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The Phenomenon of Gifted Labelling: Students' Perspectives on Their Being Labelled as Gifted by Secondary Schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

In this qualitative study, I examine the students' interpretations of the effects of being labelled as gifted by studying their experiences subsequent to the labelling process. Students' perceptions of these experiences are discussed. Twelve female students identified as gifted by secondary schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and at the time of writing, enrolled in a full-time gifted programme took part in this study. This study also examines how these students perceive the influence of labelling on their social and academic lives and self-concepts.

In-depth interviews were conducted with the participants, and the data provided new insights into the students' perceptions regarding being labelled as gifted. This study found that the majority of the students felt that the most positive aspect of being labelled as gifted was either personal or academic. The personal aspects they mentioned included things such as higher self-confidence or opportunities for personal growth. The academic aspects consisted of things like access to better learning opportunities and the chance to participate in international and domestic activities. However, the social experience related to interactions with peers was found to be the most negative aspect. Students felt forced to choose between academic endeavours and social acceptance, which resulted in emotional and social complications. This study found that these girls were sensitive to peer pressure, valued peer acceptance highly and believed that being comfortable in school meant having peers who understood and accepted them.

The implications of these children's experiences suggest that educators need to allow the child to take precedence over the label. It is essential to identify the individual children's needs, wants, challenges and strengths before

formulating educational plans or creating a fixed set of expectations for their

conduct and achievement.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The gifted label can have more complex implications for students than most people realise. Generally, adults (parents, teachers and educators) might believe giftedness to be a positive label (Ryan, 2013). Students identified as gifted are often thought of as the most distinguished academically and as setting the standard of excellence in school. Adults often delight in their ability and their passion for learning. They are excited to see their contributions in the future. Because of adults' high expectations for these students and their belief in their abilities, students identified as gifted may be at risk of assuming that they neither desire nor require additional support.

As with all other academic labels, the gifted label carries with it tensions and burdens that students identified as gifted without the label may not wrestle with in their academic experience. Not all the effects of this label are positive; on the contrary, for some students, the disadvantages may outweigh the advantages. Some students identified as gifted feel isolated, encumbered and pressured by the expectations associated with being gifted (Ryan, 2013). Such sentiments, especially if not addressed by parents, teachers or educators, may pose serious risks to their social, academic and self-concept development. Students may see their labelling as either empowering or limiting, and the difference between these two views is very nuanced; thus, it is important to examine how students believe that social and academic lives and self-concepts are influenced by this labelling.

Labelling is a socially prescribed phenomenon; that is, it is an institutionally agreed-upon system of classifying persons based on several demonstrable

qualities or characteristics. Whether implied or explicitly assigned, these characteristics or traits can be highly influential in terms of how individuals interact with their surrounding environment and society (Thomson, 2012). However, people also interact with the labels attached to them and develop new identities (Boyle, 2013) – or reject them completely as irrelevant. For the gifted label, identification and evaluation can vary significantly between programmes. Depending on the orientation and content of the programme, some identification processes might rely on wide-ranging procedures, including student work portfolios, while others might adopt rating measures and scores to assess student performance (Coleman & Cross, 2005). It is possible that students identified as gifted for particular programmes would be labelled as possessing domain-specific giftedness, such as being potentially academically gifted, or gifted in mathematics, science and sports, to mention but a few possibilities.

Clearly, the identification process is very varied, and makes the status of students as gifted subject to change between districts or programmes. These issues show that giftedness is arbitrarily assigned, and they raise many questions about the efficacy and accuracy of labelling students. Regardless of the selection process or the disagreement surrounding identification, though, the fact remains that once the student is labelled as gifted, he/she is subject to the ramifications of labelling, that might affect his/her social and educational live.

This study focuses on the students' interpretations of the effects of being labelled as gifted, as well as how these students perceive the influence of labelling on their social and academic lives and self-concepts. Although students face a different set of stereotypes, the expectations associated with the gifted label might also limit students' understandings of their abilities. For example,

students identified as gifted may understand that they are incredibly capable and their capabilities had no limits (Litster and Roberts, 2011). Moreover, students may perceive social stigmas against their label which may affect how they interact with their peers (Ryan, 2013). Academic and social aspects associated with giftedness may significantly affect these students' self-concepts, and in some instances, the expectations associated with giftedness are more harmful than useful. As such, this topic deserves greater investigation.

1.2 Problem Statement

The gifted education field is currently experiencing considerable controversy as researchers and educators reconsider educational provisions for students identified as gifted, who should be represented with this label and how their needs might best be met (Merry, 2008). Although the gifted label carries an ostensibly 'positive' connotation, it has complex emotional, social and academic implications, as discussed in the literature (Coleman, Micko & Cross, 2015). Emotionally, the student may experience a range of feelings after being identified as gifted, ranging from happiness to confusion and concern, in trying to negotiate the label. Socially, the students could believe that the gifted label influences the way others perceive them, and this can affect how the students perceive themselves. Academically, attending a specialised gifted programme may mean that students are faced with a completely new set of educational demands and expectations. Understanding the nature of students' experience of being labelled as gifted from within students' worldview is the focus of this study. The intent is to provide information for parents, teachers, administrators and psychologists so that they can better understand and support students identified as gifted and their

development, thus helping them to function successfully in emotional, social and academic domains.

Moreover, to provide quality service to students identified as gifted, the importance of labelling should be addressed. Once a student is labelled as belonging to a category with certain characteristics, positive or negative effects on this student may be inevitable. To better help these students adapt to their environment, as well as to provide better services, further study on the way students negotiate the gifted label is urgently needed.

1.3 Statement of Purpose

Although some research has been done on students' experiences of the gifted label (Berlin, 2009; Coleman et al., 2015; Coleman & Cross, 2014; Vialle et al., 2007), there has been no universal agreement on the impacts of labelling on students' social and academic lives and self-concepts.

Within this study, understandings of giftedness were derived from the perceptions of students identified as gifted and placed in gifted classes, at the time of writing. The main aim of this study is to offer an in-depth exploration of students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled as gifted in secondary schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as well as how these students perceive the influence of labelling on their social and academic lives and self-concepts.

1.4 Gifted Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

The KSA is one of the countries that recognised the importance of meeting the needs of gifted children in the mid-20th century. In 1968, educational policy in Saudi Arabia stated that all students had the right to develop their talents and

abilities (Alarfaj, 2011). In 1969, the Saudi cabinet first recognised the need to identify gifted students (The Ministry of Education (MOE), 2018), but no actual steps were taken toward this end. Between 1990 and 1996, King Abdul Aziz's City of Science and Technology, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the General Presidency for Girls Education, developed a project for extensive national research. The project, entitled "Identification and Care for Gifted Students," consisted of three main aims:

1) To design tools and tests for the identification of students identified as gifted.

2) To design enrichment programme models for the mathematics and science curricula.

3) To enlighten Saudi society about the importance of identifying high ability pupils and providing for their educational needs (MOE, 2018).

Today, the KSA has demonstrated its interest in students identified as gifted through the establishment of the King Abdul Aziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (Mawhiba), and the General Administration for Gifted Students (GAGS) in the Ministry of Education. These organisations aim to prepare policies and strategic plans for the education of students identified as gifted (MOE, 2018). Currently, many programmes and services offered by these organisations serve students identified as gifted, such as the STEM programme, which requires these students to attend gifted centres on weekends; a summer programme, held during the summer holiday; the gifted programme in schools, which provides programme-related services for students identified as gifted during the school year; and international programmes, for instance, for Mawhiba's international summer programmes, distinguished high

school students (males and females) are nominated to participate in summer programmes held in the most prestigious international universities in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada and Ireland (King Abdul Aziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity, 2018).

However, several studies in the KSA have agreed that gifted education needs more attention and care in various areas. For example, Budair and Bahabri (2010) recommended more financial support for gifted programmes. Moreover, Al-Ghamdi (2006) indicated that the gifted programmes suffer from a lack of organisation and planning in terms of material and human potential. Finally, Al-Shahrani (2002) emphasised that state school administrations are unable to clearly identify gifted students, while Juhani (2008) pointed out that researchers have not paid adequate attention to the evaluation of gifted programmes.

More details about gifted education and programmes in the KSA will be provided in the Findings Chapter (see section 4.2).

1.5 Thesis structure

This section outlines the thesis structure and introduce the chapters that it contains.

The Literature Review Chapter reviews the definitions of giftedness used throughout the history of gifted education and internationally. It reviews the studies on giftedness and the educational provisions for students identified as gifted. This chapter also examines the studies that indicate that although labelling students gifted can have many benefits, there are social, psychological and emotional risks involved in doing so.

The **Methodology Chapter** outlines the philosophical underpinnings of this study that follows an interpretative research approach. Then the study's exploratory design approach is explained, and relevant methodological issues are discussed. Project design, implementation, and recruiting participants are then presented. The analysis of the findings and ethical issues are also discussed, followed by an examination of the methodological limitations of and challenges faced in this study.

The study's findings are examined in the **Findings Chapter** in two parts. In the first, I presented an overview of the gifted programme's policies and procedures, and of how students labelled gifted are identified. This part is about presenting the students' context drawing on interviews with teachers and directors of gifted programme, and documentary analysis. The second part is about perceptions and implications of labelling from the perspective of students themselves.

The **Discussion Chapter** begins with a summary of the findings and a discussion about how the data illuminated the issues raised by the research aims. Moreover, this part of the study discusses the findings in relation to the literature, implications of the findings, recommendations for further research, and ends with the conclusion.

Finally, the **Appendices** provide supporting documents and tables that present details about the data collection methods and analysis.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The search for relevant literature was carried out in the British Education Index database, EBSCO, E-Journals, Education Research Complete, ERIC, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses and Global Saudi Digital Library. The search keywords included 'gifted and identity', 'gifted students' self-concept', 'gifted and label', 'identity development and adolescence', 'psychological impact of being labelled gifted', 'labelling and identity' and 'the influences of gifted label'. Rather than looking at studies that focus on specific subsets of students who are considered gifted, such as differentiations by gender or minority status, I sought studies that examined students from broad perspectives to obtain more generalisable results. I also searched for studies that probed students' opinions and experiences of being labelled 'gifted' and its consequences for them, rather than those of parents or teachers working with students who are gifted.

2.2 Giftedness Definitions and Concepts

Throughout the history of gifted education field, no universal agreement on the definition of 'giftedness' has been established. Several interpretations of giftedness have been offered in academic circles, where students identified as gifted represent a very diverse group (Robinson, 2002), perhaps in part due to the diversity of the criteria used to identify them (Carman, 2013). These criteria depend on the national and/or school context and include, among others, academic potential, intellectual ability, creativity and school achievement (Callahan, 2000). Agreeing upon a definition is a challenge because of the great

discrepancies between theories on what giftedness means and who qualifies as gifted. Carman (2013) points out that gifted education field contains:

> *lack of consensus as to what qualifies a person to be defined as gifted for the purposes of research. This lack of consensus leads to lower generalizability of research about giftedness and to an inability for researchers in the field to compare results from studies. (p.52).*

Historically, giftedness has been equated to having high score in an intelligence tests (Brown, Renzulli, Gubbins, Siegle & Chen, 2005; Davis & Rimm, 2004; Gordon & Bridglall, 2005), and for decades intelligence tests scores were the sole determinant for admission into gifted programs. Carman (2013) said that no matter how many researchers have suggested that an intelligence test score is not the only method for determining giftedness, it remains the most common method of identifying children perceived as gifted in research. This particular perspective became popular after Terman (1916, 1926) defined children identified as gifted as those who achieve "the top 1% level in general intellectual ability as measured by the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale or a comparable instrument" (Terman, 1926, p. 43, cited in Alfurayh, 2016). Terman's perspective on giftedness was limited to intellectual ability and excluded other factors such as leadership qualities, behaviour and creativity.

Since Terman's pioneering work, many researchers have developed numerous methods for identifying children identified as gifted (Stoeger, 2009). In 1958, Witty believed that children with outstanding potential in social leadership, creativity, music and visual artistry could be identified as gifted as well. For this reason, Witty suggested that the definition of giftedness should be expanded to include children who demonstrate outstanding performance in any valuable line

of human activity (Renzulli, 2002). He established a new standard of recognition that later was considered to be the broad definition of giftedness:

> *[Gifted children] are children whose outstanding potentialities in art, in writing, or in social leadership can be recognised 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 (p. 62).*

Marland's (1972) report to the Congress of the United States was the first national report on gifted education. One of its most compelling major findings was:

> *Gifted children are, in fact, deprived and can suffer psychological damage and permanent impairment of their abilities to function well which is equal to or greater than the similar deprivation suffered by any other population with special needs served by the Office of Education (p. 3).*

Marland's report is considered one of the pioneering works in expanding the conception of giftedness, and it contained one of the best-known definitions of children identified as gifted, and adopted in the USA and other countries around the world, including Saudi Arabia. Marland's definition is as follows:

> *Gifted 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 programme in order to realise 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* (Marland, 1972, p. 2)

After Marland, Renzulli (1978, 1988) further shifted the definition of giftedness from a narrow to a broader perspective, asserting that the narrow perspective focussed too heavily on intelligence, overlooking other areas, such as art, music, leadership and creativity. In his model, giftedness comprises three basic clusters of human traits – above-average ability, task commitment and creativity – that interact with each other and the environment (Renzulli, 2002). First, *above-average ability* is defined as facility in abstract thinking, numerical ability, analytical ability, language fluency and the ability to acquire information. Second, *task commitment* is defined as possessing high levels of attention, endurance, enthusiasm, will power and self-confidence in personal capabilities. Third, *creativity* is defined as having high levels of fluency, originality in thinking, flexibility and openness to new experiences (Renzulli, 2005). Renzulli (2002) suggests that no one cluster is more important than any other, and that while general ability may be a relatively static concept, specific abilities, task commitment and creativity are contextually rooted.
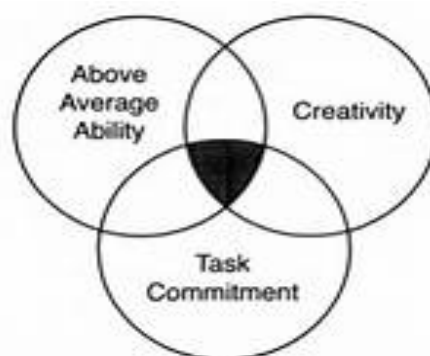
Figure 1: Renzulli's Three-Ring Giftedness Model (2005)

Gagné (1985) indicated a distinction between gifted and talent. For him, giftedness meant having natural abilities that occurred spontaneously, while talent was the transformation of these abilities into meaningful human activity or performance. According to this differentiated model, "Giftedness [is] exceptional competence in one or more domains of ability, and talent [is] exceptional performance in one or more fields of human activity" (Gagné, 1985, p. 111). He described domains of ability as comprising natural abilities that include creative, intellectual, socio-affective, sensorimotor and other general abilities; human activity includes art, social affection, leisure, business, sports and technology (Gagné, 2004).

Most recently, the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC, 2010) (an association in the United States supporting children identified as gifted, and their parents) took steps toward reaching a more holistic definition, defining children identified as gifted as:

> *those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports) (NAGC, 2010, p. 1).*

This definition resembles Marland's (1972) interpretation, and it attempts to move toward a holistic definition for children identified as gifted, but such a broad definition still leaves space for creative interpretation of identification procedures among educators and researchers. According to Carman (2013), it should come as no surprise that no consensus has been reached on the definition of giftedness, and that it is understandable that one study's gifted participants would

not be considered gifted in another study because of a lack of agreement on standards. He added that "a consensus definition of giftedness is needed, so that researchers and practitioners who look to previous research for direction in their work will not read research and wonder if they are comparing apples and oranges" (Carman, 2013, p. 62).

2.3   Giftedness Internationally

The concept of giftedness is different within and across countries and cultures. There is no universal agreement regarding the definition of giftedness, identification procedures, and programming. Children viewed as gifted in one culture may not be viewed as such in another (Elhoweris, 2014).

2.3.1   Definition of Giftedness in the United Kingdom (UK)

In 2002, a National Academy was founded in England with the aim of supporting pupils aged 11 to 18 who met the published eligibility criterion, that is, being among the top 5% nationally in terms of cognitive abilities. From 2003, gifted education was extended to include ages 4 to 19 and all geographical regions (Koshy & Pinheiro-Torres, 2013). The English government granted funding to each local authority to appoint staff responsible for gifted education. Moreover, the government encouraged all schools to nominate a staff member to implement the policy at their school, so many schools created the role of gifted coordinator (Koshy & Pinheiro-Torres, 2013).

In early February 2010, a government-selected committee met with key players to review the progress made in gifted education (House of Commons, 2010). The discussions focused on the "inconsistency" of the policy and its impact

in classrooms, and many noted that provision was "patchy" (Koshy & Pinheiro-Torres, 2013, p. 960). The committee found that the best choice of action was to allow schools to manage their own implementation of the gifted policy.

