THE INFLUENCES OF SELF REGULATION TOWARDS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG GIFTED STUDENTS IN SAUDI ARABIA

Al-Sahaf Faisal, Mohd Zuri Ghani
PhD Special Education Candidate, School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia
f.wf.wf@hotmail.com
Senior Lecturer Special Education, School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia
mdzuri@usm.my

ABSTRACT

This research examines the influence of self-regulation towards academic achievement among gifted students in Saudi Arabia. The discussion in the study is based on the theoretical framework of the emotional intelligence theory (Goleman, 1995), the Mayer and Salovey Model (1997), and achievement motivation theory. These theories are appropriate for the study because they allow the reader to understand how academic achievement is significantly influenced by self-regulation among gifted students in Saudi Arabia. A total of 150 respondents were involved in the quantitative study comprising of male and female gifted students whereby 10 teachers and 30 gifted students were used for qualitative study. Questionnaires were the instruments used to sample the opinions of 150 gifted students where by interview protocol was used to get the information from the 10 teachers and 30 gifted students. During the analysis and interpretation of the responses gathered from gifted students which is the quantitative data, multiple regressions were used to investigate the influence of self-regulation towards academic achievement among gifted students. For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was used through manual qualitative style to describe the concept of self-regulation and provide suggestions from the teachers that could be adopted to improve self-regulation among gifted students in Saudi Arabia. The findings of the study show the effect of self-regulation on academic achievement. The study will be significant to teachers of gifted students, educational planners, government, international agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, etc, and nongovernmental organizations by putting into practice the suggestions and recommendations which will help them improve emotional intelligence among gifted students in Saudi Arabia.

Keywords

Influence; Self-Regulation; Academic Achievement; Gifted Students.
INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence has been considered a base requirement to maintain a state of inner harmony, the most important feature of IQ, which makes it popular among those with a scientific bent of mind, is that it has a 'structural' basis in the form of brain circuitry, which is mostly inherited or genetical (Thomas, 2011). Thus, the concept of IQ provides a biological foundation for the study of personality and individual differences. It also enhances one’s confidence in dealing with the challenges of living and learning in educational institutions. Researchers argued that emotional intelligence was linked to the learning process of a student (Goleman, 1996; Elias, Ubriaco, Reese et al., 1992; Svetlana, 2007). Preti (2013), examined the factors affecting the development of emotional intelligence and their role in the academic achievement of students, and found links among emotional intelligence, academic achievement, and teaching emotional and social skills at school.

The emotional intelligence and academic achievement of gifted students in Saudi Arabia has become an increasing source of concern within the Saudi Education Sector (Alqefari, 2010). This concern was due to the significant role played by education in national development. Making appropriate provision for gifted and talented students is important to the development of any functioning society (Alqefari, 2010). In addition, the academic achievements of Saudi Arabian gifted students do not meet up to expectations, and this has affected societal development, correspondingly, the major challenge faced by the Saudi general education system is improving the quality of education so that the graduates of the system have skills and knowledge that match the demands of the labor market (Aljughaiman & Grigor, 2013; Prokop, 2003). The country requires intelligent and creative individuals who are capable of creating new inventions and opening new horizons to advance technological and scientific sectors. They must also remain competitive in the fast-paced developing world. Recently, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has focused on the important role of this special group.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Gifted students face emotional issues as other non-gifted students; however, the former (gifted students) may suffer from a heightened self-awareness compared to the later (non-gifted students). In addition, gifted students may be excessively critical of what they can do and achieve. Therefore, these same students may have low self-esteem or low perception of their abilities, which can lead to underachievement because they may fear failure (Diaz, 1998).

Blackwell et al. (2007), observed that, as students made the transition to junior high school, their emotional intelligence became a significant predictor of their achievement in mathematics. Moreover, an emotional intelligence of gifted students at the beginning of junior high school is more likely to improve math grades earned at the end of the second year of junior high school, controlling for the effect of math achievement test scores before entering junior high school. Thus, math grades earned in the first term of junior high school were used instead of end of sixth-grade test scores.

