools.

The purpose of the study is to investigate teachers' and parents' perceptions of giftedness. It is hoped that the findings of the current study will assist policy-makers and other people responsible for gifted children's education to understand the actual perceptions of teachers and design appropriate programs that are more effective in dealing with gifted children. It will also form the basis for conference papers and possibly professional academic publications. These publications may also appear in my (Al-Amer) thesis for my PhD, which is called: *Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions*. On your request I would be very happy to provide you with the results of the study after they are collated. I can be contacted by email as indicated below.

In order to understand your perception about giftedness I request you to complete the attached survey and return them to the school principal in an enclosed envelope. In addition, I invite you to take part in a small group interview. Please, if you are willing to be interviewed, provide me with your contact details. The male meeting will be conducted by the researcher at the central meeting room in the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Gifted Students. The female participants will be interviewed by a female

colleague at female meeting room in the female division (see location details below). The discussion will take about 90 minutes. These will be tape-recorded and transcribed. No information that you say or write will be identifiable by readers and you may like to select an alternative name for any use in publications. I will keep the consent forms, transcripts, and data coding materials and audiotapes in a locked filing cabinet and password protected computer files for five years. After that, all records will be destroyed.

If you are willing to participate in my research, please fill out the questionnaire and use the envelope provided to return it to your principal. If you are willing to be part of interview discussion, put your consent form with your details in closed envelope to forward it to your principal.

Please remember that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time. All you need to do is to not attend the meeting, or to let me know that you wish your information to be excluded.

Saad Al-Amer

### **Interview location:**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Gifted Students.

Al O' laya Street

Tel. 462 9462

Male: central meeting room.

Female: female meeting room in female division.

### **Researcher's contact details**

#### **Saudi Arabia**

**\* Please use the following post address details to send your consent to be part of interviews:**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Gifted Students.

Saad ALAMER

P.O. Box 35515 Riyadh 11488

Phone: +96614629462

Fax +96614623935

smala1@student.monash.edu

#### **Australia**

Faculty of Education

Building 6, Room No G33

Phone +61399052819 Ext 55031

Monash University, Clayton VIC 3800

smala1@student.monash.edu

**If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:**

1- Prof. Dennis Moore

Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone: 99050706, e-mail  
Dennis.Moore@education.monash.edu.au).

2- Dr. Umesh Sharma

Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone 99054388, e-mail  
Umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au).

**If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research is being conducted, please contact:**

Human Ethics Officer

Standing Committee on Ethics in  
Research Involving Humans (SCERH)

Building 3e Room 111

Research Office

Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905  
1420 Email:

[scerh@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:scerh@adm.monash.edu.au)



13/سبتمبر/2007

مجموعة المعلمين

## الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية: رؤية المعلمين والوالدين

الرجاء الاحتفاظ بهذه الورقة

المحترم/المختمة

المعلم/المعلمة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

أود في البداية أن أتقدم لكم سلفاً بالشكر الجزيل على تعاونكم معي في إنجاز مهمتي البحثية. كما يطيب لي أن أعرفكم من خلال هذا الخطاب بنفسي وطبيعة البحث الذي أنا بصدد إنجازه. اسمي هو سعد آل عامر وأدرس حالياً مرحلة الدكتوراه في مجال رعاية الموهوبين في جامعة موناش- أستراليا. يتولى الإشراف على هذه الأطروحة كلاً من البروفيسور "دنيس مور" والدكتور "أوميش شرما".

أقوم حالياً بعمل دراسة حول الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية، تحديداً وجهات نظر كل من معلمي ووالدي طلاب المرحلة الابتدائية (الموهوبين والعاديين) حول خصال الطلاب الموهوبين. وفقاً لقاعدة بيانات الإدارة العامة لرعاية الموهوبين بمدينة الرياض، هناك 121 مدرسة (69 بنين و 52 بنات) موزعة على خمس قطاعات تعليمية (الشمال-الجنوب-الشرق-الغرب والوسط) تمثل مجتمع البحث في الدراسة الحالية. صورة من موافقة وزارة التربية والتعليم لتطبيق هذه الدراسة، دعوتكم للمشاركة فيها وكذلك استبيان يتعلق باستقصاء وجهات نظر المعلمين لخصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المدارس الابتدائية بالمملكة العربية السعودية أرسلت لمدير/ مديرة مدرستكم/ مدارسكن بغرض تسليمه لكم/لكن. سوف أكون ممتناً لكم إذا شاركتكم في هذه الدراسة والتي تصب نتائجها في المقام الأول في الرقي والتقدم في مجال رعاية الموهوبين في هذا الوطن العزيز.