On all levels, schools were left without support: Nationally, the gifted education policy coordinating team within the government ceased to exist, and the National Strategies Unit broke up. Regionally, most local authorities' advisory services for gifted education were cut completely or subsumed within other remits (Koshy & Pinheiro-Torres, 2013). Currently, the education policy in the UK states that all students have the right to be educated in a way that enables them to realise their full potential. Lucas and Claxton (2010) discuss that the mission should be to enable all students, without exception, to enhance their abilities to the full and to realise their creative potential. However, the recent policy and practice in England shows that the interests of highly able 'gifted' students have not received enough attention (Smithers and Robinson 2012). The Children and Families Act (2014) defines pupils with special educational needs as "those pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities which require additional or different provision from what is typically provided" (Black, Bessudnov, Liu & Norwich, 2019, p. 3). This means that students identified as gifted are not recognised as having special educational needs in the UK, unlike what is currently the case for pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities.

2.3.2 Definition of Giftedness in United States of America (USA)

As mentioned above, the NAGC in the USA (2010) has provided the most recent definition of students identified as gifted. Moreover, the U.S. Department of Education defines students identified as gifted as those "who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities" (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002, p. 526).

Gifted education varies greatly across the USA. Although federal law recognises that children identified as gifted have unique needs that are not traditionally met in regular school settings, it offers no particular mandates, requirements or provisions for serving these children (Pereira, Knotts & Roberts 2015). Nowadays, gifted education is a purely local responsibility dependent on local leadership (NAGC, 2019). Wherefore, services and definitions vary from state to state and even district to district.

2.3.3 Definition of Giftedness in Asia

Giftedness in Asian countries is not universally accepted or defined (Alfurayh, 2016). For example, Japan has no formal educational system for children identified as gifted (Sumida, 2013). In Japan, the characteristics of gifted (*sainou*) education are domain-specific. Emphasis is placed on technology, science, research and development, rather than on education. However, "Japanese people put great faith in the thought that giftedness can be taught" (Sumida, 2013, p. 277).

Conversely, in Hong Kong, there are currently special schools for students identified as gifted; these have successfully nurtured these students as future leaders in Hong Kong (Tam, 2017). According to Tam (2017), gifted education in Hong Kong has been growing steadily for a number of years, with the establishment of various schools, bodies and programmes in Hong Kong education, such as the Gifted Education Council (Hong Kong), the Gifted Education Section of the Education Bureau in Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education, GT (Gifted & Talented?) College and the Programme for the Gifted & Talented of the Faculty of Education at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. In 1996, GT College was established as Hong Kong's first college for the gifted.

2.3.4 Definition of Giftedness in Arab Countries

The Arab countries have witnessed an increasing interest in gifted education which may propel Arab societies toward greater cultural and scientific progress. Therefore, educational policies and trends in the Arab countries are attempting to establish educational institutions and special education programmes to meet the needs of gifted students and to provide them with intellectual challenges (Srour, 2010). The first gifted school was established in Egypt in 1960 (Al-Zoubi, & Abdel Rahman, 2015). After that, new movement was begin in many Arab countries to establish schools, associations, centres, and institutions for students identified as gifted, such as the Arab Council for Gifted and Talented in Jordan, King Abdul Aziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (Mawhiba) in Saudi Arabia, and Emirates Association for the Gifted in United Arab Emirates (Jarwan, 2013).

Children identified as gifted are defined in the Middle East as those who have demonstrated advanced ability and creativity, and demonstrate specific behavioural traits (Subhi, 1997). In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), in 2000, the Ministry of Education started offering gifted-education programmes at government schools, but no law exists to regulate services for students identified as gifted (AlGhawi, 2017). Currently, the UAE has begun an initiative called 'School for all', which guarantees equal education opportunities for all students regardless of abilities or disabilities (AlGhawi, 2017). According to AlGhawi, the Ministry of Education officially defines children identified as gifted as "those who have an outstanding ability in one or more areas of intelligence, or creativity, or academic achievement or special talents such as poetry, drawing, handicrafts, sports, drama or leadership" (2017, p. 9).

In the KSA, gifted education officially began in 1998, when a so-called national project, 'Identification and Care for Gifted Students', was launched (Al Nafie, 2001). Several national educational and other institutions supported the project, e.g., The Ministry of Education and King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology. It focussed on: (a) creating procedures to identify students perceived as gifted, and (b) improving science- and math-enrichment programmes. The project adopted the aforementioned NAGC US-based definition of giftedness, which resembles Marland's (1972) definition (Aljughaiman & Grigorenko, 2013). The current definition of giftedness used in the KSA defines students identified as gifted as:

> *a male or female student possessed of special aptitude, unusual*
> *capabilities, or distinguished performance; these merits together make*
> *him/her unique among his/her peers in one or more domains appreciated*
> *by the community and bear special relevance to fields such as mental*

superiority, educational attainment, creativity, innovation and special
talents and capabilities (Aljughaiman, 2005, p. 76).

2.4   The Label "Gifted"

The label 'gifted' has been a source of disagreement for decades, maybe because it seems to imply a desirable status that is granted to some while remaining unavailable to others (Matthews, Ritchotte, & Jolly, 2014). Some researchers have argued that the label should be completely abandoned, though a replacement that provides the same advantages for classification purposes and the provision of services remains elusive. For Thomson (2012), labelling "lead[s] to [the] affiliation of students to a category" (p. 159). This means that, if a person is identified as gifted, that person is often associated with a specific group with members with similar properties and is thus likely to feel a sense of belonging.

Labelling is a socially prescribed phenomenon; that is, it is an institutionally agreed-upon system of classifying persons based on several demonstrable qualities or characteristics. Whether implied or explicitly assigned, these characteristics or traits can be highly influential in terms of how individuals interact with their surrounding environment and society (Thomson, 2012). However, people also interact with the labels attached to them and develop new identities (Boyle, 2013) – or reject them completely as irrelevant. For the gifted label, identification and evaluation can vary significantly between programmes. Depending on the orientation and content of the programme, some identification processes might rely on wide-ranging procedures, including student work portfolios, while others might adopt rating measures and scores to assess student performance (Coleman & Cross, 2005). It is possible that students identified as gifted for particular programmes would be labelled as possessing domain-specific

giftedness, such as being potentially academically gifted, or gifted in mathematics, science and sports, to mention but a few possibilities.

It is also possible for labelling to be informal, according to Barga, labelling is known as "anything functioning as a means of identification or as a descriptive term, formal or informal" (1996, p. 414). For instance, when utilised by peers in the adoption of descriptions like "nerd" or "genius." Informal labelling is a way to address or point out students in terms of their academic inclinations and educational achievement in class. Students to whom the gifted label is attached can be exposed to stigma, leaving them open to discrimination (Ryan, 2013). Stigma risks are most widespread when people see that their label is disadvantageous, that their performance is being scrutinised and that this performance may reinforce negative expectations linked to their label (Cross, Coleman, Stewart, 1993).

2.5 Theoretical Foundations

2.5.1 Labelling Theory

To better understand the effect of labelling on students identified as gifted, it is useful to review some sociological theories. Labelling theory (Becker, 1963) holds that assigning a label of deviance to a person increases the deviance exhibited by the person. At the same time, deviant behaviour may result in being labelled deviant, suggesting a symbiotic relationship between the label itself and the labelled person's environment. In labelling theory, social groups create deviance by establishing norms and rules, such that infractions are considered acts of deviance, and then applying these rules to a specific group of people and labelling them "outsiders" (Schur, 1969). This means that societies are the ones

that have the power to label people and to notice when they break the rules. Here, "society" refers to people in positions of power, such as professionals, teachers, carers and peers, those who are considered 'normal' within society, and who constitute the vast majority of the population. Labelling theory considers deviance a result of the "ability of certain actors with the power to label certain acts" (Sanders, 2013, p. 219).

Deviance, then, is the result of social judgments regarding people who may differ from the norm. Their differences might be in their character, behaviour, gender, race or physical appearance. It could be argued that children identified as gifted may be labelled as such because of their intelligence or because they possess traits that other children do not have. It is important to note that deviance theory emerged from studies on people who deviated from the norm in (perceived) negative ways, while students labelled as gifted deviate in positive ways. However, the gifted label does not guarantee positive effects (Hershey & Oliver, 1988).

According to Becker (1963), members of deviant groups have things in common, which gives them a sense of a "common fate, of being in the same boat" (p. 38). They face the same problems, the same social perspective and the same consequences. Becker believed that joining an organised deviant group might give members a sense of confidence and a self-justifying rationale. It could be argued, being a member of gifted group means that a person is no longer alone and that there are people like them who can support them.

On the other hand, labelling theory can be criticised in that it does not focus on what makes people behave in a deviant way. Rather, it is keen to understand why people opt to label some behaviours as deviant and the impact

the label has on the person and society as a whole. In fact, labelling theory does not pay much attention to the individual's character; it also overlooks issues like opportunities, attitudes and variations in socialisation. However, the extent to which individuals may be stigmatised differs depending on whether they care about their label. As such, some individuals might be affected by labels from society members; this might lead them to develop new identities as a result of the labels attached to them (Boyle, 2013). On the other hand, others have personality attributes that could make them resistant to the labels attached to them by society and thus be likely to reject them entirely.

Moreover, labelling theory focusses on the effects of labelling on the labelled person; it is not interested in the effects of labelling on the individuals surrounding this person (e.g. parents, siblings, peers and teachers). Nonetheless, labelling may affect the latter more than it affects the labelled individuals themselves. Indeed, the challenges individuals surrounding of gifted children face may be as great as those faced by the gifted children themselves (Renati, Bonfiglio, & Pfeiffer, 2017). Therefore, they need more attention.

2.5.2 Stereotype

The idea of the stereotype expands the discussion within labelling theory. While labels are names attached to people, stereotypes reflect how the label is perceived socially; in other words, they typify the social expectations attached to that label. In 1922, Walter Lippmann introduced the term "stereotype" into the social sciences, defining it as "a perception that is factually incorrect, produced by illogical reasoning, and rigid. Stereotypes are beliefs or opinions that have no implicit direction; that is, are not necessarily negative or positive" (Brubaker & Powers, 1976, p. 441). According to Steele (2010), the threat of being

stereotyped can affect people's performance to a large extent, and, as long as they are either attempting to support a positive stereotype or afraid of confirming a negative one, it is invasive to any area of their life that can be compromised by social judgment and expectations about their capabilities. He argued not only does the pressure of stereotypes make it difficult for people to work, but it also detracts from their ability to perform to their highest level.

When students are labelled as gifted, the label might convey different things to different people. As such, it may invoke a negative stereotype in one group's perception, while another group may perceive it as invoking a positive stereotype (Matthews et al., 2014). In addition, the stereotypes may involve perceptions of both others and the self in terms of deviation from typical peers. These perceptions may cause the labelled individual to react – positively or negatively – to the stereotype, which could potentially impact future behaviour. If the reaction is negative, for instance, this person may try to hide the attributes that are seen as different, hoping to conform to the attributes of peers perceived as typical (Matthews et al., 2014). Therefore, a stereotype may lead the labelled individual to feel "social anxiety or pressure to perform in a certain manner" (Gates, 2010, p. 201).

According to O'Conner (2005), despite pervasive references to stereotypes about students identified as gifted, research in this area is sparse. While, some studies have considered these students to be students with intellectual competence who are dependable, clever and clear-thinking, others have focused on personality flaws, describing them as prejudiced, conceited and aloof (O'Conner, 2005).

2.5.3 Pygmalion

The Pygmalion theory refers to the idea that the expectations of others can impact an individual's behaviour in the form of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The self-fulfilling prophecy is a prediction that directly or indirectly might become true, due to a potential relationship between belief and behaviour (Darley & Gross, 1983). The Pygmalion effect has been explained as follows: "the expectations and prejudices of teachers (from a position of power), projected onto the students, have the potential to become a self-fulfilled prophecy – either positive either stigmatizing" (Termes López, 2017, p. 132). A study by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) confirmed that teachers have the power to influence student performance through their perceptions. For instance, if teachers believe that certain students are gifted, then they will set higher academic expectations for them, thus impacting (positively or negatively) their classroom performance. Conversely, if teachers believe that a student is not capable of high performance and the student is not labelled as gifted, they may inadvertently indicate to the student that performing at a lower level might be acceptable (Matthews, Ritchotte, & Jolly, 2014). Upon receiving this message, students might feel unsupported, which can make them doubt or question their own ability and lead to disengagement and a sense of having failed to achieve at a level commensurate to their ability. These feelings might also lead students to be consciously inclined to do only the minimum work necessary to obtain an acceptable mark (Matthews, Ritchotte, & Jolly, 2014).

When used in the domain of gifted education, the notions of labelling, stereotype and the Pygmalion theory provide evidence of the power labelling has to positively and negatively affect children's beliefs about themselves as well as

the perceptions others have of them. This discussion of these theories is not meant to point out that giftedness is deviance but to show the power a label can have on people's behaviour and their social relations. People's reactions to the labelled person might be different, just as people with labels may view themselves differently. According to Gates (2010), the gifted label has the potential to change someone's life course because it may bring various options and opportunities.

2.5.4 Self-categorisation Theory

According to self-categorisation theory, individuals assess and classify themselves into groups (Turner, 1987). Tajfel and Turner (1979) noted that this idea is based on social identity theory, which shows that people's perceived affiliation with the groups they socialise with can impact their self-concept. Social categories are represented cognitively as prototypes or clusters of attributes that best differentiate one social category from another by increasing intra-category comparisons and inter-category variations (Trepte & Loy, 2017). According to Hogg and Reid (2006), prototypes describe socially shared cognitive representations of group norms. These norms define and dictate how ingroup members, including the perceivers themselves, reason and conduct themselves, as well as exemplify outgroup members' views and actions.

According to self-categorisation theory, people promote a sense of personal or individualised identity by depending upon factors that render them exceptional. They also hold various social identities, given their affiliation with certain social groups and interactions (McGarty & Turner, 1992). Once these social identities become more apparent, people tend to prefer to interact with ingroup members or those with common group membership instead of interacting with outgroup members. Moreover, in self-categorisation theory, the clearer a

person's social identities, and the more frequent the depersonalisation and self-stereotyping, the more people embrace the norms, opinions and behaviours of other ingroup members. At the same time, they tend to keep away from the norms, opinions and behaviours of their counterparts who are outgroup members (McGarty & Turner, 1992). The placement of the self in the context of group memberships is a part of the development and preservation of the self-concept. Consequently, individuals' evaluation of other group members is influenced by their categorisation of themselves in terms of their group membership (Turner, 1987). Given that people presumably assess themselves positively, they will also find the incentive to judge and appraise other ingroup members in a positive manner (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Turner, 1987). For example, fans of a particular sports team are more likely to think more positively about other fans of the same team than they do fans of another team.

2.6 Special Educational Provision

Schools have a moral obligation to ensure that all children deserve to be educated in a way that enables them to realise their full potential. Lucas and Claxton (2010) discuss that all students have the right to enhance their abilities and realise their creative potential; hence, schools should aim to meet the needs of all their pupils. However, the concepts of 'provision', special educational needs' and 'gifted' remain complex concepts for many.

2.6.1 Arguments around Educational Provision for Students Identified as Gifted

There are several conceptions of 'giftedness' and 'provision' as well as contrasting theoretical positions. It is important to review the different

perspectives around concepts such as 'gifted', as these may illustrate the importance and consequences of labelling. On the one hand, some argue that students identified as gifted should be labelled in order to be able to access specific services and programmes that suit their high educational potential. In the USA, which has a long history of gifted education, students identified as gifted are considered to have special educational needs and have been labelled based on their academic and cognitive abilities (Freeman, 1998; Brody & Stanley, 2005). Similar systems are also used in other countries (e.g. Hong Kong) and most countries in the Middle East (e.g. Saudi Arabia). Merry (2008) states that the proponents of special attention for students who are gifted hold that students identified as gifted need a specific type of education that can adequately challenge them, providing them with resources and tasks that yield substantial cognitive growth. However, the difficulties in determining what constitutes an adequate challenge remain unresolved, mainly because the means of understanding what counts as adequate are highly debatable (Merry, 2008). In addition, an education that fails to *adequately* challenge students identified as gifted has implications for motivation and learning. According to Merry (2008) "gifted children who lack motivation or interest in school because they are only given educational opportunities challenging enough for 'average' learners are less likely to flourish because flourishing is linked to the eagerness to learn" (p. 59). Hence, educational attainment in school can be directly linked to the level of motivation children experience vis-à-vis the types of educational tasks and projects they are offered.