Research on gifted students and issues related to their studies revealed several personality factors, while emotional intelligence issues are considered to be reasons that have consistently emerged as contributing factors that lead many of the gifted students to not realize their potential. Although not all gifted children experience the same issues, researchers identified a combination of the following contributing reasons: dilemmas about abilities and talents, personal decisions about family, ambivalence of parents and teachers toward developing high levels of potential, and decisions about duty and caring (putting the needs of others first) as opposed to nurturing personal, religious, and social issues (Reis, 2002).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study verifies the current research problem by conducting interviews with four teachers of the intermediate schools in the study area before the commencement of the actual study. The interview questions are mainly focused on the influence of emotional intelligence on academic achievement of gifted students in Saudi Arabia. Three of the four teachers reported that a basic teaching method is lacking, which can affect the students’ academic achievements. All teachers agree that current teaching methods and learning tools, such as e-learning, are not in demand among the gifted students. They also acknowledge the problems they confront when helping their students improve their emotional intelligence.

Almost 60 percent (60%) of teachers of gifted students in Saudi Arabia are confronted with difficulty in helping gifted students to develop their emotional intelligence and academic achievement in teaching and learning process. There is a need to conduct a study to determine whether the identified five elements of emotional intelligence self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill contribute to academic achievement among gifted students. Based on these reasons the researcher wanted to conduct the study on the influence of emotional intelligence towards the academic achievement among gifted students in Saudi Arabia.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the influence of self-regulation on academic achievement among gifted students.
2. To describe the concept of self-regulation among gifted students in Saudi Arabia
3. To provide suggestions from the teachers that could be adopted to improve self-awareness among gifted students in Saudi Arabia.
Research Questions

1. Is there any significant influence of self-regulation on academic achievement among gifted students?

2. How can the concept of self-regulation be described among gifted students in Saudi Arabia?

3. What are the suggestions from the teachers that could be adopted to improve self-regulation among gifted students in Saudi Arabia?

Research Hypotheses

H1. There is no significant influence of self-regulation on academic achievement among gifted students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-regulation and Academic Achievement of Gifted Students

Self-regulation refers to management of his inner motivations and resources which include self-control, integrity, consciousness, adaptability and creativity (Goleman, 1998). Lee and McDonough (2014), investigated the association of self-talk with children's self-regulatory behavior and academic performance. The findings reported in that paper are based on the data from self-report questionnaires on self-talk completed by eight-to-nine-year-olds, national mathematics achievement test results, and a teacher-completed behavior rating scale. Results were somewhat unexpected, including that self-talk may not have a very strong role in children's behavioral self-regulation and calling into question an effect of self-talk on children's learning in the classroom.

McSweene (2014), using mixed methods approach to investigates student heuristics and successful implementation of self-regulation strategies of learning found that the lack of fourth grade gifted students math achievement at the local and district levels has caused considerable concern for all stakeholders. The statistical representation of the achievement gap defined by socioeconomic levels and subgroup analysis has not provided a comprehensive representation of the reasons students fail to achieve. Research findings also reflect an increased awareness that the disparity among groups can be influenced by students' ability to direct their learning.

Wang (2013), conducted a study on achievement goals, motivational self-regulation, and academic adjustment among elite Chinese high school students. The findings indicated that metacognitive self-regulation, regulation of time and study environment, help seeking and self-efficacy perceptions were significant factors in explaining mathematics achievement while effort regulation was not. Further, it was concluded that there was a difference between the two genders as to the use and benefits of these strategies.

Thummaphan et al (2013) studied learning behaviors of underachieving gifted students. The proponent aims was to evaluate the effectiveness of program applying self-regulation in combination with teacher's social support. The results of the study indicated that, learning behaviors of underachieving gifted students were at the moderate level. The program applying self-regulation in combination with teacher's social support of which it's set of activities, aiming to improve learning behaviors of underachieving gifted students consisted of 20 times in total of three stages namely: preparation, activity, and evaluation. Both program applying self-regulation in combination with teachers' social support and the program applying only self-regulation were significantly effective in improving in-class and outside-class behaviors among experimental groups and individual students. Furthermore, there was no significant difference in effectiveness between two programs.

Temel (2013), compared the effects of problem-based learning with traditional teaching method on prospective teachers’ self-regulated learning skills and its effect on gifted students. In the light of the findings, it was found that the problem-based learning and the traditional teaching method did not have significant effects on prospective teachers’ self-regulated learning skills. It was also found that the prospective teachers’ attitudes towards and their self-efficacy perceptions of problem-based learning were at the middle level, and that the two variables accounted for 49% of the total variance in self-regulated learning skills on gifted students.