إنه لمؤمل بان نتائج هذه الدراسة سوف تسهم في مساعدة صناع السياسة التعليمية وكل من تعنيه تربية الطلاب الموهوبين في السعودية في فهم واقع وجهات نظر المعلمين الحالي نحو الموهبة وتصميم البرامج الملائمة التي من شأنها أن تحسن من تعاملهم مع الطلاب الموهوبين. هذه النتائج أيضاً قد تستخدم في ورقة نقاش في أحد المؤتمرات المتخصصة أو لأغراض النشر في إحدى المجالات العلمية. هذه النشرات قد تُضمن كجزء من نتائج رسالة الدكتوراه التي أنا بصدد إنجازها: الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية: رؤية المعلمين والوالدين. سوف أكون في غاية السرور لتزويدكم بنتائج هذه الدراسة متى ما طلبتم ذلك. بإمكانكم مراسلتي من خلال البريد الإلكتروني الموضح في آخر هذا الخطاب. انه لمؤمل منكم تعبئة الاستبيان المرفق

وإعادته لمدير مدرستكم. كما أود أن أشير بأن هناك مقابلات سوف تتم لبعض المعلمين والمعلمات تدور محاور نقاشها حول خصال الطلاب والموهوبين ورؤية المعلمين للموهبة والموهوبين. سوف أقوم بتولي إدارة المقابلات الخاصة بالمعلمين في حين تتولى زميلة متخصصة في مجال رعاية الموهوبين إدارة لقاءات المعلمات. أرجو في حال موافقتكم على الانضمام لهذه المقابلات تعبئة النموذج الخاص بالموافقة (مرفق) وتزويدي بوسائل اتصالاتكم وسوف أقوم وزميلي بالاتصال بكم وترتيب المكان والوقت الملائم لكم لإدارة هذا اللقاء.

وفي الختام أود أن أذكركم بأن مشاركتكم تطوعية ولن يترتب على رفض المشاركة فيها أي تبعات عليكم، غيري أنني أعول عليكم بعد الله في قبول هذه الدعوة وتزويدي بوجهات نظركم حول الطلاب الموهوبين والتي لا قيمة البتة لبحثي الحالي ما لم تشاركوني فيه.

أشكر تعاونكم سلفاً، تقبلوا خالص التقدير والتحية

الباحث/ سعد آل عامر

العليا- شارع العليا

تلفون: 4629462

#### تفاصيل اتصالات الباحث

المملكة العربية السعودية  
مؤسسة الملك عبدالعزيز ورجاله لرعاية الموهوبين  
سعد آل عامر  
ص . ب 35515 الرياض 11488  
تلفون +96614629462  
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أستراليا  
كلية التربية  
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تلفون +61399052819 + تحويلة 55031  
جامعة موناخ - كلايتون فيكتوريا 3800  
smala1@student.monash.edu

إذا ما كان لديك أي شكوى فيما يتعلق بأخلاقيات التطبيق فضلاً إذا ما رغبت الاتصال بالباحثين فيما يتعلق بأي مظهر من مظاهر الدراسة فمن فضلك اتصل على:  
الاتصال بالمشرفيين الرئيسيين حسب العناوين أدناه:

1- Prof. Dennis Moore  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone: 99050706, e-mail  
Dennis.Moore@education.monash.edu.au).

2- Dr. Umesh Sharma  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone 99054388, e-mail  
Umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au).

Human Ethics Officer  
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13<sup>th</sup> of Sep. 2007

Parents of gifted children

### **Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions**

**This information sheet is for you to keep.**

My name is Saad Al-Amer and I am conducting a research project with Dennis Moore a professor in the Department of Education, and Umesh Sharma a lecturer in the Department of Education at Monash University towards a PhD degree. This means that I will be writing a thesis.

I am currently conducting a study in the area of giftedness in Saudi Arabia, specifically, on the perceptions that are held by teachers and parents about gifted children. According to the database of the General Department for Gifted Children in Riyadh, there are 121 schools in five geographical zones (north-south-east-west and centre) under study: 69 boys' and 52 girls' schools. The parents who have gifted child/children enrolled in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades represented the population of the current study. A list of all selected schools' name was made. A table of random numbers was used in order to select the target number to participate in this study. A total of 45 schools (24 boys and 21 girls) was selected to represent the final sample of parents of gifted children group. It was decided that 225 parents of gifted children would be the target number to participate in this study. The principal of each selected school was asked to send a copy of the permission letter from the Saudi Ministry of Education to conduct the study plus, the explanatory (this letter), a questionnaire and paid envelope to the parents of any two children identified as gifted enrolled in each of the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades in his/ her school.

The purpose of the study is to investigate teachers' and parents' perceptions of giftedness. It is hoped that the findings of the current study will assist policy-makers and other people responsible for gifted children's education to understand the actual perceptions of parents and design appropriate programs that are more effective in dealing with gifted children. It will also form the basis for conference papers and possibly professional academic publications. These publications may also appear in my (Al-Amer) thesis for my PhD, which is called: *Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions*. On your request I would be very happy to provide you with the results of the study after they are collated. I can be contacted by email as indicated below.