In contrast, some believe that educators should try to provide opportunities to all students in an effort to develop their abilities; they advise educators to refrain from labelling a specific subgroup of students as 'gifted'. Morris (2013)

adds that the proponents of this claim believe that all pupils have the right to high expectations and challenge in their everyday learning experiences rather than offering special curricula and programmes to a minority of students. Merry (2008) reminds us that it is a matter of justice for governments to provide educational opportunities for all pupils irrespective of their ability or social class background. In the UK, for example, differentiation is encouraged at all levels to ensure that all students are enabled to reach their full potential (Koshy & Pinheiro-Torres, 2013). Differentiation for all students offers an inclusive approach to education, maximising the opportunity for students identified as gifted to learn and develop to the best of their ability alongside their peers (Morris, 2013). Reis (2009) says that the absence of differentiation may cause low academic achievement for students who are gifted. The differentiation of curriculum and instruction makes courses more challenging for students identified as gifted and help them realise their potential. However, there are concerns that teachers often teach at the middle level of ability, which may fail to offer adequate challenge to pupils who are gifted (Freeman, 1998). Time, curriculum and class size may hinder the teacher from applying differentiated education style. Children who are gifted may encounter situations where biological age rather than competency determines educational opportunities. The implication is that these children may complain that the offered situations are not intellectually challenging (Coleman et al., 2015).

According to Merry (2008), unreserved approval may be granted to provide extra resources to gifted education if it could be shown that these resources make an appropriate contribution to the good of students identified as gifted and not exclude the communal interests within a fair system of social cooperation. This means that additional support can be provided to students identified as gifted so long as it is in their best interests and those of their society and does not

compromise other children's education. Merry (2008) argues that, gifted or not, no child deserves the educational minimum; rather, each child deserves to be educated in ways that stimulate their critical thinking and creativity regardless of parental input, teacher recommendation and test scores.

2.6.2 Gifted Education without Gifted Label

There are some who believe that educators should focus on providing differentiated curricula for all the diverse groups of students in schools rather than thinking about interpersonal differentiation. According to Borland (2005), the construct of the child who is gifted, as it is largely assumed in American education, is neither required nor supported empirically or logically for a number of grounds. For example, the concept of gifted students in American education is socially prescribed phenomenon of questionable validity. Moreover, the educational practice of gifted education, as opposed to the goals and values of most of its advocates, has frequently had unfortunate social and moral outcomes. In addition, this practice has exacerbated the unfair allocation of educational resources in America.

Borland (2005) has called for the term 'gifted education without gifted children'. In other words, he recommends that educators dispense with the notion of giftedness things such as identification procedures, definitions and pull-out programmes and instead concentrate on the purpose of differentiating curricula and instruction for all the diverse groups of pupils in schools. Moreover, in her review of international gifted education research, Freeman (1998) highlights the trouble of using the term 'gifted' and recognises the power of the image behind the word 'gifted'; she warns that such labelling needs to be used with great care,

because it can have an effect on pupil's self-concept and can also influence the attitudes and behaviours of others towards students.

Therefore, the question is how best we can achieve the goal of offering a differentiated curriculum to the students who need particular attention without having to label them. A number of studies have attempted to answer this question (e.g. Borland, 2005; Merry, 2008). They illustrate the importance of providing opportunities to all students to develop their giftedness without having to label them 'gifted'. Borland (2005), for example, says that it does not make sense to begin by positing the existence of a group of individuals whom we perceive to be gifted; and then to wrestle with the problem of defining giftedness, something on which specialists have not yet agreed; and then move to the process of identification, whereby we strive to distinguish 'the gifted' from the rest; and finally reach the goal, which is proceeding to the development of differentiated curricula, reserved exclusively for those identified as gifted. On the contrary, it makes more sense to start with the curriculum itself, which, after all, is the aim of specialists' efforts. This means that specialists should label the curricula instead of pupils. This is consistent with Claxton and Meadows (2009) who state that in education our task is to help all children develop the 'zeal and hard work' by offering differentiated curricula which will make it possible for them to become 'gifted and talented' in their own unique ways (p. 9).

Several advocates of inclusion in the field of special education (e.g. Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006; Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan & Shaw, 2002; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2005) as well as critics of gifted education (e.g. Sapon-Shevin, 1994, 1996; Borland, 2005) have introduced the idea of inclusive schools with heterogeneous classes and differentiated,

responsive curricula and instruction as well as no labelling of students. Borland (2005) an American researcher, stated that many educators, including himself, for not very long ago, "react[ed] to criticisms of gifted programs as if they were attacks on the idea that high-achieving students require appropriately differentiated curricula, defending the means, not the end, of gifted education and wasting energy trying to preserve gifted programs instead of considering whether there is a better way to achieve our goals" (p. 14). In addition, Alamer (2014), a Saudi researcher, discourages separating gifted education from the regular education system; however, he believes that students identified as gifted would benefit from not being forced to study in the same way that regular students do. He adds that unfortunately Saudi public schools do not follow the differentiation style and do not offer special curriculum to students identified as gifted to help them learn and develop to the best of their ability.

2.6.3 Gifted Education with Gifted Label

For some societies that seek equality and fairness, it seems unnecessary to pay extra attention to those who have already demonstrated their advanced capability in sciences, mathematics or languages. However, this is not the case when a student is highly able in music or sport. In such cases, the pupil is hardly supposed to stand aside and wait for those less gifted to catch up but is rather motivated with private lessons and extra-curricular activities. For example, in England, it would appear that being labelled gifted in sport or music carries more respect and less stigma than being labelled gifted in an academic subject (O'Connor, 2012). Another common attitude towards provision for students identified as gifted is that, because of their potential and abilities, they already have the right tools for future success. Thus, time and money, instead, needs to

be dedicated to the children experiencing difficulties and barriers to enable them to attain the same opportunities to be successful (Council of Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment CCEA, 2006). Alamer (2014) argues that students who are excellent in science and/or mathematics cannot be expected to expand their talents if the education system does not give them additional support. Students identified as gifted may have special learning needs that necessitate a competitive curriculum and skilled instructors. This means that, similar to students with disabilities, students identified as gifted may need additional attention and support, because they have 'special needs' that cannot be met through regular classroom teaching to assure success in the future.

A previous viewpoint that called for gifted education without the gifted label was rebutted by two compelling arguments in a report from CCEA (2006). First, students identified as gifted cannot be seen as a homogeneous group of hard-working, well-adjusted and accomplished students, and there is no dichotomy between those who are gifted and those who have disabilities or learning difficulties. Children identified as gifted may also have adjustment issues, emotional problems, or they might perform poorly due to frustration, boredom, limited self-esteem or stress. It can be argued that it is not fair to attempt to assume that just because they are gifted, they will not need any additional encouragement or assistance. All students should have the right to access an education that best meets their requirements. Vialle et al (2007) believe that schools should think about identifying students who are gifted and group them together for at least some time, because studies have indicated that this is an effective way to decrease the feelings of isolation and stress that many students identified as gifted experience.

The second aspect is that all students have the right to receive an education that takes them beyond the minimum basic skills and allows them to enhance their capabilities to the best possible level. A good example of this is a talented sportsman who is not expected to play below his best ability simply because his peers are not as good. Similarly, a student who is gifted in mathematics should not be required to sit quietly and wait for the rest of the class to catch up or to complete more of the same sums to pass the time (CCEA, 2006). Many studies have shown that waiting often leads to boredom (e.g. Kanevsky & Keighley, 2003). An outcome of boredom can be frustration and underachievement or dissatisfaction with the learning process. Waiting for other students is quite common in classrooms, mainly because schools are designed to meet the needs of the average child; hence, the group is the controller (Coleman et al., 2015). A third-grade students identified as gifted in Peine and Coleman's (2010, p. 233) study commented that "it's boring just sitting there. I get bored. Sometimes, the beginning of class just goes on forever and ever"; an eighth grader said, "I just want the teacher to get done so we can go on. You already know the stuff, but the other people are trying to learn it and you can't advance" (p. 233). It can be argued that students identified as gifted face additional amounts of wait time and boredom when teachers explain things that these students already know, the curriculum is already known by them or when other students' lack of seriousness and misbehaviour disrupts their progression. It is thus the duty of the education system to offer a suitable level of difficulty to pupils of all abilities and not just to those who may be categorised under the label of 'disabilities' (Winstanley, 2004).

2.7   Providing Challenge to Students Identified as Gifted

2.7.1   What is Challenge?

Even though there is no clear definition for what constitutes appropriate challenge, schools still have a moral duty to ensure that their students do not waste time on activities that might not be appropriate to their level of capability (CCEA, 2006). It is therefore crucial that all students have the right to access an education that is appropriate to their level of ability. Not only does inappropriate education influence the academic development of the students identified as gifted but also influences their emotional and social development (Eddles-Hirsch, Vialle, Rogers & McCormick, 2010). For students identified as gifted, this may be achieved through the provision of curricular enrichment, extended lesson plans or being accelerated via coursework. It should be pointed out that the need for creating academic challenges in every single aspect of the curriculum should not be to the detriment of other pupils; however, students identified as gifted should not be left alone to develop negative feelings, such as boredom and frustration.

2.7.2   What Challenge is Appropriate?

The significance of a challenging curriculum for students identified as gifted is often appreciated by professionals, educators and researchers (e.g. Coleman, Micko & Cross, 2015; Kanevsky & Keighley, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999). Therefore, a child with high potential should be exposed as far as possible to a wide array of activities so that they can identify those that excite them most and will help them maintain their interest. According to Coleman (2005), challenge can be defined as a lack of immediate success and effort to learn a skill or understand a subject. Vanderbrook (2006) carried out a study in which intellectually gifted

females shared their experiences of their advanced placement courses. For one student, the term challenge was used to show the time she spent on understanding and examining literature as compared with the time needed for her to reason through maths problems. Elsewhere, Kanevsky and Keighley (2003) found that the students identified as gifted required more intellectually thought-provoking activities and tasks, which were more complex in terms of content, while instruction had to be fast paced in order to tackle their boredom in school.

CCEA (2006) offers ways in which challenges can be adjusted to meet the needs of students identified as gifted. As soon as the type of challenge is identified and agreed upon, the level of difficulty must be determined, ensuring that the task is not boring and frustrating for students. It has been well documented that easy tasks are likely to lead pupils to boredom and eventually disengagement and misbehaviour. Ironically, however, if they continuously attain great scores in their extended activities, this may reinforce the assumption that they must always produce perfect work, which can be detrimental as they advance through school and the degree of challenge increases. According to CCEA (2006), challenge should involve a risk of failure; in addition, it is desirable that students learn to cope with failure in supportive environments to learn how to cope with unpleasant situations in later stages of their academic life.

Similarly, if tasks are too hard and the students cannot try them in any way, particularly if they are accustomed to managing their regular schoolwork with relative ease, this can be a very demoralising process. When students identified as gifted see themselves presented with intellectual and/or academic challenge, they usually feel as though their capability and label are being questioned (Gates,

2010; Greenspon, 2000). Adults (parents or educators) may do a disservice to the students identified as gifted if they only focus on their strengths. These students might be gifted in some areas but struggle in others. However, the expectation is that a pupil who is gifted must perform difficult tasks and have a high performance in all subjects (Gates, 2010). Instead, students identified as gifted need their parents and teachers to tell them how to deal with problems and help them understand that they are all-round individuals with different abilities and skills. This might relieve some of the emotional stress that these students feel about themselves and their performance at school.

2.8 Being Labelled Gifted

Labelling has the power to influence the way others perceive the pupils and how the pupils perceive themselves. Assumptions on how the students are expected to behave and perform can be very confusing and even painful for such children (Gates, 2010). It is likely that the perceptions and expectations of a child's performance may change overnight as a result of a test score when in reality the child remains the same. Thus, the child usually attempts to demonstrate his/her ability by delivering distinctive work or achieving high scores in school exams. Dweck (2000, p. 122) offers the following remark:

> *When students are labelled, some may be over concerned with justifying the label and less concerned with seeking challenges that enhance skills…if being gifted makes them special, then losing the label may mean to them that they are 'ordinary' and somehow less worthy.*

Blum and Bakken (2010) argue that despite the fact that labelling may serve as a useful communication tool, it can also lead to damaging stereotypes. Similarly, it has been claimed that being labelled gifted usually involves high

expectations of the child from adults and peers (Berlin, 2009; Matthews, Ritchotte & Jolly, 2014). From the students' perspective, the gifted label has both advantages and disadvantages (Berlin, 2009; Coleman, Peine, Olthouse & Romanoff, 2009; Košir, Horvat, Aram & Jurinec, 2016; Coleman et al., 2015). Cross et al. (2003) conducted a study in which children reported being embarrassed when they were introduced as role models to their peers or confused when students teased or ridiculed them; they also said they were unhappy when their teacher informed them that he/she was disappointed by a test score. Other incidents reported by students involved feeling embarrassed about actions they referred to as 'failures', including giving the wrong answer to a question in the classroom (Cross, Stewart & Coleman, 2003). Freeman (2006) argues that being labelled gifted during childhood can lead to great emotional complications due to the high social expectations and pressure linked to academic performance. In addition, several studies (e.g. Berlin, 2009; Pereira & Gentry, 2013; Shaunessy, McHatton, Hughes, Brice & Ratliff, 2007) revealed students' negative opinions about being called gifted, emanating from teachers' and other adults' extremely high expectations of them.

On the other hand, some researchers (e.g. Berlin, 2009; Henfield, Moore & Wood, 2008; Shaunessy et al., 2007) indicate that access to gifted programmes, special curricula, more opportunities and engagement is the main advantage of the gifted label reported by students identified as gifted. Labelling can help students receive support and services they otherwise would not have received without this label. Berlin (2009, p. 211) concludes that students identified as gifted think that they have 'better teachers' in gifted classrooms and can make new friends in these classrooms. Moreover, Martin, Burns and Schonlau (2010) searched published literature for studies comparing the prevalence of mental

health conditions among gifted and nongifted children and adolescents, they found that students identified as gifted did not differ from their counterparts in terms of levels of depression or suicide thoughts. In another comparative study on 50 children who are gifted and 50 age-and-gender matched peers of typical ability, López and Sotillo (2009) identified no differences between the two ability groups in terms of popularity, rejection, visibility (social impact) and social preference criteria.

According to Gates (2010), students identified as gifted exhibit several of the same needs and motivations as their typically developing peers, although expectations of them are often too high, given their extraordinary potential or extensive vocabulary, which they are capable of using with great efficacy in class. It can be argued that each child's key needs and requirements as well as areas of concern and strength should be identified before reaching any educational decisions on them or formulating a set of expectations for their conduct and achievement.

2.8.1 Feeling Different from Others

In school, students identified as gifted tend to learn faster and may understand more deeply. In addition, they are more engaged in learning particular content in which they are interested, and may have abilities and interests that peers who are not identified as gifted do not; moving faster beyond their peers may help them stand out (Coleman et al., 2015, Coleman, 2011, and Coleman and Cross, 2005). Similarly, the more intense and incomprehensible the topic, the greater the opportunity for others to notice the exceptional skills of students identified as gifted. All in all, these traits can significantly widen the gap and highlight the differences between children who are gifted and their peers

(Coleman et al., 2015). Therefore, what seems like small differences in the first grade can develop into huge differences in the course of a few years.

Coleman et al. (2015) through a synthesis of 25 years of studies concerning the lived experience of students identified as gifted within the context of school, state that, students identified as gifted recognise their capability of doing things or their interest in domains that occasionally do not match the same abilities or interests of their peers who are not identified as gifted. Notably, awareness of these differences may increase with age. Cross et al. (2003), for example, found that the youngest participants in Grades 1 to 3 were aware of their own abilities in some of the subjects (e.g. reading); they differed from their peers in the same class who found it hard to deal with a similar exercise. As for the pupils in an older participant group (Grades 4 to 6), they found that they were even more sophisticated and eloquent in their descriptions of their peers' key strengths and weaknesses in both academic and social subjects. As for the secondary school, some students identified as gifted reported feelings of loneliness, mainly because of the disparity between their abilities and motivation and those of the people around them. Hébert and McBee's (2007) example of a secondary school student who spoke about her love for space science illustrates this point best: 'There was nobody who loved it like I did. It was very frustrating. I felt alone' (p. 143). It could be argued that, these students may feel sad and lonely because they do not find peers that share their hobbies and interests.

Coleman et al. (2015) argue that although students identified as gifted are aware of the differences between their abilities and those of others, they usually reject the claim that their abilities is the main point of difference. On the contrary, they declare that it is others who see them as different either academically or

socially. It is interesting how these children neither think of themselves as remarkably exceptional nor admit that they belong to a distinct group, except for their mere interest in knowledge and learning (Coleman & Cross, 2014).

2.8.2 Stigma and Difference

According to Goffman (2009), social stigma can be described as a phenomenon whereby a person with an attribute which is deeply discredited by his/her society is rejected as a result of the attribute. Goffman saw stigma as a process by which the reaction of others spoils normal identity. Coleman and Cross (2014) believe that stigmas may be obvious, as in the case of a person with physical disabilities, or may be subtle, as in the case of a person who is gifted. This is maybe because gifted label seems to be a desirable status (Matthews et al. 2014), that has many advantages. Stigma is triggered when others classify a person as a member of an atypical or dissimilar group (Coleman, 1985). Some people occasionally alter their behaviour when they learn about a student's association with the gifted group (Coleman et al., 2015). Such modified behaviour rests on the notion of what members of the gifted group might do or have done previously, meaning that everyday social attitudes are disrupted by recognising the presence of the gifted. In Coleman and Cross' (1988) study, a student described these situations by associating being gifted with a 'social handicap' (p. 3). Since many students identified as gifted tend to be acceptable to other students, some have attempting to mask their intellectual differences and adopt the same perceptions and interests as their peers.