Thummaphan et al (2013), investigated the relationship between creative potential and self-regulation among gifted students. The study aims to examine the moderating effects of parenting styles on that relationship. Participants in this study were 311 gifted students; their creative potential was assessed by the Runco Ideation Behavior Scale (Runco, Plucker, & Lim, 2001). The results showed that there was no relationship between creative potential and short-term self-regulation. The relationship between creative potential and long-term self-regulation was significant among the participants who perceived a neglected parenting style, but not for participants who perceived an authoritative parenting style. However, overall long-term self-regulation scores were higher in the authoritative parenting style group that the neglected parenting style group regardless of the creative potential level.

Findings from this study refute the position that gifted students' creative potential may relate negatively to their self-regulation capacities. Findings also suggested that authoritative parenting can nurture children's long-term self-regulation without hindering creative potential development. Previous literature has suggested that creative students often have difficulties adapting to academic and social contexts, even if they are intellectually gifted. Creative individuals' difficulties in social adaptation can be explained better by introducing the concept of self-regulation, since self-regulation has been
found to be a strong predictor of one's academic success, school engagement, and peer social acceptance (Kim and Van Tassel, 2010).

Previous studies reported that gifted students can be identified among students who do not perform well in the examination (Majid, 2012); the latter are subsequently categorized as underachievers. Underachievement is defined as the difference between the school or academic achievement of a child and some of the indexes of the actual ability of that student, such as intelligence (Davis et al., 2011). Therefore, the school cannot identify gifted students when these nonperforming students are eliminated. In turn, the necessary learning environment that can optimize their full potentials cannot be provided. One of the fundamental objectives adopted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is to achieve education goals that aim to identify gifted students, provide them with required care and different opportunities for their growth in the framework of general programs, and to set special programs for these.

As early as 1969, the Saudi government already recognized the need to identify the gifted students (Al-Nafea, Alkatay, & Aleslim, 1992). However, no actual steps were taken at that time until 1990, when King Abdul Aziz’s City of Science and Technology implemented a project in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the General Presidency for Females’ Education to conduct national research entitled "Identification and Care for the Gifted Students." The research provided a scientific basis for gifted care project implementation, which included the preparation of standards, methods, and structured scientific methods that cope with the environment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In addition, this program helped set models for gifted care programs in math and sciences as well as a plan for community awareness, and coordinated efforts among the relevant public and private institutions (Al-Nafea, Alkatay, & Aleslim, 1992).

The national research was presented to educational parties after its completion, after which the Ministry of Education initiated the establishment of the national program to explore gifted individuals and to provide them with required care (Al-Atari, 2000). The identification of gifted individuals and the care program were designed to cope with the needs of society, educational policy objectives, and the available possibilities in 1992. Based on the definition by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and Mayer and Salovey (1997), Gunkel (2014), stated that emotional intelligence is composed of four dimensions: 1) self-emotional appraisal, which is assessing and expressing of emotion in the self; 2) others’ emotional appraisal, which is the appraisal and recognition of emotion in others; 3) regulating self-emotion in self; and 4) using emotion to enhance performance. An emotionally intelligent person is skilled in four areas: identifying, using, understanding, and regulating emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1993). Alternatively, Goleman (1995), indicated that emotional intelligence consists of five components: knowing one’s emotions (self-awareness), managing self-emotions, managing self-motivation, identifying emotions in others (empathy), and handling relationships.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In this study, two theories were used namely Emotional Intelligence Theory of Goleman, 1995, Mayer and Salovey (1993), for emotional intelligence of gifted students and Achievement motivation theory of McClelland (1958), for academic achievement of gifted students in Saudi Arabia. These theories are more appropriate to be used in this study because they are closely related to the issue of gifted students. The relationship between Goleman and Mayer and Salovey’s theories is seen in their contribution to the concept of emotional intelligence where they first of all defined emotional intelligence (EI) as the ability to monitor one's own and other people’s emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior (Coleman, Andrew, 2008).