In order to understand your perception about giftedness I request you to complete the attached survey and return them to the school principal in an enclosed envelope. In addition, I invite you to take part in a small group interview. Please, if you are willing to be interviewed, provide me with your contact details. The meeting will be conducted by the researcher at the central meeting room in the King Abdulaziz

Foundation for Gifted Students. The female participants will be interviewed by a female colleague at female meeting room in the female division (see location details below). The discussion will take about 90 minutes. These will be tape-recorded and transcribed. No information that you say or write will be identifiable by readers and you may like to select an alternative name for any use in publications. I will keep the consent forms, transcripts, and data coding materials and audiotapes in a locked filing cabinet and password protected computer files for five years. After that, all records will be destroyed. If you are willing to participate in my research, please fill out the questionnaire and use the envelope provided to return it to your children school's principal. If you are willing to be part of interview discussion, put your consent form with your details in closed envelope to forward it to your children school's principal. Please remember that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time. All you need to do is to not attend the meeting, or to let me know that you wish your information to be excluded.

Please note that your participation is voluntary that you can choose not to participate in part or all of the project without being penalised into you or your child(ren). I would be very grateful if you could participate in my study to help me identify the perceptions of teachers and parents toward gifted children in elementary schools.

Saad Al-Amer

**Interview location:**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Gifted Students.  
Al O' laya Street  
Tel. 462 9462  
Male: central meeting room.  
Female: female meeting room in female division.

**Researcher's contact details**

**Saudi Arabia**

**\* Please use the following post address details to send your consent to be part of interviews:**

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**If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:**

1- Prof. Dennis Moore  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone: 99050706, e-mail

**If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research is being conducted, please contact:**

Human Ethics Officer  
Standing Committee on Ethics in  
Research Involving Humans (SCERH)

Dennis.Moore@education.monash.edu.au).

2- Dr. Umesh Sharma  
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13/سبتمبر/2007

والدي الطلاب الموهوبين

## الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية: رؤية المعلمين والوالدين

(هذه المعلومات الواردة في هذه الرسالة لك. فضلاً أحتفظ بها)

اسمي هو سعد آل عامر وأقوم حالياً بتطبيق مشروع بحثي لمرحلة الدكتوراه تحت إشراف كُلاً من البروفيسور دنس مور " قسم التربية " و أوميش شرما المحاضر في قسم التربية -جامعة موناش-. محصلة هذا الجهد سوف يتمخض عنه أطروحة علمية في مجال الموهبة.

أقوم حالياً بعمل دراسة حول الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية. تهدف الدراسة إلى استقصاء وجهات نظر المعلمين والوالدين حول خصال الطالب الموهوب في المرحلة الابتدائية في المملكة العربية السعودية.

وفقاً لقاعدة بيانات الإدارة العامة لرعاية الموهوبين بمدينة الرياض، هناك 121 مدرسة (69 بنين و 52 بنات) موزعة على خمس قطاعات تعليمية (الشمال-الجنوب-الشرق-الغرب والوسط) تُمثل مجتمع البحث في الدراسة الحالية. أولياء الأمور الذين لديهم ابن/ابناء موهوبين يدرسون في الصفوف الرابع، الخامس والسادس سوف يمثلون عينة الدراسة. لتحقيق ذلك أُعدت قائمة عشوائية بأسماء هذه المدارس والتي نتج عنها 45 مدرسة (24 بنين و 21 بنات). تم استهداف 225 ولي أمر بغرض المشاركة في العينة النهائية للدراسة.

صورة من موافقة وزارة التربية والتعليم لتطبيق هذا الدراسة، دعوتكم للمشاركة في هذه البحث واستبيان الدراسة مرفق معها مطروف مسبق الدفع أرسلت مباشرة لمدير مدرسة ابنك/ ابناكم. سوف يقوم المدير مشكوراً بتسليم هذه الأوراق لابنك/ ابنتك والذي بدوره مشكوراً سوف يقوم بتسليمها لكم. وأود الإشارة هنا بأن مشاركتك تطوعية ولن يترتب على رفضك المشاركة فيها أي تبعات على ابنك/ ابنتك. سوف أكون ممتناً لكم إذا شاركنم في دراستي لمساعدتي في التعرف على وجهات نظر الوالدين نحو الطالب الموهوب في المدارس الابتدائية.

إنه لمؤمل بأن نتائج هذه الدراسة سوف تسهم في مساعدة صناع السياسة التعليمية وكل من تعنيه تربية الطالب الموهوب في السعودية لفهم واقع وجهات نظر الوالدين الحالي نحو الموهبة وتصميم البرامج الملائمة التي تحسن من تعاملهم مع الطالب الموهوب. هذه النتائج أيضاً قد تستخدم في ورقة نقاش في أحد المؤتمرات المتخصصة أو لأغراض النشر في إحدى المجلات العلمية. هذه النشرات قد تُضمن كجزء من نتائج رسالة الدكتوراه التي أنا بصددتها الان: *الموهبة في المملكة العربية*

**السعودية: رؤية المعلمين والوالدين.** سوف أكون في غاية السرور لتزويدكم بنتائج هذه الدراسة متى ما طلبتم ذلك. بإمكانكم مراسلتي من خلال الإيميل الموضح في آخر هذا المكتوب.