Cross et al. (1991) interviewed students identified as gifted; they described a number of strategies they adopted to deal with social situations that sometimes camouflaged their giftedness. For example, the students did not say a test was

easy, not offering answers, asking questions when the answer was already known. Moreover, some students said that they pretended to be interested in small talk or tried to take part in extra-curricular activities for which they had little interest; they also acted in a silly manner and asked ridiculous questions (Cross, Coleman & Terhaar-Yonkers, 1991). The adoption of such strategies illustrates that the students' awareness of the potential stigma of giftedness, which may in turn affect their behaviour and perception of labelling.

2.9 Lived Experiences of Students after Being Labelled as Gifted: Capturing the Students' Voices

From the students' perspective, the gifted label has both advantages and disadvantages (Berlin, 2009; Coleman et al., 2015; Coleman, Peine, Olthouse, & Romanoff, 2009; Košir, Horvat, Aram, & Jurinec, 2016). Moulton et al. (1998) surveyed 14 adolescents registered at the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts at Northwestern State University Campus (USA), and they found that the students identified several attributes of the gifted label. The positive ones included increased desire of achievement and uniqueness, as well as the ability to engage with material in more depth. The most negative aspects of the gifted label were found to be having a label such as "nerd" or "know-it-all", or other stereotypes, like "teacher's pet", as well as a lack of guidance and support from teachers. Pressure and high expectations from parents and teachers were also ranked among the top five negative aspects (Moulton, Moulton, Housewright & Bailey, 1998).

Coleman and Cross (2014) examined whether being gifted was a social handicap. The respondents were selected from a group of students at Tennessee's 1985 Governor's School for the Sciences, which was held at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The findings showed that many gifted

students viewed giftedness as a social handicap. The students felt different from others, and they were viewed by other students as academically and socially different. According to the majority of participants, others saw them as unique.

The experiences of six academically gifted pupils and their parents within the UK context were studied by Morris (2013). A number of students said they felt happy if they have peers who understood and accepted them, rather than due to any specific academic achievement. The need for a peer group was identified as essential for many students to feel happy, despite the fact that their future-oriented self-motivation meant that the majority would continue learning whether or not they were part of a peer group.

Pereira and Gentry (2013), examined the experience of some gifted students in Midwest United States schools, they found that students stated that they were happy to be in gifted classes with other gifted learners, where they were challenged and where the teachers had high expectations of them. As for the negative attributes of the gifted label, students reported that the gifted label brought greater anxiety about achievement scores as well as parents' high expectations were mentioned as one of the most negative aspects of the gifted label.

A mixed-methods longitudinal study by Peterson, Duncan and Canady (2009) examined which types of life events were considered the most stressful in gifted students' experiences by following 150 identified students for 11 years, beginning in grades two through five, in a Midwest United States schools. An interesting finding, as reported by an overwhelming majority of the gifted students, was that school-related issues were the most worrying; other family or personal life events were not as stressful. When reporting academic difficulties in particular, a number of students mentioned receiving their first B as a main

learning challenge. Bs are not normally considered low marks, but for high-achieving students, this is usually outside of their academic comfort zone.

In addition, students labelled as gifted can be exposed to negative pressure from their peers, which can escalate to name-calling and bad-mouthing, such as being called a "nerd" or a "genius". In a study by Rentzsch, Schütz and Schröder-Abé (2011) with 125 students in eighth grade in south-eastern Germany, the students argued that concerns about being labelled a 'nerd' might lead a gifted child choosing to achieve lower marks in maths. Their study also showed that demonstrations of pride after getting a good mark decreases peer liking. Therefore, students who felt at risk of being excluded tried to show less enthusiasm about their academic achievements to avoid jeopardising their acceptance among their peers.

Kerr, Colangelo and Gaeth (1988), who examined 184 gifted students from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA, investigated the adolescents' attitudes toward being gifted and how they felt others viewed their giftedness. The researchers administered a number of open-ended questions, and students' answers were classified as personal, social or academic. They found that most of the students believed that the most positive aspect of being gifted was either personal or academic. The personal aspects they mentioned included such things as opportunities for personal growth and gaining greater self-confidence. The academic aspects comprised a number of advantages, like access to advanced classes and better learning opportunities. On the other hand, the social aspects related to interactions with peers were the most negative in the gifted students' view. Overall, the students had positive views about their giftedness, but they did not feel that others were positive toward their giftedness.

Berlin (2009) conducted a study with 66 sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students, all identified gifted students enrolled in a suburban public middle school in the Midwest (USA) and all participants in the district's gifted program. He found that some of these students believed that they had better teachers in gifted classrooms and that they were able to make new friendships in these classrooms. Generally, the most positive perceptions were purely academic. Nevertheless, more homework or schoolwork, as well as parents and teachers high-expectations about giftedness, were mentioned as three of the five most negative aspects of the gifted label. Moreover, other factors, such as pressure from parents and teachers, were perceived as strongly negative aspects.

The relationships between personality factors, emotional well-being, social support and academic achievement were investigated by Vialle, Heaven and Ciarrochi (2007). This study was undertaken with 65 gifted secondary students in a Catholic Diocese in New South Wales, Australia. In comparison to their peers, these students were performing well academically, although they reported feeling sadder and lonelier. Nevertheless, their teachers were not aware of these feelings and ranked these students as very well adjusted and less likely to experience emotional issues or to display any behaviour problems.

One major conclusion that one can draw from these studies is that students identified as gifted were ambivalent about their giftedness. They were often pleased by their opportunities for better learning and participation in various activities, yet they were concerned about the potential negative perceptions of their peers. Although most students in these studies believed that they were performing well academically, they face many social and academic challenges

because of labelling. These findings showed that the emotional and social needs of gifted students need more attention from researchers and educators.

2.10 Students' Interpretations of the Effects of Labelling

A literature review of the opinions and experiences of family members, peers and teachers about students identified as gifted is a useful contextual tool for evaluating the perceptions of these students of the effects of labelling. According to Cross (1999), students identified as gifted live in a world filled with mixed messages for them, many of which convey unfavourable notions about what it is like being gifted.

2.10.1 Parental Expectations

Considerable psychological evidence has shown that parenting practices can contribute considerably to children's development and growth (Magnuson & Duncan, 2004). Such practices can support the development of positive coping strategies in the face of depression and anxiety (Pfeiffer & Reddy, 2001; Stone, Mares, Otten, Engels & Janssens, 2016). A number of studies have highlighted the fact that the happiness and well-being of students identified as gifted can be affected by factors within their families. For example, a recent study indicated that the life satisfaction of adolescents who are gifted is linked to their perception that their parents are warm, approachable and emotionally reassuring (Suldo, Hearon & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2018). In other words, "there is no escape from the impact of giftedness on the family or the impact of the family on giftedness" (May, 2000, p. 59).

Parents' opinions carry weight with their children who are gifted or otherwise, especially in Saudi Arabia—a culturally conservative Muslim country

(Baki, 2004; Hamdan, 2005). The Saudi citizens' lives are structured according to the laws of Islam (Almutairi, 2008). The Islamic law governs people's interpersonal relationships, including their relationships with their parents. In Islam and in the Saudi culture, obedience and parental consent are obligatory. Many children seek their parents' satisfaction and feel happy when they feel that their parents are satisfied with them. Unfortunately, only a few studies have examined the impact of parents on their children's self-perception of being labelled as gifted, especially in the Middle East in general and Saudi Arabia in particular.

According to Cornell (1983), the label of giftedness is positively linked to a sense of pride and closeness on the part of parents for their children who are gifted. On the same note, Robinson et al. (2007) describe parents as a source of comfort and guidance rather than a source of stress. However, there is evidence that students commonly cite parents as a major source of pressure and strain for them (Schulz, 2005; Moulton, et al., 1998; Udvari & Schneider, 2000; Cornell, 1989; Fletcher & Neumeister, 2012; Robinson, Shore & Enersen, 2007; Assouline & Colangelo, 2006; Rimm, 2008). Parents' continuous highlighting and boasting of their children's giftedness may compel them even more to sustain their academic achievement.

In an in-depth longitudinal study, Freeman (2010) examined the lives of 20 high-potential individuals in Britain, some of whom were labelled gifted. It was concluded that students who had been declared gifted by their parents were more likely to develop additional emotional complications and had fewer friends. In her chapter on the effect of the gifted label, Freeman provides an example of a musically capable female student whose parents were excessively pressurising

her to achieve prominence, emanating from the label of giftedness; however, her failure of reaching the expected status resulted in some adverse, lifelong repercussions. In contrast to this unpleasant experience, Freeman (2010) introduces a different child who, despite being labelled gifted, became a successful adult. Freeman asserts that several of the issues faced by children who are labelled gifted may be caused by external factors, such as pressure from parents, teacher put-downs, and boredom and bullying in school and may not necessarily be linked to the 'gifted' label.

A description of how parent's actions may impact on their children's expectations has been offered by Rimm (2008) who claimed that if parents constantly emphasise their children's giftedness, this could lead students to develop unrealistic achievement expectations of themselves. Recognising their exceptional intelligence may give the students a feeling of being 'enthroned', whereas, this could later mean they have been 'dethroned' if they sense that they are no longer able to sustain the required performance level (p. 41).

In their theoretical article, Assouline and Colangelo (2006) discuss parents' role in conveying the message to their children that they should 'not waste the gift' of giftedness (p. 75). The authors shed light on how parents use all available resources, including themselves, to invest in their children's attainment to ensure that they fulfil their full academic and career potential later in life. This way, however, parents run the risk of imposing their choices of 'right' and 'wrong' concerning the academic and career options available to their children. According to Vadeboncouer and Portes (2002), pressure on students to achieve academic success often stems from constant emphasis to meet an established career target, which does not necessarily mean it is the chosen path by the students.

Instead of formulating an identity to their liking, students are often forced to accept one that has been predetermined from the options given to them.

2.10.2 Peers' Perceptions

Generally, peer relationships of students identified as gifted have been portrayed positively (e.g. McCallister, Nash & Meckstroth, 1996; Neihart, 2007; Robinson, 2008; Lee, Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2012). There is little evidence to suggest that students identified as gifted are subject to more peer rejection than their peers who are not identified (Gross, 2002, 2004).

However, it has been strongly suggested that students identified as gifted may struggle with interpersonal relationships. According to Robinson (2007), students identified as gifted tend to exhibit an early control of language, a more advanced lexical knowledge, higher articulateness and more flexibility in their communication. Thus, these students may be inclined to be judgmental or engage in critical thinking, which other students may find off-putting, mainly because they may not be comfortable with such profound and continual assessment (Altman, 1983). The dissimilarities between the capabilities and interests of students identified as gifted and those of their peers require an uneasy compromise between their own capabilities and interests on one hand and their desire for social acceptance; students identified as gifted may feel rejected due to a lack of understanding or interest by others (Košir et al., 2016).

A number of empirical studies have shown that perceived differences and lack of peer acceptance can have an impact on the interpersonal abilities and social coping skills of students identified as gifted. Gross (1989) argues that some students identified as gifted may choose to isolate themselves if they do not find

same-age peers that share their interests and general beliefs about friendship. In addition, they often have to work and play alone if they refuse or are unable to make a compromise between their own interests and capabilities and their intention to be accepted into a social group (Gross, 1989). Silverman (2002) also argues that children who are gifted and cannot find children of their own age group to share their interests may alternatively seek a new social scene through companionship with elder peers. In more serious situations, these children, upon perceiving a lack or unavailability of appropriate peers, may try to adjust themselves to the given social scene by concealing or dismissing their giftedness, blaming it for being the key factor for their rejection by other peers (Davis & Rimm, 1998). In contrast to the above-mentioned evidence, Lee et al.'s (2012) findings show that the majority of the students they studied reacted positively to their perceived giftedness and did not attempt to hide it from their peers. They found that the students felt fairly at ease and were able to deal with the situations arising from their relationships with other people, for example by striking up conversations, voicing opinions, making decisions, offering emotional support to other people when they are down or in a low mood as well as controlling their temperament when having disagreements with other peers, etc.

Moreover, it appears that students identified as gifted could be subjected to negative pressure from other peers, which can even involve name-calling and bad-mouthing (e.g. 'nerd' and 'genius'). Rentzsch, Schütz & Schröder-Abé (2011) claim that due to the fear of being called a nerd, a child who is gifted may deliberately achieve lower scores in mathematics. Their study suggests that showing pride after receiving a good grade decreases peer liking. Students who are at risk of being excluded as nerds may be advised to present their

achievements modestly if they do not want to jeopardise their acceptance among their peers (Rentzsch et al, 2011).

On the other hand, several studies have shown the 'advanced skills' of the students identified as gifted in their relationships with their peers who are not recognised as such. In their study, Cohen, Duncan and Cohen (1994) compared the classroom peer relationships of children participating in a pull-out enrichment programme with all the other classmates. It was found that students who were part of the enrichment programme were better accepted by their peers; they also showed great awareness of reciprocity in their friendships and were considered by their peers to be less involved in violent behaviour or being at the receiving end of such conduct (Cohen et al., 1994). In another study, Peairs (2010) showed that students identified as gifted enjoyed a higher social favour and popularity compared with their peers who were not perceived as gifted; further, they were more likely to form friendships and cliques with their counterparts who were known for their giftedness. Teachers also had a positive perception of these students and considered them to be more socially skilled than their peers who were perceived as typically developing.

2.10.3 Teachers' Perceptions

There is a unique interpersonal relationship between students identified as gifted and their teachers. In comparison with their peers, students identified as gifted tend to be more deeply influenced by the relationships they have with their teachers (Croft, 2003). Interactions with significant adults can have positive or negative outcomes, aiding or hindering almost all of children's activities. Teachers are possibly the most important adults in a young child's life after their parents (Kesner, 2005). Given this important role, teachers can either foster or

suppress positive relationships with children, leaving a huge impact on their development. A successful educator must acknowledge the exceptional capabilities and requirements of children who are gifted and offer suitable curricular challenges in a climate that is conducive to achieving these ends.

According to Piechowski (2006), despite the fact that students identified as gifted may have advanced skills in thinking and reasoning, this does not mean that there is a difference between their physical and emotional development and those of their peers in the same age group. It is possible that this asynchronous development may pose problems for these students in their interactions with adults, where they expected that their maturity level should match their cognitive level (Neihart, 1999). Moreover, some teachers believe that once a student has been declared gifted, then the expectation is that they are capable of doing any work perfectly. Therefore, students identified as gifted may suffer from perfectionism. Perfectionism is probably the most common trait and most overlooked attribute linked to giftedness (Silverman, 1999). Arguably, perfectionistic predispositions among students identified as gifted may manifest themselves in class in the form of delay in starting assignments, procrastination or reluctance to submit finished assignments and disinclination to participate unless completely sure of the right answer (Nugent, 2000). Students identified as gifted might feel the desire to live up to unrealistic expectations, which are sometimes imposed by themselves and sometimes by their teachers. If they fail to fulfil these expectations, then they may face numerous problems, such as low academic achievement, depression and acute personality disorders (Hewitt & Dyck, 1996; Rasmussen & Eisen, 1992). Thus, as a result of a number of social/emotional problems that might influence children of advanced ability, several challenges may emerge for the classroom teacher; this suggests that

cultivating a secure relationship with children who are gifted is crucial, albeit challenging, for teachers compared with when they deal with other students who are considered typically developing.

Croft (2003) provides a list of traits that The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) suggests for highly effective teachers who teach students identified as gifted, such as the ability to inspire and motivate students, minimising tension and anxiety for them and empathising with their high levels of sensitivity. In addition, teachers are advised to develop a positive interpersonal relationship with their students identified as gifted so as to be able to achieve the above-mentioned aims. Hence, it is important for teachers to be sensitive to the social and emotional circumstances that affect adolescents who are gifted and to acknowledge areas of concern and where they are most vulnerable (Vialle et al., 2007).

It should also be pointed out that educators need to consider the precedence of the child over the label. It is essential to identify the individual children's needs, wants, challenges and strengths before formulating educational plans or creating a fixed set of expectations for their conduct and achievement (Peterson, 2007). According to Berlin (2009), teachers' views of students identified as gifted often relate to the level of teacher training in gifted education or teachers' attitudes towards diversity. Increased training and experience in a particular field has always been assumed to lead to better informed and more skilled practitioners.

Unfortunately, in Saudi Arabia, the majority of teachers in public schools of students identified as gifted are not professionally trained to deal with these students (Alamer, 2014). The lack of teacher training may create many problems

in schools for students identified as gifted. For example, it may increase the number of teachers who misunderstand the characteristics and needs of these students and this can negatively affect teachers' attitudes toward students who are gifted (McCoach & Siegle, 2007).

2.11 Affective Issues of Gifted Label

Compared with the issue of labelling students with disabilities, the issue of labelling students identified as gifted has received limited attention (Matthews et al., 2014). Students identified as gifted in Saudi Arabia have experiences similar to their international counterparts. There is little interest in studying issues related to gifted education, including the meaning of the gifted label for students identified as gifted, in Saudi Arabia (Alamer, 2010; Al Garni, 2012; Alamer, 2014).