METHODOLOGY

The mix of quantitative and qualitative research design was adopted for this study. The study sought to determine the gender difference and emotional intelligence elements among gifted students in Saudi Arabia reasons. The main population of this study consisted of all 396 intermediate gifted (male and female) students enrolled in Al-Faisaliah and the school of 128th. The findings in this paper are drawn from a research study on the influence of emotional intelligence towards academic achievement among gifted students in Saudi Arabia. Data were collected from the gifted students in Saudi Arabia through questionnaires and interview. A purposive sampling procedure was adopted in selecting the gifted students, on the basis of their status that is all gifted students in Al-Faisaliah school and the school of 128th data. The estimated number of the main population stands at 396 gifted students. The sample size for this study was 150 gifted students. The total selected sample size for the qualitative study was 30 gifted students, which included 5 Males and 5 females from each class. The sample size for qualitative study was selected from the sample size of the qualitative study, in other words the 30 gifted students that were interviewed were selected from the 150 gifted students already selected for quantitative study.

However, a total of 10 teachers have been chosen for the interview, as they are the only teachers who are full time teachers to teach the first, second and third class of gifted students with whom the study was conducted and available in the time of conducting the study that is January 2015. The selected teachers interviewed have a direct contact with the gifted students; therefore, the researcher has intentionally planned to interview them. The teachers were all male comprised of Master degree (MA) and Bachelor degree (BA) holders. It is worth mentioning that the teachers were only asked to give suggestions that could be adopted to improve emotional intelligence among gifted students in Saudi Arabia.
Table 1: Distribution of the population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First class</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second class</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third class</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Al Faisaliah School and the school of 128th data.

Table 2: Distribution of quantitative study respondents according to class grade and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First class</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second class</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third class</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Al Faisaliah School and the school of 128th data.

Table 3: Distribution of qualitative study respondents according to class grade and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First class</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second class</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third class</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FINDINGS

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. The quantitative study investigated the significant influence of self-regulation on academic achievement among gifted students. The qualitative study investigated how self-regulation can be described among gifted students in Saudi Arabia and the suggestions that could be adopted to improve emotional intelligence among gifted students in Saudi Arabia. In the present study, the results of data analysis gathered from gifted students in Saudi Arabia will be reported.

Research Question 1: Is there any significant influence of self-regulation on academic achievement among gifted students?

Ho1. There is no significant influence of self-regulation on academic achievement among gifted students.

Accordingly, the assumptions of multiple regression analysis were met in this study and the regression analysis can safely be used to test the designated hypotheses. The results of the regression analysis between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among gifted students are presented in Table 4.7. The R² was 0.446 indicating that 44.6 percent of the variation of academic achievement can be explained by emotional intelligence of students. The result show self-regulation (β = 0.256, p<0.01), motivation (β = 0.150, p<0.05), and empathy (β = 0.371, p<0.001) were positively effect on academic achievement whereas self-awareness (β = 0.084, p>0.05) and social skills (β = 0.041, p>0.05) have no significant effect academic achievement of gifted student in Saudi Arabia. Thus Ho1b, Ho1c, and Ho1d were supported and Ho1a and Ho1e were not supported.
Table 4: Multiple Regressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Standardized Beta</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ho1a</td>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho1b</td>
<td>Self-Regulation</td>
<td>0.256**</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho1c</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>0.150*</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho1d</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>0.371***</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho1e</td>
<td>Social Skill</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F value 23.167***  
R² 0.446  
Adjusted R² 0.427

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Research Question 2: How can the concept of self-regulation be described among gifted students in Saudi Arabia?

For this question, 30 gifted students were interviewed orally, in the light of how they described self-regulation among gifted students in Saudi Arabia. The gifted students described self-regulation, among gifted students in Saudi Arabia according to their own opinions.

Identified Themes for Qualitative Study

In the following sections the researcher revealed the opinion of each participant in line with the research questions number two (2) and question number three (3) of the study. Specific themes were identified as emergent from the interview data collected. Each theme also contained some sub themes based on which the discussion will be done in respect of each major theme. Relevant concepts or subjects occurring at least twice were assigned as categories and were then coded. Therefore the section elaborates on each theme and concludes with thought from the participants directed to gifted students’ opinions to describe self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill and suggestions that could be adopted to improve emotional intelligence among gifted students in Saudi Arabia. Below are some of the major themes derived from the responses of the gifted students which were put in a tabular form and finally explained one after the other.