إنه لمؤمل منكم تعبئة الاستبيان المرفق وإعادته لمدير/مديرة المدرسة في ظرف مغلق. كما أود أن أشير بأن هناك جزء من الدراسة يتطلب مقابلة بعض الوالدين وطرح بعض الأسئلة المتعلقة بالطالب الموهوب. إنني سوف أكون ممتنا لك إذا ما قبلت المشاركة في النقاش مع أولياء أمور آخرين وتزويدي بما لديك من خبرات حول الطالب الموهوب.

اللقاء الخاص بالأباء سوف يدار بواسطة الباحث في غرفة الاجتماعات الرئيسية بمؤسسة الملك عبدالعزيز ورجاله لرعاية الموهوبين. الأهميات المشاركات سوف يتم لقائهن بواسطة زميلة في غرفة لقاء السيدات في قسم السيدات بالمؤسسة (انظر تفاصيل الموقع أدناه). النقاش سوف يستغرق قرابة 90 دقيقة وسوف يتم تسجيله وكتابته. كل ما يقال أثناء الاجتماع أو يكتب سوف لن يتم الإشارة لصاحبه مباشرة كما أنه باستطاعتكم اختيار أسماء بديلة لكم أو عدم الإشارة لها كلياً. سوف يتم الاحتفاظ بجميع الأوراق المتعلقة باللقاء والتي تشمل (موافقتكم على الانضمام للنقاش، محتوى النقاش المسجل والمكتوب) في خزانة مخصصة لهذا الغرض وعلى كمبيوتر محمي بكلمة سر لمدة 5 سنوات. بعد هذه المدة سوف يتم إتلافها.

وفي الختام أود أن أستعري انتباهك بأن مشاركتك تطوعية سواء كانت جزئية كما ستكمال الاستبيان ورفض المقابلة أو العكس، أو الرفض الكلي بالمشاركة. إنني أعول على قبولكم المشاركة وتزويدي بوجهات نظرکم والتي لا قيمة البتة لبحثي الحالي ما لم تشاركوني فيه. أشكر تعاونكم سلفاً تقبلوا خالص التقدير والتحية.

سعد آل عامر

موقع اللقاء: مؤسسة الملك عبدالعزيز ورجاله لرعاية الموهوبين

العليا- شارع العليا

تلفون: 4629462

غرفة اللقاءات الرئيسية- غرفة لقاء السيدات

تفاصيل اتصالات الباحث

المملكة العربية السعودية

مؤسسة الملك عبدالعزيز ورجاله لرعاية الموهوبين

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كلية التربية

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جامعة موناش- كلايتون فيكتوريا 3800

smala1@student.monash.edu

إذا ما رغبت الاتصال بالباحثين فيما يتعلق بأي مظهر من مظاهر الدراسة فمن فضلك الاتصال بالمشرفين الرئيسيين حسب العناوين أدناه:

إذا ما كان لديك أي شكوى فيما يتعلق بأخلاقيات التطبيق فضلاً  
أتصل على:

1- Prof. Dennis Moore  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone: 99050706, e-mail  
Dennis.Moore@education.monash.edu.au).

2- Dr. Umesh Sharma  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone 99054388, e-mail  
Umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au).

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13<sup>th</sup> of Sep. 2007

### **Parents' of non- gifted children**

#### **Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions**

**This information sheet is for you to keep.**

My name is Saad Al-Amer and I am conducting a research project with Dennis Moore a professor in the Department of Education, and Umesh Sharma a lecturer in the Department of Education at Monash University towards a PhD degree. This means that I will be writing a thesis.

I am currently conducting a study in the area of giftedness in Saudi Arabia, specifically, on the perceptions that are held by teachers and parents about gifted children. The purpose of the study is to investigate teachers' and parents' perceptions of giftedness in Saudi Arabia. It was found that 121 schools in five geographical zones (north-south-east-west and centre) under study: 69 boys' and 52 girls' schools. The parents who have child/children enrolled in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades represented the population of the current study. A list of all selected schools' name was made. A table of random numbers was used in order to select the target number to participate in this study. A total of 45 schools (24 boys and 21 girls) was selected to represent the final sample of parents of children group. It was decided that 225 parents of children would be the target number to participate in this study. The principal of each selected school was asked to send a copy of the permission letter from the Saudi Ministry of Education to conduct the study plus, the explanatory (this letter), a questionnaire and paid envelope to the parents of any two children enrolled in each of the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades in his/ her school.

It is hoped that the findings of the current study will assist policy-makers and other people responsible for gifted children's education to understand the actual perceptions of parents and design appropriate programs that are more effective in dealing with gifted children. It will also form the basis for conference papers and possibly professional academic publications. These publications may also appear in my (Al-Amer) thesis for my PhD, which is called: *Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions*. On your request I would be very happy to provide you with the results of the study after they are collated. I can be contacted by email as indicated below.

In order to understand your perception about giftedness I request you to complete the attached survey and return them to the school principal in an enclosed envelope. In addition, I invite you to take part in a small group interview. Please, if you are willing to be interviewed, provide me with your contact details. The male meeting will be conducted by the researcher at the central meeting room in the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Gifted Students. The female participants will be interviewed by a female colleague at female meeting room in the female division (see location details below).