2.11.1 Social and Emotional Outcomes of Gifted Label

For a child who is gifted, strengths in areas of mathematics or literacy do not necessarily translate into strengths in the emotional and social domains. Some researchers who have studied the social functions of students identified as gifted have shown evidence of negative social effects and social insecurity (Kunkel, Chapa, Patterson & Walling, 1992; Lovecky, 1992; Sowa, McIntire, May & Bland 1994; Vialle et al., 2007). In their study, Vialle et al (2007) found that although most of the students identified as gifted were performing well academically, the social and emotional data collected in the study indicated that some of them were at risk; they added that students identified as gifted collectively tended to complain more about their isolation and voice discontent with the social support they received, illustrating a high level of dissatisfaction. However, these might be early signs of more significant emotional and social

problems, as they progress through school. Studies on adolescents who were gifted show that isolation and anxiety become more acute as students' progress through their secondary schooling (Assouline & Colangelo, 2006). However, there is no evidence to suggest that adolescents who were gifted are more likely to be depressed and suicidal than the general adolescent population (Baker, 1995; Cross, Cassady & Miller, 2006).

There is also some evidence that students' gender may influence the relationship between social acceptance and a label of giftedness (Norman, Ramsay, Roberts, & Martray, 2000; Schapiro, Schneider, Shore, Margison, & Udvari, 2009; Preckel, Zeidner, Goetz, & Schleyer, 2008; Rimm, 2002). Each study recognised that boys and girls responded differently to the social pressures associated with labelling, and all agreed that girls identified as gifted were more sensitive to peer pressure and were more aware of their gifted identity. Moreover, Luftig and Nichols (1990) examined the social acceptance of several students identified as gifted and compared this with same-aged peers not identified as gifted, according to ability and gender. They found that boys who identified as gifted were the most popular, followed by boys and girls who were not identified as gifted. Girls who identified as gifted were the least popular among all groups. Thus, this illustrates that while giftedness can be construed as a facilitative factor for boys with regards to their social adjustment, it can pose a risk to their female adolescent counterparts (Luftig & Nichols, 1990). Moreover, the research that examined gender differences in social coping among adolescents identified as gifted showed that girls who were gifted were more likely to deny their giftedness (Swiatek, 2001; Swiatek & Dorr, 1998) and valued peer acceptance higher (Chan, 2003, 2004).

Moreover, parenting behaviour, values and socialisation practices in families may account for the emotional and social problems that a child who is gifted can encounter. For example, in Saudi culture boys receive more care and attention from parents than girls. Therefore, girls who are gifted may not excel academically, socially and emotionally as far as their brothers because they receive less attention and educational resources (Hein, Tan, Aljughaiman & Grigorenko, 2014). Despite this, there are studies that oppose this view and argue that, in social coping, gender does not differ among students identified as gifted (e.g. Foust, Rudasill & Callahan, 2006).

In addition, as mentioned above, stigma for giftedness may lead to further negative social and emotional consequences for students identified as gifted (Cross, Coleman & Terhaar-Yonkers, 2014), which may affect normal social interaction. Coleman and Sanders (1993, p. 23) contend that "many children who are gifted experience being gifted as if it were a stigma". They claim that "if given a chance to call attention to their differentness (giftedness)", students who are known for being gifted will often choose "to soften the sharpness of the difference" (p. 24). For instance, in their research, Coleman and Cross (1988) quoted one student: "Being one of the smarties isn't easy. Actually, it's on the same wavelength to some people as a man with one leg, it's a social handicap and everyone stares" (p. 41).

2.11.2 Self-concept

According to Davis and Rimm (2004), labels can change students' perceptions of themselves. Researchers claim that students' perceptions of the label 'gifted' can affect their academic achievement (Marsh, Chessor, Craven & Roche, 1995) as well as their emotional and social development (Cross et al.,

1991). It has been found that academic self-esteem is often high among students identified as gifted; however, social self-concept is often low (CCEA, 2006).Yet, Mudrak and Zabrodska (2014) claim that "children themselves are, paradoxically, often absent from the current models and theories of giftedness" and that "the subjective perspective seems to be vital to understanding the development of the sense of agency in high-achieving children" (p. 57). Therefore, the methods that researchers commonly used to access students' perceptions warrant close attention.

In the literature, the label 'gifted' is usually seen as a mixed blessing (Hickey & Toth, 1990). Kerr, Colangelo and Gaeth (1988) believe that students identified as gifted view giftedness as having a positive impact on themselves but an ambiguous or negative impact on others. Giftedness is perceived as an advantage in terms of academic and personal growth; however, it is equally perceived as having strong negative social implications.

Litster and Roberts' (2011) meta-analysis is based on 40 studies that examined self-concept in children and adolescents who are gifted. They found that students identified as gifted perceived their academic competence higher than their peers who were not identified as gifted. These students also perceived themselves as having higher self-confidence and self-concept. On the other hand, students identified as gifted perceived themselves lower than their peers for measures of appearance and perceived athletic competence. In terms of perceived social competence, no differences between students identified as gifted and their peers who were not identified as gifted were found.

In addition, Lee et al (2012) examined the perceptions of the interpersonal competence and peer relationships of 1,526 gifted adolescents who had

previously participated in academic gifted programmes, in the Northwestern University Midwest Academic Talent Search and/or the Centre for Talent Development summer programs from 2005 to 2008, using an online survey. They found that students identified as gifted generally had positive perceptions of their social competence and demonstrated high levels of interpersonal ability. These students rated themselves as capable of initiating, forming and maintaining relationships with others, including their peers, and thought that they were liked by others. They were hopeful about their future and had low levels of depression. Moreover, Lee et al (2012) study showed that the students who were gifted had higher and more positive academic self-concept than other students. They rated their academic self-concept significantly higher than their social self-concept. It could be argued then that higher academic self-concept compared with social self-concept might illustrate that the students identified as gifted may perceived themselves more academically competent and that their exceptional academic capability might boost their overall self-image.

2.11.3 Academic Challenges and Outcomes of Gifted Label.

Although many studies have indicated that students identified as gifted academically excel their peers who are not identified as gifted (Vialle et al., 2007), they face many academic challenges because of labelling. Greenspon (2000) described a challenging academic experience encountered for the first time by a student who was gifted in mathematics. The student explained that he had "always been able to sail through the work and make very high grades" and because he was gifted, he was "supposed to be able to figure things out in a flash" (Greenspon, 2000, p. 177). Hence, when he faced the difficulty, he realised

that he was not as intelligent as others and he himself had come to believe and did not possibly deserve to be called 'gifted'.

Some students identified as gifted believe that their success in academic challenges is proof of their eligibility for a gifted label. Clinkenbeard (2012) believes that students identified as gifted are prone to interpreting academic difficulties as a sign of inability. With this mentality, students identified as gifted may easily think that an academic challenge represents failure. Such a mentality might undermine these students' academic self-concept and lead them to develop negative beliefs about their intelligence and whether or not they deserve their label.

When students identified as gifted encounter intellectual or academic difficulties, they usually feel as if their label of giftedness and competence is being questioned (Gates, 2010; Greenspon, 2000). Ryan (2013) believes that reduction in academic self-concept might lead to reduction in motivation; students are less likely to be interested in completing school assignments if they do not think they can fairly complete them or complete them at the quality level they wish. Students in special classes in Zeidner and Schleyer's (1999) and Adams-Byers, Whitsell and Moon's (2004) studies expressed discomfort about losing their special class and being threatened by the academic abilities of their peers who are also gifted. In both studies, the increase in the expectations of school work and those in the student group reduced the students' academic self-concept and their perceptions of their own abilities.

Researchers also have confirmed the importance of social support in academic outcomes for students identified as gifted. Living in supportive home environments can help students face academic challenges and encourage them

to learn and develop to the best of their ability. Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde and Whalen (1993) found that students identified as gifted who performed well at school were those who had supportive families. Moreover, Moon, Swift and Shallenberger (2002) examined 24 students who were gifted in the 4th and 5th grades in their transition year to separate classes. Students said that at first many of them were disappointed by the challenge of their new learning environment. However, students said that with time and with their parents' and teachers' encouragement, they began to redefine their giftedness and intelligence and consider how far the challenge could help them grow intellectually.

On the other hand, students identified as gifted may show higher levels of academic self-concept than peers who are not identified as gifted (Robinson, 2002; Hoogeveen, Van Hell & Verhoeven 2009). As noted earlier, some studies indicate that students identified as gifted feel that being labelled gifted has positive academic outcomes. For example, the students in Moulton et al.'s (1998) study felt that attributes such as uniqueness, advanced learning, a positive sense of accomplishment, special experiences in gifted classes and the ability to cover material in more detail were worthy of receiving high positive ratings. Moreover, students in Berlin's (2009) study reported that the label 'gifted' allowed them to access gifted programming, receive great opportunities, be exposed to different curricula and enjoy attending the gifted class. This means that the label 'gifted' can be also a positive development, because it provides special support to students and might pave the way for a variety of opportunities and resources.

Generally, as mentioned above, there has been no agreement on the meaning of the gifted label for students identified as gifted, and how students'

social and academic lives and self-concepts may be influenced by this label; hence, the significance of this study is evident.

2.12 Rationale of the Study and Research Questions

There is a significant need for further research in gifted education field, especially as there is still a great disagreement about provision in gifted education, as mentioned above. For example, in the KSA and the USA, students identified as gifted are considered to have special educational needs and have been labelled as children with SEN. However, in the UK, these students are not recognised as having special educational needs and not labelled as children with SEN. This study examines the students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled as gifted and explores the advantages and disadvantages of this label.

Moreover, this research sheds light on the lived experiences of students identified as gifted and aims to understand how students' context may influence their lived experiences. In their study, Coleman et al. (2015) noted that the lived experiences of children identified as gifted require more in-depth research. They added that "researchers need to follow children into more narrowly defined educational settings to better understand how context influences the lived experience" (p. 372).

This study aims to allow students to describe in great detail their own experiences regarding being labelled as gifted from their own point of view. Students' perspectives – through their own voices – need to be heard. The goal is to discover what the students experience is, not to tell students what their experience could be. Studying individuals' experiences requires research that allows each person's voice to be heard.

Studies that have explored students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled gifted have been rather limited because most have not examined the lived experience; instead, adults (e.g. parents, teachers), rather than the students themselves, describe the students' experiences (Coleman et al., 2015). I cannot deny that these data are valuable, but they simply do not reflect the lived experience. This study aims to bypass the meanings adults attribute to students, instead giving students the right to express their own opinions.

There is an international and national limitation in exploring gifted label from the perspectives of students identified as gifted. Compared with the issue of labelling students with disabilities, the issue of labelling students identified as gifted has received limited attention (Matthews et al., 2014). Students identified as gifted in the KSA have experiences similar to their international counterparts. There is little interest in studying issues related to gifted education, including the meaning of the gifted label for students identified as gifted, in Saudi Arabia (Alamer, 2010; Al Garni, 2012; Alamer, 2014).

Moreover, in the culture like Saudi culture some parents might believe giftedness to be a positive label, so students identified as gifted are often thought of as the most distinguished academically and as setting the standard of excellence in school. Parents often delight in their ability and their passion for learning, they are excited to see their contributions in the future. Parents may have high expectations of their children who identified as gifted. Because of this, these children may feel tenser because they do not like to be seen by their parents as less competent. In addition, parents' opinions in the Saudi culture carry great weight with their children, and many children seek their parents' approval and satisfied. To my knowledge, no study has focused on exploring the

perspectives of students identified as gifted regarding their being labelled as gifted in the KSA and how these students perceive the influence of labelling on their relationship with their families.

Hence, this gap needs to be explored; this study used an exploratory design to examine students' experiences by asking them for their opinions, feelings and experiences about being labelled as gifted, including the social and educational implications of labelling. This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

Part 1:

1. How did the school come to be selected to have gifted programmes?
2. How are students identified as a gifted student?
3. What kinds of gifted programmes are organised?
4. What is the teachers' of gifted programme view about the benefits and disadvantages of identifying students as gifted?

Part 2:

1. What are the current beliefs and feelings of students regarding being labelled as gifted?
2. How did the students perceive themselves (self-concepts) when they were labelled as gifted?
3. What are students' views about how the gifted label influenced their social acceptance and their relationships with parents, siblings and peers?
4. What are students' views about the educational effects of being labelled as gifted?

2.13 Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature pertinent to students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled gifted; it also examined how students' social and academic lives and self-concepts may be influenced by labelling. This chapter reviewed the definitions of giftedness used throughout the history of gifted education and internationally. It reviewed the studies on giftedness and the educational provision for students identified as gifted. The literature suggests that the proponents of the label 'gifted' believe that these students should be labelled in order to provide specific services and programmes to them, which suit their high educational potential. In contrast, the opponents of this label believe that educators should focus on providing opportunities to all students to enable them to develop their abilities by moving away from labelling a subgroup as 'gifted'. They believe that educators should label and differentiate the curriculum rather than the students.

This chapter also examined the studies that indicate that although labelling students gifted can have many benefits, there are social, psychological and emotional risks involved in doing so. Students may feel they have to choose between academic endeavours and social acceptance, which can result in emotional complications (Greenspon, 2000). If students identified as gifted think that their intelligence is a constant and is only measured by their performance, their academic self-concept might be challenged when they face academically rigorous situations (Greenspon, 2000; Clinkenbeard, 2012; Gates, 2010). Students identified as gifted also often set unusually high goals for themselves; while this can reinforce their academic support when they reach their goals, it is also likely to lead them to doubt their giftedness when they fail to fulfil their

ambitions (Adams-Byers et al., 2004; Rimm, 2008). However, the literature indicates that if students study in supportive learning environments, they are more likely to develop positive self-concept even when they are labelled gifted. This does not mean that labelling has negative effects only; generally, students identified as gifted report higher levels of academic self-concept compared with their peers who are not labelled as such (Robinson, 2002; Hoogeveen et al., 2009). Many students identified as gifted also report that they enjoy participating in gifted programmes, made possible through formal labelling (Moulton et al., 1998; Hertzog, 2003; Berlin, 2009). They speak of both social and academic benefits of being labelled, because they see themselves surrounded by peers and more competent teachers (Berlin, 2009; Henfield, Moore & Wood, 2008; Shaunessy et al., 2007). Moreover, this chapter highlighted the rationale of the study and the research questions. It has revealed the significant need for further research to explore students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled as gifted.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the philosophical underpinnings of this study that follows an interpretative research approach. Then the study's exploratory design approach is explained, and relevant methodological issues are discussed. Project design, implementation, and recruiting participants are then presented. The analysis of the findings and ethical issues are also discussed, followed by an examination of the methodological limitations of and challenges faced in this study.

3.2 Philosophical Position

This study was conducted from an interpretive approach to highlight the issues under examination. According to Hammersley (2013), this kind of approach draws from various theoretical perspectives that differ not only in their views on how research should be pursued, but also in their epistemological and ontological assumptions, as well as in their views on the purpose of research in general. This is because interpretive research emerged out of resistance to dominant scientific methods: it focusses on studying the social world, gives voice to the participants to explore various perspectives, underlines the danger of key concepts being lost with quantitative examination and emphasises the significance of context and interpretation (Hammersley, 2013). The term 'ontology' refers to how the nature of the world is perceived by the researcher. In other words, the researcher's ontological viewpoint can be defined as the assumptions and beliefs the researcher develops about the world that can be

used as the starting point of any empirical social research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Grix, 2004). I believe that the world is experienced differently by different people, meaning that social relations can be understood only from the perspective of the individuals participating in the action being examined (Klein & Myers, 1999). As such, researchers can access different experiences as perceived by different people because people have different opinions, views and interpretations of the world surrounding them.

The field of special education needs (SEN) contains diverse groups and individuals, each with distinct characteristics (Avramidis & Smith, 1999). As mentioned above, in some countries (e.g. Saudi Arabia), students identified as gifted are considered to have special educational needs and have been labelled based on their academic and cognitive abilities (Aljughaiman & Grigorenko, 2013). Therefore, in this field, interpretive research can offer valuable in-depth insight and deeper interpretations. For instance, students identified as gifted may differ in their identified level of giftedness (e.g., from moderately gifted to exceptionally gifted), the reasons behind their giftedness and their needs, so these students will also have different perceptions of their giftedness. Thus, as proposed by Arzubiaga, Artiles, King and Harris-Murri (2008), quantitative SEN researchers should think about the cultural distinctions among children and explore these variations in their natural conditions.

The interpretive approach adopts a constructionist epistemological position. Consequently, according to interpretive researchers, the interaction between the researcher and the object of the research leads to the construction and attainment of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In light of this, interpretive

researchers link knowledge to meaning, explanation and interpretation (Fox, 2001; Schwandt, 1994).

As a researcher, from an epistemological perspective, I believe that in order to understand people's social world requires investigating their perceptions of the social world surrounding them. The aim of this study is to understand the perspectives of students labelled as gifted regarding this label. This meant making an effort to comprehend and gain access into their social world. Therefore, I took a broader look at the students' context at school by interviewing teachers and directors of gifted programmes. This helped me understand students' school life, which facilitated the interpretation of some students' responses. From this perspective, my aim was to identify and interpret participants' perceptions.