1. Feeling of Self-Confidence
2. Self Control
3. Self Initiative
4. Human Relation
5. Sharing the feelings of others
Table 5: Themes identified from the interview data collected from Gifted Students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of Self-Confidence</td>
<td>. Speaking about one’s feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Expressing one’s feelings toward others to be easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Having a natural smile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Control</td>
<td>. Controlling one’s anger is not easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Getting angry easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Requesting help from friends during exams period if need arises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Initiative</td>
<td>. Interest in performing new tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Interest in accomplishing work for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Initiate work without being asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Relation</td>
<td>. Making friendships as an important thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Loving one’s friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Spending time with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing the feelings of others</td>
<td>. Sharing with others during their private conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Convincing others of one’s point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Solving problems when a dispute occurs among group members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 5: What are the suggestions from the teachers that could be adopted to improve self-regulation among gifted students in Saudi Arabia?

In this section a total of ten teachers were interviewed on the suggestions that could be adopted to improve self-regulation among gifted students in Saudi Arabia.

Analysis of the interview conducted with teachers of gifted students from the centre of gifted students Jeddah Saudi Arabia gave a great insight into the importance of the suggestions that could be adopted to self-regulation among gifted students in Saudi Arabia. In this section, the responses of the respondents were summarized under the following themes:

(a) Teach the teachers emotional intelligence skills,
(b) Incorporating emotional intelligence into the curricula,
(c) Provide emotional intelligence training to gifted students,
(d) Incorporate religious perspectives of emotional intelligence into spiritual formation curricula.
Table 6: Themes identified from the interview data collected from Gifted Students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teach the teachers emotional intelligence skills</td>
<td>. Teachers should be emotionally literate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Teachers should teach with self-awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and optimism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Emotionally intelligent teachers should be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>caring and deeply empathetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporating emotional</td>
<td>. Controlling one’s anger is not easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in intelligence into the curricula</td>
<td>. Getting angry easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Requesting help from friends during exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>period if need arises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide emotional intelligence training to first-year students</td>
<td>. Interest in performing new tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Interest in accomplishing work for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Initiate work without being asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate religious perspectives of emotional intelligence into</td>
<td>. Making friendships as an important thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spiritual formation curricula.</td>
<td>. Loving one’s friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Spending time with others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that, there is a positive influence of self-regulation on academic achievement among gifted students. It was shown in the data analysis and interpretation that self-regulation ($\beta = 0.256, p<0.01$), have positive effect on academic achievement of gifted students in Saudi Arabia. Self-regulation refers to management of inner motivations and resources which include self-control, integrity, consciousness, adaptability and creativity Goleman (1998). Self-regulation is part of meta cognitive knowledge and is important in working on learning tasks, as students need to make a variety of decisions in order to understand the task, plan a course of action, select strategies to carry out the plans, monitor the execution of activities while the strategies are being implemented, evaluate the outcome of plans and strategies and revise or abandon non-productive strategies and plans (Van Deur, 2004; Garafalo and Lester, 1985). A positive motivation for learning is also needed to make the effort to carry out the self-regulatory actions to manage these processes.

The findings of this study coincided with Lee and McDonough (2014), who investigated the association of self-talk with children's self-regulatory behavior and academic performance. The results were somewhat unexpected, including that self-talk may not have a very strong role in children's behavioral self-regulation and calling into question an effect of self-talk on children's learning in the classroom. The findings of this study also agree with the opinion of McSweene (2014), whose findings reflect an increased awareness that the disparity among groups can be influenced by students’ ability to direct their learning. The findings of this study corroborate with Wang (2013), who conducted a study on achievement goals, motivational self-regulation, and academic adjustment among elite Chinese high school students. The findings indicated that self-regulation, was among significant factors in explaining mathematics achievement while effort regulation was not. Further, it was concluded that there was a difference between the two genders as to the use and benefits of these strategies.

The finding of this study is like that of Thummaphan et al (2013), the results of their study indicated that, learning behaviors of underachieving gifted students were at the moderate level. The program applying self-regulation in combination with teachers’ social support and the program applying only self-regulation were significantly effective in
improving in-class and outside-class behaviors among experimental groups and individual students. Furthermore, there was no significant difference in effectiveness between two programs.

The findings of this study concentrated mainly on the influence of self-regulation on academic achievement among gifted students; unlike Temel (2013), who compared the effects of problem-based learning with traditional teaching method on prospective teachers' self-regulated learning skills and its effect on gifted students. In the light of the findings, it was found that the problem-based learning and the traditional teaching method did not have significant effects on prospective teachers' self-regulated learning skills. It was also found that the prospective teachers' attitudes towards and their self-efficacy perceptions of problem-based learning were at the middle level, and that the two variables accounted for 49% of the total variance in self-regulated learning skills on gifted students.