The discussion will take about 90 minutes. These will be tape-recorded and transcribed. No information that you say or write will be identifiable by readers and you may like to

select an alternative name for any use in publications. I will keep the consent forms, transcripts, and data coding materials and audiotapes in a locked filing cabinet and password protected computer files for five years. After that, all records will be destroyed. If you are willing to participate in my research, please fill out the questionnaire and use the envelope provided to return it to your children school's principal. If you are willing to be part of interview discussion, put your consent form with your details in closed envelope to forward it to your children school's principal. Please remember that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time. All you need to do is to not attend the meeting, or to let me know that you wish your information to be excluded.

Saad Al-Amer

**Interview location:**

**The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Gifted Students.**

**Al O' laya Street**

**Tel. 462 9462**

**Male: central meeting room.**

**Female: female meeting room in female division.**

**Researcher's contact details**

**Saudi Arabia**

**\* Please use the following post address details to send your consent to be part of interviews:**

The King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Gifted Students.

Saad ALAMER

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**If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:**

3- Prof. Dennis Moore

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University Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone:

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Dennis.Moore@education.monash.edu.au).

4- Dr. Umesh Sharma

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University Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone

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Umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au).

**If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research is being conducted, please contact:**

Human Ethics Officer

Standing Committee on Ethics in

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والدي الطلاب العاديين

## الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية: رؤية المعلمين والوالدين

(هذه المعلومات الواردة في هذه الرسالة لك. فضلاً أحفظ بها)

اسمي هو سعد آل عامر وأقوم حالياً بتطبيق مشروع بحثي لمرحلة الدكتوراه تحت إشراف كُلاً من البروفيسور دنس مور " قسم التربية " والدكتور أوميش شرما المحاضر في قسم التربية -جامعة موناش-. محصلة هذا الجهد سوف يتمخض عنه أطروحة علمية في مجال الموهبة.

أبحث حالياً في مجال الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية. تهدف الدراسة تحديداً إلى استقصاء وجهات نظر المعلمين والوالدين فيما يتعلق بحصال الطالب الموهوب. تم تحديد 121 مدرسة (69 بنين و 52 بنات) موزعة على خمس قطاعات تعليمية (الشمال-الجنوب-الشرق-الغرب والوسط) لثُمثل مجتمع الدراسة الحالية. أولياء الأمور الذين لديهم ابن/ابناء يدرسون في الصفوف الرابع، الخامس والسادس سوف يمثلون عينة الدراسة. لتحقيق ذلك أُعدت قائمة عشوائية بأسماء هذه المدارس والتي نتج عنها 45 مدرسة (24 بنين و 21 بنات). تم استهداف 225 ولي أمر بغرض المشاركة في العينة النهائية للدراسة.

صورة من موافقة وزارة التربية والتعليم لتطبيق هذا الدراسة، دعوتكم للمشاركة في هذه البحث واستبيان الدراسة مرفق معها مطروف مسبق الدفع أرسلت مباشرة لمدير مدرسة ابنك/ ابناكم. سوف يقوم المدير/المديرة مشكوراً/مشكورة بتسليم هذه الأوراق لابنك/ ابنتك والذي بدوره مشكوراً سوف يقوم بتسليمها لكم. وأود الإشارة هنا بأن مشاركتك تطوعية ولن يترتب على رفضك المشاركة فيها أي تبعات على ابنك/ ابنتك. سوف أكون ممتناً لكم إذا شاركتكم في دراستي لمساعدتي في التعرف على وجهات نظر الوالدين نحو الطالب الموهوب في المدارس الابتدائية.

أنه لمؤمل بأن نتائج هذه الدراسة سوف تسهم في مساعدة صناع السياسة التعليمية وكل من تعنيه تربية الطالب الموهوب في السعودية لفهم واقع وجهات نظر الوالدين الحالي نحو الموهبة وتصميم البرامج الملائمة التي تحسن من تعاملهم مع الطالب الموهوب. هذه النتائج أيضاً قد تستخدم في ورقة نقاش في أحد المؤتمرات المتخصصة أو لأغراض النشر في إحدى المجلات العلمية. هذه النشرات قد تُضمن كجزء من نتائج رسالة الدكتوراه التي أنا بصددتها الان: **الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية: رؤية المعلمين والوالدين**. سوف أكون في غاية السرور لتزويدكم بنتائج هذه الدراسة متى ما طلبتم ذلك. بإمكانكم مراسلتي من خلال الإيميل الموضح في آخر هذا المکتوب.

أنه لمؤمل منكم تعبئة الاستبيان المرفق وإعادةته لمدير المدرسة في ظرف مغلق. كما أود أن أشير بأن هناك جزء من الدراسة يتطلب مقابلة بعض الوالدين وطرح بعض الأسئلة المتعلقة بالطالب الموهوب. إنني سوف أكون ممتنا لك إذا ما قبلت المشاركة في النقاش مع أولياء أمور آخرين وتزويدي بما لديك من خبرات حول الطالب الموهوب.