This study had two phases, and both had a similar epistemological perspective with the only difference between these phases being the type of interpretation (Sandelowski, 2000). In phase one, I used a more descriptive interpretation of the students' context. The descriptive data were gathered from teachers and directors of the gifted programme in KSA, and documentary analysis. In this phase, the data were interpreted through me (the researcher) as I designed the interview questions, analysed the data and conveyed the teachers' and gifted programmes' directors' opinions. The term 'epistemology' in this case refers to knowledge about reality that can be understood from a naturalistic perspective (Bradshaw, Atkinson, & Doody 2017). In the view of Sandelowski (2010), this kind of research can be referred to as essential or basic in qualitative research. The use of a qualitative description approach is particularly relevant when information is needed directly from those experiencing the phenomenon

under investigation, yet resources and time are limited (Neergaard, Oleson, Anderson & Sondergaard, 2009). In this study, the information needed was about the context of gifted provision in KSA.

On the other hand, phase two required deeper interpretation of the meanings to explore students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled as gifted. As such, I was keen to gather in-depth distinct perspectives from the students about the phenomenon under investigation to determine how they felt about being labelled as gifted and how the label had affected their social and educational lives. I have tried to understand and make sense of participants' construction of meanings in their social world.

In general, epistemological assumptions are linked to how knowledge can be produced, developed and conveyed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Qualitative research often adopts an inter-subjective epistemology, which is based on real-world experiences and social interaction because, as Grix (2004) noted, the world does not exist independently of our knowledge of it. In so doing, interpretive researchers strive to "understanding phenomena from an individual's perspective, focusing on the interaction between individuals taking account of historical and cultural contexts" (Norwich, 2019, p. 2). In other words, meanings are construed via human interaction (Crotty, 1998).

3.3 Methodological Approach

Crotty (1998) defined methodology as "the strategy, plan of action, process, or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes" (p. 3). Its main aim is to evaluate, justify and describe the use of particular methods (Wellington, 2000).

Several factors may influence a researcher's choice to use a certain methodology or particular methods, such as the nature, context and aims of the study, as well as the timescale dedicated to the research (Creswell, 2005; Robson, 2002). This study used an exploratory approach to examine students' experiences by asking them for their opinions and feelings about, and experiences of, being labelled as gifted, including the potential social and educational implications of this label. The exploratory nature of qualitative research is helpful and efficient when exploring new areas or phenomena about which very little is known (Eisenhardt, 1989; Perry, 2005). In this study, the exploratory research approach is adopted to "investigate a phenomenon or general condition" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 152). This is because the aim of this research was to explore a phenomenon about which there is a dearth of research. Where labelling is a new practice in Saudi Arabia and little research exists on this topic. As such, an exploratory approach was taken using neutral questions so that the participants could discuss their experiences of being labelled as gifted in school (Goetz & Lecompte, 1984; Patton, 1980).

My decision to adopt an exploratory approach was underpinned by the ontological assumption of interpretive research that indicates, as Creswell (2013) suggests, that people experience reality in different ways. Even though such viewpoints can be numerous and divergent, they are seen as valuable and effective paths to deeper insights into people's experiences of the world around them (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). As such, I was keen to gather several distinct perspectives from the students about the phenomenon under investigation to determine how they felt about being labelled as gifted and how the label had affected their social and educational lives.

3.4 Research Design

This study was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved interviews with teachers and directors of the gifted programme in KSA, and documentary analysis, followed by interviews with students identified as gifted in the second phase.

3.4.1 Phase One

The reason for conducting this phase was to obtain information about the general context of the students identified as gifted at school.

3.4.1.1 Descriptive Semi-structured Interviews

These interviews were conducted with four teachers and two directors of the gifted programme in KSA. The purpose of the interviews was to collect information about the gifted programmes, as this information was not publicly available. These interviews helped me understand the students' context, their school life and the schools' provisions, which are important in understanding the students' perspectives on being labelled as gifted. The story of labelling begins with the context and how the student was selected and ends with the effects of labelling on the student's life. As Tomlinson (1989) noted, "a clear conception of the domain of interest appears to be a logical prerequisite for systematic research" (p. 162). Background information collected about the students' context included: (a) how the school came to be selected to have a gifted programme; (b) what "gifted" means in the school; (c) the nature of the gifted programmes and what is provided; (d) how students are identified as gifted; and (e) the benefits and disadvantages of identifying students as gifted in the school. The detailed interview schedule is provided in Appendix 6 (p. 261) and Appendix 7 (p. 263).

3.4.1.2 Document Analysis

The reason for carrying out document analysis was to support and supplement what the teachers and gifted programme directors had said. The documents analysed in this study contain text (words) and images. Some of these documents were publicly available and others I obtained from the teachers and directors of the gifted programme.

3.4.2 Phase Two

In depth semi-structured exploratory interviews were conducted with students identified as gifted. The research instrument was carefully designed and built, with questions based on Tomlinson's (1989) methodology of hierarchical focussing. The creation of the instrument involved designing a concept map as a basis for the hierarchical focussing method to map out the areas I wanted to explore (Appendix 3, p. 253). These areas were: students' beliefs and feelings about being labelled as gifted, students' self-perception after being labelled as gifted and students' views about the social and educational effects of being labelled as gifted. I chose this strategy to create interview questions that would enable young participants to express their views with a minimum of researcher framing and impact, as explained in the next section.

3.4.2.1 Hierarchical Focussing as a Research Interview Strategy

The study relied on a hierarchical strategy to construct and analyse the interview questions. In hierarchical focussing, "the interviewer seeks to elicit the interviewee's construal with a minimum of framing and uses a hierarchical interview agenda to raise topics only as necessary" (Tomlinson, 1989, p. 165). The "top-down" approach is probably the most obvious way of doing so, in which

topics being raised in order of generality. That is, researchers initially ask a question at the highest level of generality. They then seek further explanation and expand upon anything that emerges, taking note of the agenda items covered as the interview proceeds. If the aspects of interest are not stated spontaneously by the interviewee, the interviewer can raise them in a way that is "top-down," from general to specific, going as far as the most particular aspects of the agenda if possible (Tomlinson, 1989).

In hierarchical focussing, interviewers begin at the more general end of the agenda hierarchy and prompt the participants to elaborate. If the interviewers fail to elicit coverage of the research agenda, they may then check how far the interviewees have gone under any given heading and, if possible, raise the next most particular sub-topic. This principle should be used iteratively throughout the different sub-levels until the agenda is fully exhausted. In this study, I followed the steps mentioned below when conducting this strategy:

(1) It was important for me, the researcher, to analyse the content and hierarchical structure of the domain in question. For example, I was interested in exploring students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled as gifted. I was aware of a whole range of potential questions, such as: What are the beliefs and feelings of students identified as gifted regarding being labelled as gifted?; Might this label affect students' self-concept?; and What social and educational effects of the gifted label might they anticipate? These and other questions had various levels of generality, so there seemed to be a need for a systematic, hierarchical taxonomy that could be represented synoptically in one visual diagram. I therefore set about analysing the domain and came up with the structure reproduced in (Figure 2 p. 81).

(2) I decided which aspects of the issue I wanted to explore in the interviews, identifying the aspects of my topic area whose construal I intended to gain from the participants.

(3) The next task involved creating an agenda of questions that allowed for gradual progression from open to closed, with contextual focussing, and providing a skeleton to guide the order and focus of the actual questions in a way that took full advantage of the open-endedness of the process (Appendix 4, p. 254).

(4) I conducted the interviews as open-endedly as possible by adopting the strategies stated above within a non-directive style of interaction to reduce researcher impact. This strategy rendered the interview process open to the interviewees' frame of reference, rather than being framed by the terms of the interviewer. Detailed interview questions are provided in (Appendix 5, p.255) .

Students' perspectives on their being labelled as gifted

- Students attitudes and feeling after labelling
    - Positive feeling
    - Negative feeling
- Self-perception
    - The impact of labelling on student life at home/school
    - The student's opinion about herself
    - The concerns or special insights
    - The advantages and disadvantages of labelling
- Social relations
    - Student relation with their parents
    - Student relation with their siblings
    - Student relation with teachers and friends
    - The opinion of family, peers and teachers about gifted student
    - The changes in life at home /school after labelling
- Educational aspect
    - The kinds of gifted Programmers
    - The issues of the program
    - The impact of labelling on student academic life
    - The assignments and challenges after labelling

Figure 2: Analysis of a research domain.

3.5 Study Participants

The study took place in four secondary schools, two state schools and two private schools currently offering gifted programme in Riyadh. I recruited schools that represented diverse academic, social and economic backgrounds. For Phase 1 of this study, I interviewed four female teachers (one in each school) who were teaching in a gifted programme and two female directors of gifted programmes, one at the Department for the Gifted at the Ministry of Education (DGME), who is a director of the gifted programme in state schools, and the other at the King Abdul Aziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (Mawhiba), who is a director of the gifted programme in private schools.

For Phase 2 of this study, I recruited 12 female students aged 12 to 15 who were currently enrolled in gifted education programme at these schools. I chose three students in each school for interviews.

This study focussed only on female participants because the Saudi culture calls for education to be strictly segregated by gender. This made access to male participants challenging, as males and females are housed in different locations in all schools. As a woman, I could not gain access to male participants.

3.5.1 Recruitment

Recruiting participants for a research study involves inviting a subset of persons from a larger population to participate in a research study (Scott & Morrison, 2006). The nature of the study and the chosen method of data collection usually determines the sampling strategy adopted by researchers (Scott & Morrison, 2006). Researchers collecting qualitative data often do not

intend to generalise their findings to a population, but rather to develop an "in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2012, p. 206); thus, I opted for a purposefully recruited participants (Creswell, 2009, 2012; Marshall, 1996). The aim of purposeful recruiting participants is to recruit the most diverse and productive participants possible to answer the research question (Marshall, 1996).

Three main criteria were used to recruit participants: First, the students had to be currently enrolled in gifted education programme. Second, the students had to be between 12 and 15 years old. Finally, as I was very keen to have a diverse participant group with experiences relevant to the issues being investigated, I handed a form for each teacher of gifted programme in each school to name students with different characteristics (Appendix 8, p.264). In each group of three, one had a very high IQ score within the gifted range, another was gifted but represented a more borderline case, and the third was gifted and had an additional talent, e.g. in art or music.

Table 1 Participants' details

Name	age	school	The level of giftedness	additional talent
Hind	13	State	gifted but represented a more borderline case	
Huda	13	State	a high IQ score within the gifted range	
Lulu	15	State	gifted but represented a more borderline case	Art and calligraphy
Anood	14	State	a high IQ score within the gifted range	Leadership ability
Fatima	12	State	gifted but represented a more borderline case	Drawing
Hana	14	State	gifted but represented a more borderline case	Art, diction and representation
Nora	13	Private	gifted but represented a more borderline case	
Nouf	14	Private	a high IQ score within the gifted range	Leadership ability and poetry
Jude	13	Private	gifted but represented a more borderline case	Drawing, representation and Leadership
Reem	13	Private	gifted but represented a more borderline case	
Sara	14	Private	a high IQ score within the gifted range	
Manal	12	Private	a high IQ score within the gifted range	Leadership ability

3.5.2 Participants Size

In this qualitative study, participants were 12 female students identified as gifted. Participants sizes vary across studies, as there are no rules for participants size in qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002), and researchers have worked with many different participants sizes (Dworkin, 2012; Marshall, 1996). In this study, because I focus on a particular phenomenon in depth, having a comparatively small number of participants was appropriate for gaining insight into the research questions, as I did not aim to generalise my findings to a larger population. Interestingly, the interviews generated very rich and complex data, despite the small number of the participant group.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Methods are "techniques and procedures used in the process of data-gathering" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 47). The following sections examine the data collection methods and shed light on access-related issues and difficulties in the data collection process.

3.6.1 Document Analysis

Document analysis is "a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material" (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). As mentioned above, the reason for carrying out document analysis was to obtain information about the general context of the students identified as gifted at school, which supported and supplemented what the teachers and gifted programme directors had said.

Therefore, no interpretive or analytical efforts were made, though the programme information supplied by the documents was informative.

3.6.2 Semi-structured Interviews.

Because this study considered human interaction the main element in the production of knowledge, interviews were chosen as the key tool for data collection (Cohen et al., 2007). Interviews usually encompass "the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 351). This instrument is very useful in terms of gaining in-depth insights and making sense of the social world from the standpoint of the participants, as well as opening a window through which their views and sentiments can be explored and construed (Mears, 2009). According to Cohen et al., interviews enable participants "to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view" (p. 349). For the purposes of this study, interviews seemed the most appropriate tool since the emphasis of the study was on students' viewpoints, attitudes and opinions, and also because detailed insight was required to provide descriptions of the interviewees' experiences.

Not only are semi-structured interviews useful for capturing meaningful experiences from the respondents' standpoints (Kvale, 2008), but they also enable these participants to provide further insights and accounts of their personal experiences on a specific issue. Often, when researchers use instruments using Likert scales or questionnaires, be they open-ended or closed-ended, to measure adolescents' perceptions of the gifted label, they only capture a single response or a single collection of responses regarding students' thinking (Meadows & Neumann, 2017). Therefore, qualitative interviews are more useful

for allowing students who are gifted to elaborate on their experiences (Kvale, 2008). I preferred the interview format over a questionnaire format, as the former is more suitable in many ways. *Firstly*, this research aimed to describe how the phenomenon of labelling was experienced by students identified as gifted. Since such labelling is a new practice in Saudi Arabia and little research exists on this topic, as mentioned above, it was not my intention to make assumptions through a questionnaire. As such, qualitative interviews were undertaken using questions that could enable students elaborate on the practice and prompt them to respond in a way that would reflect their experiences of being labelled in school. *Secondly*, it actually seemed unreasonable to ask students to respond to direct questions about their experiences with a potential social and educational handicap on a questionnaire, particularly as the phenomenon's characteristics and impacts were not yet known. *Thirdly*, I expected that the nature of labelling may lead students at the critical age of 12 to 15 to deny their feelings of being different. However, with interviews, where additional explanations can be requested, I would expect their emotions to emerge.

3.6.2.1 Pilot Interviews

Pilot interviews help researchers increase credibility and confirmability (Silverman, 2011). Thus, I piloted the interview questions to make sure that they were clear and relevant, and to remove any vague questions. To achieve this, I interviewed two students identified as gifted chosen at random, in two different schools; one was in a state school and the other in private school. Each was interviewed individually. Questions that students found difficult or confusing were noted and amended. For example, when I asked the students that 'Do you think your parents decide your future?' They did not understand this question clearly,

and this prompted me to amended it to 'Do you feel any struggle over your future between yourself and others (e.g. parents, teachers)'?

Moreover, after piloting, I found that each interview lasted for approximately one hour. This helped me arrange interview times with the participants in the main study. Moreover, I analysed the interviews to see if they would provide the information needed to answer the research questions. Finally, the pilot interviews were a good way to test the interview questions before using them in the main study context.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through interviews conducted in the KSA in Riyadh. As noted earlier, the research had two phases: (1) The first involved descriptive semi-structured interviews with teachers and directors of gifted programmes, as well as documentary analysis, and (2) the second involved in depth semi-structured exploratory interviews with students identified as gifted, as explained in greater detail below. During both phases, the interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. They were conducted in Arabic, audio recorded, transferred electronically onto my personal computer and later fully transcribed. Prior to starting each interview, the participants and I had a short discussion – not recorded – to make the participant feel at ease. Once the participants were ready to start, I informed them of the expected time scale of the interview. I obtained consent from each participant before recording her interview on a digital recorder; the participants were assured that the recordings would be kept securely and would be transcribed by me alone.

To conduct the study, I submitted a request to the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. Once they provided approval to carry out the study, I approached the schools' principals, informed them of the approval and asked them to facilitate the study. The approval of the Saudi Ministry is sufficient for conducting studies in the schools.

3.7.1 Phase 1: Descriptive Semi-structured Interviews with Teachers and Directors of Gifted Programmes

Before arranging the interviews, I sent an information sheet to the teachers and directors of gifted programme by email to inform them about the purpose of research and what was requested of participants. This sheet also explained the data collection methods and informed them clearly about their rights, such as voluntary participation, the right to refuse to answer any of the questions, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any stage from the study (Appendix 2A, p. 247). I then contacted them, introduced myself and had a brief discussion with each of them. In our conversations, I explained them that the purpose of their interview was to give me a clear picture of the general context of the students identified as gifted at school. I organised my interview schedule based on their commitments and time and location preferences.