Similar study was conducted by Thummaphan et al (2013), who investigated the relationship between creative potential and self-regulation among gifted students. The results showed that there was no relationship between creative potential and short-term self-regulation. The relationship between creative potential and long-term self-regulation was significant among the participants who perceived a neglected parenting style, but not for participants who perceived an authoritative parenting style. However, overall long-term self-regulation scores were higher in the authoritative parenting style group that the neglected parenting style group regardless of the creative potential level. Findings from Thummaphan et al (2013), study also refute the position that gifted students' creative potential may relate negatively to their self-regulation capacities; the study also suggested that authoritative parenting can nurture children's long-term self-regulation without hindering creative potential development.

Previous literature has suggested that creative students often have difficulties adapting to academic and social contexts, even if they are intellectually gifted creative individuals' difficulties in social adaptation can be explained better by introducing the concept of self-regulation, since self-regulation has been found to be a strong predictor of one's academic success, school engagement, and peer social acceptance (Kim and Van Tassel, 2010).

From the theoretical perspective, the study established concrete connection and mutual relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of gifted students in Saudi Arabia in the aspect of self-regulation; through the emotional intelligence Theory Goleman’s (1995) which confirmed that academic, personal, and professional success cannot be fulfilled if the person does not acquire emotional and social skills, the Mayer and Salovey Model (1995) which hypothesized a new type of intelligence based on individual differences to treat emotional information more especially in relation to gifted students and achievement motivation Theory which postulates that people are motivated in varying degrees by their need for achievement, need for power and need for affiliation, and that these needs are acquired or learned during one's lifetime.

Self confidence is the difference between feeling unstoppable and feeling scared out of one's wits. Perception of oneself has an enormous impact on how others perceive him. Perception is reality the more self confidence one has, the more likely it is he'll succeed. Feelings of self-confidence were explicitly mentioned by respondent 9 (R9) during the interview although many of the factors affecting self confidence are beyond one's control, there are a number of things one can consciously do to build self confidence.

Self-control is the ability to control one's emotions, behavior, and desires in the face of external demands in order to function in society. In psychology it is sometimes called self-regulation. Self-control is essential in behavior to achieve goals and to avoid impulses or emotions that could prove to be negative. In behavior analysis self-control represents the locus of two conflicting contingencies of reinforcement, which then make a controlling response reinforcing when it causes changes in the controlled response. Self control is the central issue or theme that emerged from the interview responses. Almost all the respondents mentioned something related to self control in their responses either negatively or positively.

The term Self Initiative is usually used to describe someone who is driven to get the job done. Someone who has self initiative and drive doesn't need someone to stand over them to make sure they get their job done. They just need to know what you need and they will find a way to get it done. These people are highly motivated to be successful. In fact, they will normally work best with little or no direct supervision. Self initiative is another theme emerged from the interview responses and it was specifically mentioned by respondent 6 where he said: "I initiate work without being asked". (R6), this indicated that he is self initiative and can create things on his own.

Human relationship is a relation between people; relationship is often used where relation would serve, as in 'the relationship between inflation and unemployment', but the preferred usage of 'relationship' is for human relations or states of relatedness; "the relationship between mothers and their children. Analysis of the interview conducted with thirty gifted students from the centre of gifted students Jeddah Saudi Arabia gave a great insight into the importance of human relation. The opinions of the respondents are almost similar in their aims to have relations others more especially friends. Other respondents consider making friendships as an important thing as mentioned by R21, making friends easily with others as mentioned by R25 loving friends as said by R23.

Sharing the feelings of others have several positive mental and physical health related outcomes, such as relieving tension caused by the buildup of everyday stressors, as well as the trauma of major life difficulties. Expressing emotions also reduces the likelihood of acquiring stress-related problems such as muscle aches and tension headaches. Some psychologists believe that the most important aspect of life is feeling connected to another person and one way to enhance closeness is through sharing feelings. By disclosing ourselves sharing our inner ideas, concerns and emotions with family members, partners or close friends we come to know ourselves better. When we express ourselves, our
thoughts and feelings often become clearer and take on an even fuller meaning in several ways. Sharing the feelings of others was pointed out by respondent 26 (R26) where he was quoted saying “I can share with others during their private conversations”. (R26). Under this theme, other respondents mentioned some opinions that are closely related to the opinion of R26 which is one of the main themes of the interview responses.