اللقاء الخاص بالأباء سوف يدار بواسطة الباحث في غرفة الاجتماعات الرئيسية بمؤسسة الملك عبدالعزيز ورجاله لرعاية الموهوبين. والامهات المشاركات سوف يتم لقاءهن بواسطة زميلة في غرفة لقاء السيدات في قسم السيدات بالمؤسسة (انظر تفاصيل الموقع أدناه). النقاش سوف يستغرق قرابة 90 دقيقة وسوف يتم تسجيله وكتابته. كل ما يقال أثناء الاجتماع أو يكتب سوف لن يتم الإشارة لصاحبه مباشرة كما أنه باستطاعتكم اختيار أسماء بديلة لكم أو عدم الإشارة لها كلياً. سوف يتم الاحتفاظ بجميع الأوراق المتعلقة باللقاء والتي تشمل (موافقتكم على الانضمام للنقاش، محتوى النقاش المسجل والمكتوب) في خزانة مخصصة لهذا الغرض وعلى كمبيوتر محمي بكلمة سر لمدة 5 سنوات. بعد هذه المدة سوف يتم إتلافها.

وفي الختام أود أن أسترعي انتباهك بأن مشاركتك تطوعية سواء كانت جزئية كما استكمال الاستبيان ورفض المقابلة أو العكس، أو الرفض الكلي بالمشاركة. إنني أعول على قبولكم المشاركة وتزويدي بوجهات نظركم والتي لا قيمة البتة لبحثي الحالي ما لم تشاركوني فيه. أشكر تعاونكم سلفاً تقبلوا خالص التقدير والتحية.

سعد آل عامر

موقع اللقاء: مؤسسة الملك عبدالعزيز ورجاله لرعاية الموهوبين

العليا- شارع العليا

تلفون: 4629462

غرفة اللقاءات الرئيسية- غرفة لقاء السيدات

#### تفاصيل اتصالات الباحث

المملكة العربية السعودية

مؤسسة الملك عبدالعزيز ورجاله لرعاية الموهوبين

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إذا ما رغبت الاتصال بالباحثين فيما يتعلق باي مظهر من مظاهر الدراسة فمن فضلك الاتصال بالمشرفين الرئيسيين حسب العناوين أدناه:

5- Prof. Dennis Moore  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone: 99050706, e-mail  
Dennis.Moore@education.monash.edu.au).

6- Dr. Umesh Sharma  
Building 5 Krongold Centre Monash University  
Clayton Vic 3800 (Phone 99054388, e-mail  
Umesh.sharma@education.monash.edu.au).

إذا ما كان لديك أي شكوى فيما يتعلق بأخلاقيات التطبيق فضلاً  
أتصل على:

Human Ethics Officer  
Standing Committee on Ethics in Research  
Involving Humans (SCERH)  
Building 3e Room 111  
Research Office  
Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905 1420

**Appendix C-3: Consent letters****Teachers' consent****Title: *Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' perceptions***

I agree to take part in the research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that I am requested to give my perspective about my perceptions of gifted children.

I understand that all information I contribute to the discussion will be used for the purpose of research. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- be involved in a discussion group with other teachers
- allow discussion to be audio-taped
- allow the data to be used (in de-identified form) for academic publication.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview for use in published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

**Participant's name****Signature****Date****Contact details****Tel.****E-mail**



## مجموعة المعلمين: الموافقة على المشاركة في الدراسة الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية: رؤية المعلمين والوالدين

أوافق على أن أكون أحد أعضاء عينة البحث الموضح أعلاه. اطلعت مسبقاً على المشروع واحتفظ بصورة من الشروحات المتعلقة بتطبيقه. بناءً على هذا أوافق على إعطاء وجهة نظري في النقاط التالية:

- الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية،
- خصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المرحلة الابتدائية في المملكة العربية السعودية،
- كيف يرون هؤلاء الطلاب من خلال معلمهم ووالديهم.

إنني أعني بأن كل المعلومات التي أفضيت بها سوف تستخدم في أغراض بحثية. أنني أفهم بأن موافقة على أن أكون أحد أعضاء النقاش هو بأنني مستعد للآتي:

- سوف يكون النقاش بمعية مجموعة من المعلمين،
- السماح بتسجيل النقاش،
- السماح باستخدام المعلومات المنبثقة عن النقاش في تصميم أداة الدراسة،

أعلم بأن مشاركتي تطوعية وبإمكاني الانسحاب جزئياً أو كلياً من البحث في أي مرحلة من مراحل ذلك دون أدنى مسؤولية أو ضرر بأي حال من الأحوال.

أوافق على استخلاص أي معلومات من نتائج النقاش وذلك بغرض البحث بحيث لا يشار لأسمي أو أي معلم قد يستدل به علي.

التاريخ / /

الإيميل (العمل):

التوقيع

التلفون (العمل):

أسم المشارك (اختياري)

تفاصيل الاتصال:



### **Parents' consent**

#### **Title: *Giftedness in Saudi Arabia: Teachers' and Parents' perceptions***

I agree to take part in the research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that I am requested to give my perspective about gifted children.