3.7.2 Phase 2: Semi-structured Interviews with Students Identified as Gifted

Before arranging the interviews, the state and private schools' principals informed the students and their parents about this study via an information sheet that offered the same information as that given to the teachers and directors (appendix 2B and 2C p. 249-251). Moreover, it clarified the importance of

students' participation and indicated that the interviews would offer them an opportunity to express their opinions regarding their being labelled as gifted. All students were given total freedom to choose the location of the interview to make them feel comfortable and secure enough to express their views privately. They selected different places, including in their own classrooms, in the school meeting room, or in the gifted programme teachers' office. This step seemed to make them feel more at ease during the interviews and encouraged them to express their views without interruptions or reservations. All the interviews were conducted in a convenient and informal environment. To make the atmosphere friendly and encourage social interaction, I also devoted about five minutes before each interview to social discussion as a warm-up.

3.8 Interview Analysis

I saved the recorded interviews in different electronic files, and the entire interview transcription for each participant was kept separately in a different file. For the data analysis stage, I was keen to make myself very familiar with the data. I went through each transcript several times to gain a deeper understanding of the entire dataset, becoming "immersed" in the data and getting consumed within the content (Riley, 1990; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This helped me gain some initial insight into key patterns, ideas and themes. During the immersed reading of the data, key notes were taken for each of the interview transcripts, which were drawn upon during data analysis. Using notes was beneficial for describing codes and considering the key themes and patterns that were highlighted in the analysis. Miles and Huberman's (1994) recommendation to use memo writing as an analytical tool for data description and analysis was a valuable one.

The next step was to generate codes from the data, which meant reducing the large amount of data into smaller, more manageable sections by coding the interviews. Coding involves selecting several words, phrases, paragraphs or sections from the texts that appear to capture the key ideas or opinions voiced by the respondents. The next stage involved giving descriptive labels to the coded segments. In this study, some interesting and pertinent extracts were coded to be used as the basis for categorising the themes and topics awaiting analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested that researchers should identify or use excerpts from the coded data that are relevant to a specific research question or theme. The coded data resulted in the creation of categories and subcategories. In producing these categories, I paid special attention to internal consistency, which was attained by ensuring that all codes were interconnected, made sense and were listed under adequate headings or categories. To this end, I utilised MAXQDA 12, a qualitative data analysis software (Appendix 10, p. 266).

In the next phase, I began identifying themes; in other words, I grouped the categories I deemed suitable for consideration as themes (Appendix 11, p. 267). While so doing, I aimed for internal homogeneity within the themes, which was reached by making sure that all the categories in each theme were meaningful and interrelated (Patton, 1990). Moreover, to avoid repetition during this process, some overlapping themes were merged, which is consistent with Tuckett's (2005) suggestion that data should be arranged into meaningful groups. In this step, each category was given a different colour so I could distinguish them more easily. It was also helpful at this point to use visual representations to sort the different categories into themes, so I organised and summarised the contents of each category in a table using a few words. I used the hierarchical strategy to analyse the data, where I started with themes at the highest level of generality in

the agenda hierarchy and then sought further expansion through sub-themes. This strategy helped me to organise and arrange the huge amount of data that emerged from this study, and it was particularly helpful in ensuring consistency and coherence among the categories (Appendix 12, p. 268).

The final step involved a review of all the themes generated, which was carried out in three stages. Initially, I reviewed all the themes to ensure that the appropriate quotations were chosen, that they revealed the content of the themes and that they were accurate representations of the key themes. Second, I sought to ensure that the presented themes had enough data to support them and that there was not a lot of diversity in the data, which is in keeping with Braun and Clark (2006). The third level was related to ensuring that all the themes were interconnected and that they truthfully conveyed the participants' story. Therefore, I endeavoured to ensure that all developed themes were logically presented, complemented each other and included distinctive data that would provide appropriate descriptions of the phenomenon under examination. Further details about the analysis process can be found in Appendix 13 (see, p 271).

3.9   Research Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a set of criteria advocated by some researchers for assessing the quality of qualitative research (Bryman, 2008). To provide evidence for the trustworthiness of this study and to show that it was conducted systematically, it important to look at the criteria generally used to evaluate qualitative research and how they have been addressed in this research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that in qualitative research, researchers need to describe the precautions they have taken to develop the trustworthiness of their study's

findings. Therefore, they suggested the following criteria to evaluate the quality of qualitative research procedures: credibility, transferability and confirmability.

3.9.1 Credibility

According to Merriam (1998), the idea of credibility in social research attempts to confirm that the researcher's interpretation of the data reflects what was presented by the research participants. Building on this, and to ascertain credibility in the present research, I sought to implement the highly recommended member-checking/respondent validation procedure, generally regarded as a valuable instrument in attaining this criterion in qualitative research (e.g., Bryman, 2008; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Holliday, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In particular, member checking enables the researcher to provide data and summaries to the respondents during and after the interview and to seek answers as to whether these are a true reflection of the participants' views, practices, and emotions, which will ultimately increase the accuracy and credibility of the research (Creswell, 2007). In this study, I held a discussion of the interview with the respondents after every meeting to ensure that the meaning of the participants' responses was clear. My adoption of this method was guided by Lincoln and Guba's (1985) stance that member checking is "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314).

The second step that I took to ensure credibility involved a different technique, this one proposed by theorists who are proponents of the idea of seeking out peer checks to augment the credibility of the findings (e.g., Merriam, 1998; Schwandt, 2001). In peer checking, it is important to involve a qualified researcher or fieldworker to ensure that the research process is on the right track and to provide feedback on data interpretation (Merriam, 1998). I asked two of

my PhD colleagues to provide assistance with this research study, while my supervisors, who are qualified faculty researchers, observed the research process by inspecting the data collection, procedures and data analysis. Part of their feedback also involved reviewing the data analysis, such as codes and themes.

In addition, it was essential to consult with a bilingual member regarding the accuracy of the Arabic-to-English translations. This process involved the examination of two transcripts, which were randomly chosen and sent by email to the bilingual member. To begin, the bilingual member checked the phrasing of the English interview questions against my Arabic translation, which was helpful in ensuring the absence of bias and that the translations were a clear reflection of the intended original questions. The second task was to examine the content of the responses in Arabic and then match it to the translation offered in English. The last step taken by the bilingual member was to help me with the wording and phrasing to make sure that I had included the correct English terminology and phrases to attain the closest possible Arabic-English translation.

3.9.2 Transferability

According to Given (2008), transferability can be defined as the extent to which the findings of qualitative research may be applicable or transferrable into other similar contexts. Many researchers have argued that it may be unsuitable to make generalisations with the findings of qualitative studies because they involve specific contexts and respondents. In addition, qualitative research aims to study and analyse a specific problem or phenomenon in detail and is not preoccupied with generalising the findings to different contexts (Krefting, 1991; Sandelowski, 1986).

On the other hand, other researchers disagree with this, alleging that the findings of a qualitative research study can, in fact, be generalised to other situations with similar features in terms of the research context and participants (e.g., Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Schwandt, 2001). Some effort was made in this study in order to offer an in-depth account of the research context, participants, data collection and analysis instrument for the "readers [to] establish the degree of similarity between the case studied and the case to which findings might be transferred" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 258). In so doing, readers, researchers and teachers in gifted programmes who read this study may find the findings and recommendations useful. One possible benefit to the field is that such individuals may wish to transfer the study findings, discussion or any part of the research deemed relevant to their own academic endeavours. Put simply, certain similarities may be inferred, allowing these researchers to select from my study what could be relevant and fitting to their situation to gain deeper insight into their own context or to inform their respective research accordingly, based on the exhaustive descriptive nature of the research.

3.9.3 Confirmability

According to Bryman (2008) "conformability is concerned with ensuring that the researcher has acted in good faith. In other words, it should be apparent that the researcher has not overtly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations manifestly to influence the conduct of research and findings deriving from it" (p. 379). This means that the interpretations and findings are based on the experiences, beliefs and views of the participants, and not based on the personal preferences of the researcher (Given, 2008). To establish conformability in this study, the interviews were conducted as open-endedly as possible, by adopting

hierarchical focussing strategies with a non-directive style of interaction to reduce researcher framing and impact and to enable participants to express their opinions freely, providing further insight and accounts of their personal experiences.

Moreover, the piloting of the interview questions helped me to ensure that questions were suitable and relevant, and to eliminate any vague questions. This helped me ensure that the participants understood the interview questions very well and answered them clearly.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are at the core of educational research (BERA, 2018). As stated by Wellington (2000), "the main criterion for educational research is that it should be ethical" (p. 54). Indeed, certain ethical codes of conduct have to govern the process of data collection to guarantee that the involvement of the study participants does not harm them in any way, as their safety is paramount (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000; Oppenheim, 1996). In particular, as highlighted by Creswell (2009), it is of the highest priorities of ethical research to safeguard research participants from various kinds of harm, which can be physical, psychological, social, economic and even legal if there are serious implications. Miller and Brewer (2003) emphasised that:

> *ethical responsibility is essential at all stages of the research process, from the design of a study, including how participants are recruited, to how they are treated through the course of these procedures, and finally to the consequences of their participation. (p. 95)*

Therefore, to ensure that procedures were in place to capture the ethical rules approved by BERA (2018) and the University of Exeter to guarantee the rights of the respondents, I filled out the Certificate of Ethical Research Approval form, which was signed by my supervisors and by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee of Exeter University (Appendix 1A, p. 238). The guidelines outlined below were also followed to protect the research respondents.

The research aims and objectives should be clear to the participants who are taking part in the study (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Radnor, 2002). To ensure this was the case for my study, before participants were interviewed, they were informed both verbally and in writing about the study's nature, the research subject, its aim, and the key issues to be investigated. A number of participants asked questions, and they were provided with thorough answers so that they had ample background information about the research study.

Moreover, I explained to the participants that they had the right to decline participation in the study. In fact, they were reassured that their right to withdraw could still be claimed even if they had already started taking part, and they could do so at any point (Punch, 2005; Silverman, 2001; 2011). Prior to the interviews, I asked for the consent of the teachers of gifted programme, the students and their parent using consent forms that were given to all participants to sign and return. These forms contained information about the aims of the study and assured data confidentiality and anonymity.

It is important to assure the research participants of the confidentiality and anonymity of their personal information. For example, I explained that instead of using their own personal details, I would give them pseudonyms. Similarly, participants were also assured that their identity and any other information

received from them would not be used except for the purposes of this research and that these would be kept confidential. Moreover, participants were made aware that there would be absolutely no access to their data except by me, and that no disclosure would take place regarding their personal information. As would be expected in educational research, some participants might share negative information about the school or the institution. To maintain their anonymity, some quotations that might make a direct reference to particular incidents or actions, and thus could potentially reveal the identity of the participants, were excluded from the data.

3.11 Limitations and Challenges of the Study

Despite the preference for interviews for data collection, I also perceived some possible drawbacks. In fact, several issues that could potentially hinder the data collection process needed to be dealt with; these emerged anywhere from the initial stage of interview protocol design to the carrying out of the interviews per se. For instance, designing the interview protocol was at times a struggle because certain questions appeared to push the respondents toward predetermined thoughts I had about specific topics. According to Creswell (2012), "interview data may be deceptive and provide the perspective the interviewee wants the researcher to hear" (p. 218), which, in fact, confirmed that this type of research might be subjective in nature, as my personal bias and influence could potentially impact the participants and lead them toward a particular idea or answer. While carrying out the interviews, it was important for me to ensure that I refrained from pushing my own views or perspectives on issues or steering the course of the interview toward the responses that I wanted or expected to hear. It would have been "deceptive" to generate data with answers I wanted to hear

rather than answers my participants wanted to articulate. Moreover, given the qualitative nature of the research, it was fundamental that I "submitted" to the data and permitted the unexpected to emerge (Holliday, 2010). In fact, because of the constructivist, interpretive approach adopted in the research, it was important for me to enable the participants to voice their own opinions and express their views, even beyond the boundaries of the interview protocol and the research questions already prepared and shared with the interviewees. To prevent the aforementioned pitfalls, I adopted Tomlinson's (1989) method of hierarchical focussing when constructing the interview questions. One of the advantages of hierarchical focussing is that, by adopting an explicit agenda in the open-ended probing of interviewee standpoints, the interviewer seeks to obtain the interviewee's construal with a minimum of researcher framing and impact, using a hierarchical interview agenda to raise topics only as necessary (Tomlinson, 1989). However, building the interview questions using a hierarchical strategy is not so easy and it took a great effort and time from me, as it requires great accuracy and experience to build a set of questions in a consistent hierarchical way.

In addition, the pilot interview was largely beneficial, with certain questions being redesigned after feedback from the interviewees. Also, based on the findings of the pilot interview, I knew that I needed to wait for the interviewees to respond and to give them time to ponder their answers. For example, when necessary, giving blanks of silence of a few seconds seemed very effective in making the participants feel less pressured and stressed when talking and expressing their views.

Another challenge was Saudi culture, which calls for education to be strictly segregated by gender, so access to male participants was challenging, as males and females are housed in different locations in all schools. Therefore, as a woman, I could not gain access to male participants, which meant that this study could only focus on female students, as mentioned above.

3.12 Summary

This chapter highlighted the philosophical assumptions of the study, in regarding of its subjective, interpretative nature. These essential philosophical underpinnings at the level of ontology and epistemology were present throughout the research as I attempted to understand the social world through the subjective eyes of the participants.

This study used an exploratory approach to examine students' experiences by asking them for their opinions and feelings about, and experiences with, being labelled as gifted, including the potential social and educational implications of this label. It had two phases, the first involved a descriptive interview survey of the students' context through semi-structured interviews with teachers and directors of gifted programme and documentary analysis. The second phase consisted of in-depth semi-structured exploratory interviews using Tomlinson's (1989) methodology of hierarchical focussing with students identified as gifted.

This chapter described the overall research design of the study, and it also discussed participant recruitment, the data collection method, the design and outcomes of the pilot study and the approach to interview analysis. It is also demonstrated how the study's trustworthiness was informed by principles of credibility, transferability and confirmability. Finally, the limitations and challenges

of the study were addressed. Taking into account the methodological choices described here, the next chapter presents the main findings that emerged from the data.

Chapter Four: Description of Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is organised into two complementary parts. In the first, I presented an overview of the gifted programme's policies and procedures, and of how students labelled gifted are identified. This part is about presenting the students' context drawing on interviews with teachers of gifted programme in secondary schools, the directors of the gifted programme at the General Administration for Gifted Students (GAGS) in the Ministry of Education, and at the King Abdul Aziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (Mawhiba) and documentary analysis. The second part is about perceptions and implications of labelling from the perspective of students themselves. The findings are grouped into emotions, self-perception, the advantages and disadvantages of gifted label, social and academic considerations. Through each of these, I explored students' labelled as gifted beliefs and feelings about being labelled, students' self-perceptions, the advantages and disadvantages of gifted label, and students' views on the social and educational effects of being labelled as gifted.

4.2 Part 1: The Description of Findings Pertaining to Students' Context

The information discussed here was supplied by the teachers and directors of gifted programme and official documents. This information was separated into four areas: (a) gifted programme; (b) school selection; (c) students' identity; and (d) the teachers' of gifted programme views on the advantages and

disadvantages of labelling and segregating students identified as gifted in gifted classes.

4.2.1 Gifted Programme

The KSA has shown interest in high ability students through the establishment of the King Abdul Aziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (Mawhiba) and the General Administration for Gifted Students (GAGS) in the Ministry of Education. These organisations aim to prepare policies and strategic plans for the education of students identified as gifted (MOE, 2019). Currently, there are many programmes and services offered by these organisations to serve students identified as gifted, such as the STEM programme, which requires these students to attend gifted centres on weekends; a summer programme, which is held during the summer holiday; international programmes, for example Mawhiba's international summer programmes which involve the nomination of distinguished high school students (males and females) to participate in summer programmes held in the most prestigious international universities in the United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada and Ireland (KACFGC, 2019); and the gifted programme in schools, which provides programme-related services for students identified as gifted during the school year. In this study, I focused only on the gifted programme in schools, which provides an enrichment curriculum and services for students identified as gifted during the school year.

The GAGS and Mawhiba directors and teachers of gifted programme have said that the goal of providing special care and programmes for students identified as gifted in schools is to contribute to building a national framework for giftedness and creativity that provides outstanding services to these students and

promotes enthusiasm for science and knowledge. This is part of achieving Saudi Vision 2030, which seeks to invest in the younger generation to help them become the most important contributors to the nation and its prosperity. The prince Mohammed bin Salman believes that, the true wealth of any society lies in the ambition and potential of its youth. He said, "Our true wealth lies in their ambition and potential. They are the nation's pride and the architects of its future"(Vision 2030, 2019).

Since 2015, both organisations (Mawhiba and the GAGS) have offered the programme through gifted classes, which are separate classrooms for students identified as gifted within the schools, where full-time attendance for students, which will be explained later (A Guide of Gifted Classes, 2015/2016).

4.2.1.1 Gifted Programme from Integration to Segregation

Although the system of gifted education in the KSA is still under development and is described in somewhat contradictory ways in different documents, its 25 years of development have generated a number of accomplishments (Aljughaiman & Grigorenko, 2013). For example, the education policy in the KSA today targets students identified as gifted either boys or girls. It is concerned with using appropriate methods that can identify and nurture students identified as gifted and their abilities. Moreover, the education policy states that the Government should promote high ability students by giving them special care, to enhance their abilities and to give them the chance to achieve their potential. In addition, the period from 2004 to 2009 has seen an enormous increase in the number of schools which have implemented gifted programs. The number of schools has almost doubled each year, starting with 27 schools in 2004 and reaching 700 schools in 2009.