During the interview majority of the respondents suggested that the teachers should be taught emotional intelligence skills to be able to impart the skills to the students. R3 suggested that teachers should have self-awareness and be emotionally literate and understand that emotion is embedded in their teaching. R5 was of the view that teachers should teach with self-awareness and optimism and believe that they can make a difference in the lives of their students, and they should attribute positive qualities to learners.

Almost all the respondents suggested the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the curricula, by putting more emphasis to the relationship between emotions and classroom management as mentioned by R2. R8 suggested that there is a need for the ability to identify and regulate (control) student’s emotions by the teachers because they are capable of experiencing a wide array of emotions such as anger, frustration, anxiety, and happiness in one class period if the concept of emotional intelligence is incorporated into the curriculum.

Providing emotional intelligence training to gifted students might be a valuable strategy, an equally viable option for teachers is to blend lessons on feelings and relationships with other topics already taught as mentioned by R3 during the interview.

Incorporating religious perspectives of emotional intelligence into spiritual formation curricula was the opinion of almost all the respondents during the interview. Other respondents directly related the concept of emotional intelligence to religion as mentioned by R8 where he said that “Emotions are a gift from God.” R2 suggested that it is necessary for both gifted students and their teachers as believers to manage their emotional lives according to God’s design.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Studies about the influence of self-regulation towards academic achievement among gifted students in Saudi Arabia is among the recent investigations conducted in Saudi Arabia, so these findings are considered basic and there is still a need for further research and discussion in this area. The findings of this study which have highlighted on the influence of self-regulation towards academic achievement among gifted students in Saudi Arabian Saudi Arabia is among the recent investigations conducted in Saudi Arabia, suggested that more studies should be done on influence of self-regulation towards academic achievement among other categories of students to make the research more general in nature. Since the present study was conducted in Saudi Arabian in only Al Faisaliah School and the school of 128th using gender difference on emotional intelligence elements towards academic achievement among gifted students, there is a need to make deeper investigation of self-regulation and academic achievement using more than two schools. Since the findings of this study showed that the is positive influence of self-regulation and social skills on academic achievement among gifted students, research can also be done on strategies that could be used to improve the level of self-regulation of gifted students in Saudi Arabia. More research on self-regulation and academic achievement using purely qualitative research methodology need to be done in order to make deeper investigation about the phenomena.

**Recommendations**

There is a need to develop and establish a philosophy of self-regulation and academic achievement through Saudi Arabia Ministry of Education. Relationship between self-regulation and academic achievement of gifted students has many known benefits for Saudi Arabian Education system, as well as for teachers, students and Ministry of Education in general; Ministry of Education should therefore enhance and facilities programme that encourage public as well as private schools involvement in the issue of self-regulation and academic achievement. The issue of feeling of self-confidence, self control, self initiative, human relation and sharing the feelings of others should be inculcated in the mind of gifted student in particular and all students of Saudi Arabia in general. Ministry of Education should improve emotional intelligence among gifted students in Saudi Arabia by teaching the teachers emotional intelligence skills, incorporating emotional intelligence into the curricula, providing emotional intelligence training to gifted students, incorporating religious perspectives of emotional intelligence into spiritual formation curricula. Useful policies to the gifted students should also be created by encouraging gifted students to develop their skills. Saudi Arabian government through its public schools should improve the quality of life of the gifted and non-gifted students contribute towards addressing their social and emotional problems that are mainly related to academic achievement.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This exploratory study attempted to shed light on gender difference on emotional intelligence elements towards academic achievement among gifted students in Saudi Arabia. The findings of this study explore the influence of self-regulation towards academic achievement among gifted students in Saudi Arabia; which is a meaningful change in Saudi education system in general. The result of multiple regression shows that, there is a positive influence of self-regulation on academic achievement among gifted students.
During the analysis and interpretation of the responses gathered from gifted students and their teachers manual qualitative data analysis was used to provide suggestions that could be adopted to improve emotional intelligence among gifted students in Saudi Arabia. The findings of the qualitative investigation were put under different themes. Analysis of the interview conducted with 10 teachers and 30 gifted students gave a great insight into the feeling of self-confidence, self control, self initiative, human relation and sharing the feelings of others, teaching the teachers emotional intelligence skills, incorporating emotional intelligence into the curricula, providing emotional intelligence training to gifted students and incorporating religious perspectives of emotional intelligence into spiritual formation curricula.

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