I understand that all information I contribute to the discussion will be used for the purpose of research. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- be involved in a discussion group with other parents
- allow discussion to be audio-taped
- allow the data to be used (in de-identified form) for academic publication.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way to me or my child(ren).

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview for use in published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

**Participant's name**

**Signature**

**Date**

**Contact details**

**Tel.**

**E-mail**



## موافقة مجموعة والدي الطلاب الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية: رؤية المعلمين والوالدين

أوافق على أن أكون أحد أعضاء عينة البحث الموضح أعلاه. أطلعت مسبقاً على المشروع واحتفظ بصورة من الشروحات المتعلقة بتطبيقه. بناء على هذا أوافق على إعطاء وجهة نظري في النقاط التالية:

- الموهبة في المملكة العربية السعودية،
- خصال الطلاب الموهوبين في المرحلة الابتدائية في المملكة العربية السعودية،
- كيف يرون هؤلاء الطلاب من خلال معلمهم ووالديهم.

أنني أعني بان كل المعلومات التي أفضيت بها سوف تستخدم في أغراض بحثية. إنني أفهم بأن موافقة على أن أكون أحد أعضاء النقاش هو بأنني مستعد للأتي:

- سوف يكون النقاش بمعية مجموعة من الوالدين،
- السماح بتسجيل النقاش،
- السماح باستخدام المعلومات المنبثقة عن النقاش في تصميم أداة الدراسة،

أعلم بأن مشاركتي تطوعية وبإمكاني الانسحاب جزئياً أو كلياً من البحث في أي مرحلة من مراحل ذلك دون أدنى مسؤولية أو ضرر بأي حال من الأحوال.

أوافق على استخلاص أي معلومات من نتائج النقاش وذلك بغرض البحث بحيث لا يشار لأسمي أو أي معلم قد يستدل به علي.

التاريخ / /

الإيميل (العمل):

التوقيع

التلفون (العمل):

أسم المشارك

تفاصيل الاتصال:

**Appendix C-4: Comparison between teachers and parents of cognitive traits**

Table CA: Comparison of Teachers' and Parents' Mean perceptions Scores of cognitive traits

Traits	Teachers	Parents	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>		
Precise/imprecise	1.74 (.99)	1.72 (.91)	538	.187
Cheerful/Grumpy	2.33 (1.13)	2.29 (1.31)	537	.353
Attentive/Distracted	1.54 (.90)	1.63 (.95)	537	-1.051
High achiever/Underachiever	1.96 (1.19)	1.64 (.97)	537	3.40
Sharp/Dull	1.47 (.76)	1.41 (.87)	538	.809
Exceptional memory/Forgetful	2.08 (.98)	2.09 (1.12)	533	-.102
Loves writing/Hates writing	2.57 (1.14)	2.53 (1.25)	538	.369
Independent/Dependent	1.96 (1.07)	2.09 (1.24)	538	-1.24
Imaginative/Unimaginative	1.83 (.98)	2.29 (1.32)	533	-4.50
Of multiple-interests/ Of limited interests	2.08 (1.21)	2.10 (1.22)	532	-.254
Admired/Distracted	1.92 (1.06)	1.77 (1.00)	539	1.68
Solution focused/problems focused	2.07 (1.35)	2.14 (1.51)	534	-5.63
Critical reader/Not critical reader	2.15 (1.15)	2.44 (1.23)	534	-2.9
Advanced language/Age appropriate language	2.32 (1.31)	2.62 (1.81)	539	-2.13
Has large vocabulary/Has limited vocabulary	2.39 (1.26)	2.63 (1.46)	534	-1.98
Outstanding reader/ordinary reader	2.44 (1.24)	2.80 (1.70)	533	-2.71
Curious/Uninterested	1.87 (1.06)	1.83 (1.06)	537	.459
Confronts problems/Avoids problems	2.37 (1.41)	2.90 (1.79)	537	-3.77**

\*\*p&lt;0.01

**Appendix C-5: Comparison between teachers and parents of personal traits**

Table CB: Comparison of Teachers' and Parents' Mean perceptions Scores of personal traits

Traits	Teachers	Parents	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>		
Loyal/Disloyal	1.85 (.915)	1.65 (.83)	537	2.548
Obedient/Disobedient	2.49 (1.44)	1.99 (1.17)	533	4.409***
Frank/Evasive	2.04 (1.18)	1.82 (1.05)	536	2.288
Logical/Illogical	1.84 (1.03)	1.69 (.88)	537	1.835
Fair/Unfair	2.20 (.99)	1.88 (.93)	536	3.805***
Careful/Careless	2.27 (1.32)	1.88 (.97)	534	3.935***
Helpful/Unhelpful	2.07 (1.09)	1.83 (.99)	539	2.674
Task-committed/Uncommitted	1.96 (1.05)	1.83 (1.05)	538	1.426
Reliable/Unreliable	1.77 (1.04)	1.71 (.95)	537	.684
Lovable/Unlovable	2.14 (1.22)	1.69 (.96)	538	4.855***
Organized/Disorganized	2.32 (1.41)	2.13 (1.34)	539	1.627

\*\*\* $p < 0.000$

**Appendix C-6: Comparison between teachers and parents of social and leadership traits**

Table CC: Comparison of Teachers' and Parents' Mean perceptions Scores of social and leadership traits

Traits	Teachers	Parents	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>		
Sociable/Unsociable	2.42 (1.29)	1.95 (1.14)	539	4.533***
Courageous/Cowardly	2.24 (1.14)	2.20 (1.16)	538	.420
Confident/Unconfident	1.63 (.79)	1.65 (.86)	538	-.188
Leader/Follower	1.96 (1.04)	1.90 (1.07)	534	.610
Outgoing/Shy	2.14 (1.30)	2.08 (1.29)	540	.620

\*\*\* $p < 0.000$

**Appendix C-7: Comparison between teachers and parents of traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts**

Table CD: Comparison of Teachers' and Parents' Mean perceptions Scores of traits perceived within religious and cultural contexts

Traits	Teachers	Parents	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>		
Quiet/Talkative	2.97 (1.68)	2.45 (1.68)	538	3.695***
Follows rules/Does not follow rules	2.51 (1.56)	2.09 (1.56)	538	3.173**
Persistent/Not persistent	2.47 (1.49)	2.45 (1.62)	536	.170
Likes singing/Dislikes singing	3.61 (1.59)	3.54 (1.75)	531	.447
Enjoys music/Hates music	3.62 (1.55)	3.68 (1.75)	529	-.446
An exceptional drawer/An ordinary drawer	3.13 (1.38)	3.54 (1.82)	537	-2.916*

\*\*\* $p < 0.000$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$

**Appendix C-8: ranking order of cognitive traits**

Table CA: Main and standard deviation ranking of cognitive traits (lowest to highest)

<b>Teacher</b>			<b>Parents</b>		
<b>Traits</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Traits</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Sharp/ Dull	1.47	.763	Sharp/ Dull	1.41	.867
Attentive/ Distracted	1.54	.900	Attentive/ Distracted	1.63	.949
Precise/ Imprecise	1.74	.986	High achiever/ Underachiever	1.64	.965
Imaginative/ Unimaginative	1.83	.988	Precise/ Imprecise	1.72	.917
Curious/ Uninterested	1.87	1.065	Admired/ Despised	1.77	1.001
Admired/ Despised	1.92	1.060	Curious/ Uninterested	1.83	1.066
High achiever/ Underachiever	1.96	1.191	Exceptional memory/ Forgetful	2.09	1.120
Independent/ Dependent	1.96	1.070	Independent/ Dependent	2.09	1.243
Solution focused/ Problems focused	2.07	1.353	Of multiple interests/ of limited interests	2.10	1.228
Exceptional memory/ Forgetful	2.08	.984	Solution focused/ Problems focused	2.14	1.517
Of multiple interests/ of limited interests	2.08	1.211	Cheerful/ Grumpy	2.29	1.306
Critical reader/ Non- critical reader	2.15	1.151	Imaginative/ Unimaginative	2.29	1.318
Advanced language/ Age-appropriate language	2.32	1.311	Critical reader/ Non- critical reader	2.44	1.233
Cheerful/ Grumpy	2.33	1.131	Likes writing/ Hates writing	2.53	1.259
Confront problems/ Avoids problems	2.37	1.411	Advanced language/ Age- appropriate language	2.62	1.819
Has large vocabulary/ Has limited vocabulary	2.39	1.260	Has large vocabulary/ Has limited vocabulary	2.63	1.462
Outstanding reader/ ordinary reader	2.44	1.241	Outstanding reader/ ordinary reader	2.80	1.703
Likes writing/ Hates writing	2.57	1.141	Confront problems/ Avoids problems	2.90	1.790

*Appendix C-9: Ranking order of personal traits*

Table CB: Main and standard deviation ranking of personal traits (lowest to highest)

Teacher			Parents		
Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Traits	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Reliable/ Unreliable	1.77	1.041	Loyal/ Disloyal	1.65	.833
Logical/ Illogical	1.84	1.026	Logical/ Illogical	1.69	.876
Loyal/ Disloyal	1.85	.915	Lovable/ Unlovable	1.69	.960
Task-committed/ Uncommitted	1.96	1.049	Reliable/ Unreliable	1.71	.954
Frank/ Evasive	2.04	1.180	Frank/ Evasive	1.82	1.047
Helpful/ Unhelpful	2.07	1.083	Helpful/ Unhelpful	1.83	.996
Lovable/ Unlovable	2.14	1.220	Task-committed/ Uncommitted	1.83	1.054
Fair/ Unfair	2.20	.993	Fair/ Unfair	1.88	.927
Careful/ Careless	2.27	1.320	Careful/ Careless	1.88	.967
Organized/ Disorganized	2.32	1.414	Obedient/ Disobedient	1.99	1.171
Obedient/ Disobedient	2.49	1.444	Organized/Disorganized	2.13	1.338