In 1969, the Saudi cabinet first recognised the need for identifying students with high ability (MOE, 2019), but no actual steps were taken towards this end. Between 1990 and 1996, King Abdul Aziz's City of Science and Technology, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the General Presidency for Girls Education, produced a project for extensive national research. The project, entitled 'Identification and Care for Gifted Students', consisted of three main aims:

(1) To design tools and tests for the identification of students with high ability.

(2) To design enrichment programme models for the mathematics and science curricula.

(3) To enlighten Saudi society about the importance of identifying children with high ability and providing for their educational needs (MOE, 2019).

Two years later, in 1998, this project, designed to identify students with high ability in the KSA, was implemented by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2019).

This project was provided a succinct manner in which to identify and support students with high ability in the KSA. Therefore, it represents a landmark in the history of gifted education in the KSA (Aljughaiman & Grigorenko, 2013). The project provided the Ministry of Education with the opportunity to start special programmes for students identified as gifted.

In 2000, an independent unit was created in the Saudi Ministry of Education to monitor and facilitate the education of students identified as gifted in the KSA. This unit was referred to as 'The General Administration for Gifted Students' (GAGS) (MOE, 2019). In 2009, the so-called 'school partnership initiative' was developed between Mawhiba and the GAGS. Mawhiba provided students with full enrolment support by creating a high-quality educational environment and

providing scholarships for students identified as gifted to join distinguished KSA schools as well as enhancing the quality of education provided for other students enrolled in partnership schools (KACFGC, 2019). The GAGS and Mawhiba applied different methods to implement the enrichment curriculum and programme within the classroom, because students identified as gifted were integrated with mainstream students in the same classes. According to both directors of the gifted programme at Mawhiba and the GAGS and the teachers of gifted programme, in the past, students identified as gifted had been integrated with mainstream students, and schools had taken advantage of spare time, weekends and summer holidays to provide the gifted programme and activities to students identified as gifted. Teachers of gifted programme have said that in the previous system in the KSA, the gifted programme was implemented in regular classrooms for all students (gifted and mainstream) or in the resource room – a room where students identified as gifted are grouped in their spare time – to provide students identified as gifted with activities and more educational programmes according to their abilities.

Zainab and Kholoud (teachers for students identified as gifted, pseudonyms) believed that in the previous system for the gifted programme, when students identified as gifted were integrated with mainstream students in the same classes, teachers faced difficulties implementing the gifted programme because of the large number of students in the classroom and the lack of spare time for implementing the gifted programme in the resource room and for focusing on students identified as gifted and their progress. Abeer (teacher for students identified as gifted, pseudonym) believed that 'the presence of students identified as gifted in regular classrooms increases the dispersion of the students, and this needs more effort and time from the teacher'. Hence, the need for gifted classes

for students identified as gifted, which would make it easier to follow their progress and provide support and services according to their abilities, has been highlighted.

4.2.1.2 The Project of Gifted Classes

The Project of Gifted Classes was introduced on 29 July 2015 (A Guide of Gifted Classes, 2015/2016). This project focuses on students identified as gifted in public education schools by segregating them from mainstream students into special classrooms where they receive additional support that challenges their abilities and arouses their scientific curiosity according to the best international standards for teaching students identified as gifted (A Guide of Gifted Classes, 2015/2016). Table 2 below explains the objectives of this project and its outputs according to MOE (2019), and A Guide of Gifted Classes (2015/2016).

Table 2: The Project of Gifted Classes (MOE, 2019; A Guide of Gifted Classes, 2015/2016)

Target group	**Gifted students from the fourth to twelfth grades.**
The objectives of the project of gifted classes	1. Creating an educational environment that meets the needs of talented students. 2. Designing educational models that enrich talented students. 3. Implementing an educational system that takes into consideration individual differences among students. 4. Providing comprehensive guidance services for gifted students. 5. Preparing the educational environment for the opening of special schools for gifted students.
Implementation phases	The classes for gifted students are implemented gradually and are applied at the beginning of the school year in schools meeting the criteria for the opening of gifted classes (which will be explained later) for fourth-grade primary (primary in the KSA consists of six grades), first-grade secondary (which consists of three grades) and first-grade high schools (which also consists of three grades). In the following year, the first group moves up a grade and so on until the completion of all stages, and the expansion of the opening of classes increases each year according to the potential of the educational departments.
Main outputs:	Gifted students are provided with a specialised care service in educational environments equipped with highly trained teachers capable of competing and excellence in all national, regional and international forums.

4.2.1.3 Care Programmes for Students Identified as Gifted in KSA Schools (Riyadh)

As mentioned above, there are two organisations in Riyadh that conduct gifted programmes in schools. The first is the King Abdul Aziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (Mawhiba), which implements the programme only in private schools but aspires to expand to state schools in the future. The second is the General Administration for Gifted Students (GAGS), which currently implements the programme only in state schools.

a) The King Abdul Aziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (Mawhiba)

Mawhiba is a non-profit national cultural foundation. In Riyadh, Mawhiba implements its programme only in five secondary female private schools (Mawhiba, 2018). Mawhiba gifted programme in schools, was began in 2009, which is called the school partnership initiative because Mawhiba implements the programme in cooperation with the GAGS and in schools affiliated with the Ministry of Education (KACFGC, 2019). Its programme, presented at partnership schools, depends largely upon the Ministry's curricula. It offers high-quality, internationally advanced curricula in science, mathematics, information technology and the English language, in addition to enhancing thinking, communication, problem-solving, personal and social skills.
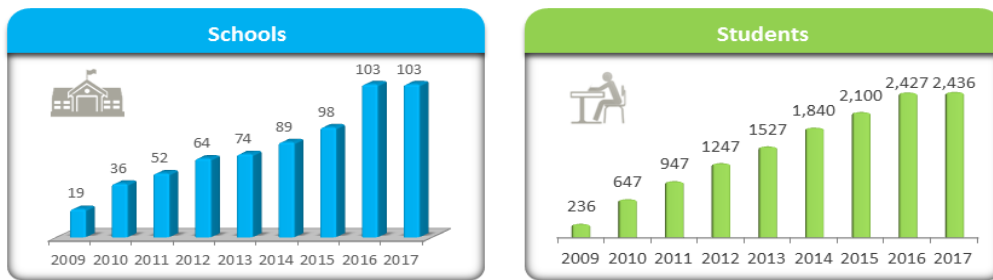
Figure 3: Statistics of partnership schools (male and female) in the KSA (KACFGC, 2019).

Mawhiba focuses on some major issues, such as curriculum and student assessment, in order to ensure that the students benefit from the gifted programme.

Figure 4: High-quality educational environment for gifted students (KACFGC, 2019).

Curriculum

The curriculum involves the use of the Advanced Supplementary Curriculum (ASC), which has been prepared, tested and implemented for the subjects of science, mathematics, English language and information technology, with the aim of serving students identified as gifted. The books include a collection of advanced activities that supplement but do not replace the Ministry's curricula. There is also an official curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education, and it is a basic requirement for all female students in the KSA (KACFGC, 2019).

The ASC's aim is to enrich students' knowledge, allowing them to acquire more advanced skills related to school subjects. It promotes values and traits like inquiring, taking risks, innovation, confidence, mental openness and cooperation. Moreover, different kinds of skills, like generalisation, reasoning, critical thinking skills, self-meditation, communication and dialogue are encouraged (KACFGC, 2019).

Assessment

The assessment aspect aims to monitor the progress of the school partnership initiative, examining the consolidation of a student-centred learning culture and of assessment *for* learning and not only *of* learning. This involves preparing training programs targeting all partnership teachers, dealing with different assessment types, performance appraisal, peer evaluation, self-evaluation, project-evaluation and student achievement portfolios (KACFGC, 2019).

To attain the above objective, Mawhiba students in ASC mathematics and science courses take an annual test. The emphasis is on the standards targeted by Mawhiba's curriculum with respect to the performance of the students identified as gifted in partnership schools, and the goal is to help measure their progress. A student who does not pass the Mawhiba test will be excluded from the programme (KACFGC, 2019).

b) ***The General Administration for Gifted Students (GAGS) in the Ministry of Education***

In Riyadh, the GAGS currently implements the programme in only 12 female state schools, only four of which are secondary schools (GAGS' director in

Riyadh). The schools that apply the GAGS programme follow largely the Ministry of education curricula in science and mathematics. In addition, the programme aims to enhance thinking, communication, creative problem solving, personal and social skills. Moreover, it adopts diverse and exciting additional curricula that allow for the discovery and development of students' abilities, talents and scientific tendencies. It also aims to stimulate their creative abilities and academic preparation, as well as helping them achieve balanced growth in all aspects of their personhood (cognitive, emotional, social and leadership). The GAGS focuses on some issues, such as curriculum and student assessment, in order to ensure that the students benefit from the gifted programme.

Table 3: Gifted Classes for 2018 for Female Gifted Students in the KSA (MOE, 2019)

Gifted Classes for 2018				
School grades	Primary schools	Secondary schools	High schools	Total
The number of schools with gifted classes	48	75	49	172 schools with gifted classes
The number of gifted classes	98	149	104	351 gifted classes
The number of female gifted students	1453	2735	1651	5839 female gifted students
The number of teachers of gifted classes who obtained the foundation, rehabilitation and training programme for the training period during the 2016-2017 year				796 teachers
The number of science and maths teachers of gifted students in gifted classes who obtained the advanced, rehabilitation and training programme during the 2016-2017 year				494 teachers

Curriculum

The schools adopt a variety of curricula that help to develop students' educational, personal and social skills. These include the regular curriculum, an enrichment curriculum in science and mathematics. According to director and teachers of gifted programme in state schools, the programme focused on offer many things to develop students' self-confidence and to hone students' personal skills and social abilities. However, the additional curricula in math and science are not fully applied in schools, this is because there is not enough time to apply the enrichment curriculum, as the greatest interest and emphasis is on the regular curriculum.

Assessment

With regards to the regular curriculum, students identified as gifted are evaluated according to the Ministry of Education's approach as all students in all schools in the KSA. For the enrichment curriculum, the evaluation methods for students identified as gifted do not rely on tests, but rather on other tools, such as observation, individual reports and final products (student projects) (General Administration for Female Gifted Students in Riyadh, 2011-2012). According to teachers of gifted programme, this assessment is less stressful way of evaluation students identified as gifted than the Mawhiba assessment.

4.2.2 School Selection

Schools that implement a gifted programme are schools affiliated with the Ministry of Education, which is interested in sponsoring students identified as gifted. These schools include special classes for these students, which provide various educational opportunities that challenge the students' abilities, help them enhance their skills and enrich their personalities to become effective members of society.

When I asked the GAGS and Mawhiba directors and teachers of gifted programme "How did the school come to be selected to have a gifted programme," their answers were strikingly similar. First, the school was chosen based on the availability of science and math teachers who obtained the advanced, rehabilitation training programme, to teach students identified as gifted. Second, they considered the willingness of these teachers to participate and implement the programme. Third, they looked at the willingness and readiness of the schools' leaders to adopt the programme at the school. Fourth, they examined the school building's appropriateness for such a programme (e.g., lab availability, rooms for students identified as gifted and enrichment library). For the school to be considered an appropriate place for developing skills, giftedness and creativity, the following needs were considered:

- adoption of the additional curriculum in mathematics and science, as well as extracurricular enrichment programmes;
- ability to accommodate more students identified as gifted at the school;
- activation of student-centred learning methods and effective learning;
- the need to involve parents more in the education of their children; and

- availability of a teacher of gifted programme, as well as mathematics and science teachers, trained to teach the enrichment curricula (General Administration for Female Gifted Students in Riyadh, 2011-2012) and (KACFGC, 2019).

4.2.3 Identifying Students

First, students are nominated for the National Project for Gifted Identification in one of the following ways: (a) nominated by the school; (b) nominated by their parents; or (c) self-nomination. Nomination is available for all students in the KSA. Students are nominated annually (both those who have been classified as gifted and those who have not) for the National Project for Gifted Identification in all schools in the KSA for the third, sixth and ninth grades. For students identified as gifted – for example, if the student has been classified as gifted in grade three – they will take the test again in grade six and also in grade nine. Should a student fail any test, she will be excluded from the programme; however, she will have the right to reapply to the programme the following year. According to Zainab (teacher for students identified as gifted, pseudonym), 'This is to ensure that the student has met the admission criteria of the gifted programme and deserves to continue in it. Moreover, in order to allow all students to join the programme and benefit from its services'.

Second, students identified as gifted are recognised through the National Project for Gifted Identification. The project is a partnership between the Ministry of Education, Mawhiba and the National Centre for Assessment (Qiyas). Qiyas focuses on the design, construction and application of appropriate tools, standards and mechanisms for an excellent and qualitative testing system for students who have the pertinent skills and abilities to be labelled gifted and

creative in general education; in particular, students in the third, sixth and ninth grades in all schools in the KSA (Qiyas, 2019).

Qiyas Centre developed the Multiple Cognitive Aptitude Test (MCAT) after spending an extensive period of time studying and reviewing the scientific literature, as well as the global standards and tools used to identify gifted and creative students. The centre aims to introduce a giftedness and creativity assessment test to remain in line with the latest scientific developments while ensuring that the test is equally suitable for the Arab environment in general and the Saudi context in particular (Qiyas, 2018). The MCAT test is applied on the same day to all students of the KSA who have been nominated by school, parents and by themselves. Specific centres are designated by GAGS and Mawhiba around the KSA for application the test.
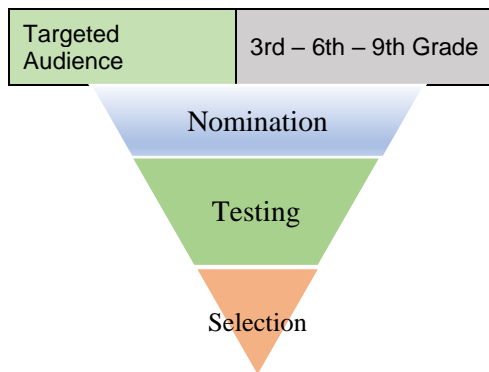
Figure 5: This image depicts the process of identifying students identified as gifted (KACFGC, 2019).

Table 4: Information about The Multiple Cognitive Aptitude Test (MCAT) (Qiyas, 2019)

The goals of the (MCAT) test	1. To identify gifted students in the KSA in the scientific fields. 2. To develop an integrated system and a comprehensive methodology to identify gifted students. 3. To improve the quality of the criteria and tools during the process of identifying the gifted. 4. To achieve justice and equality in the selection of gifted students and to direct them to the appropriate care programme. 5. To build a comprehensive and detailed database for students identified as gifted in the KSA. 6. To contribute to the creation of a well-informed community aware of the characteristics of the gifted and the significance of their identification. 7. To transform the identification procedures by making them electronic, which increases the efficiency and accuracy of the identification process. 8. To enable the application of the detection tools to a large number of students.
Covers	1 – mental flexibility 2 – mathematical and spatial reasoning 3 – scientific and mechanical reasoning 4 – linguistic reasoning and reading skills
Targeted Audience	3rd – 6th – 9th Grade
The test is held once a year; however, there is no limit to how many times a student can take it.	
The test is carried out in Arabic and English, to give the students the freedom to choose the language he/she prefers.	

The MCAT scores range between 665 to 880, as shown in Table 5 below. Mawhiba selects students who score in the region of the top 1% of all students in Saudi Arabia, while the GAGS selects students who score below the top 1% and above 5%. The acceptable percentile varies from year to year based on students' scores each year. For example, if the number of students in the top 1% is small, then Mawhiba broadens the acceptance percentage to 2%, and vice versa. Accordingly, in this case, the GAGS selects students who score below 2%.

Table 5: The Interpretation of the Multiple Cognitive Aptitude Test (MCAT) to Identify Students Labelled Gifted (Teachers interviews)

The Interpretation of the Multiple Cognitive Aptitude Test (MCAT)	
Score description	**Score**
Maximum score	880
Students' average score in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)	500
The student's score is in the top 1% of all students in his grade in the KSA	733 and above
The student's score is in the top 5% of all students in his grade in the KSA. This is lowest score for admission into the programme (The cut-off score)	655 and above

4.2.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Labelling and Segregating Students Identified as Gifted in Gifted Classes

The information in this section was supplied by teachers of gifted programme in private (P) and state (S) schools. A pseudonym has been used for each teacher. Teachers of gifted programme are those who are responsible for students identified as gifted and who obtained the foundation, rehabilitation and training programme to teach these students the enrichment programme, thinking skills and guidance programmes. Teachers of gifted programme were asked to describe what they thought were the "advantages of identifying and placing students identified as gifted in the school" and the "disadvantages of identifying and placing students identified as gifted in the school." The responses reflected some overlap in the way the teachers perceived the label and placement. On the "positive aspects," Zaynab (S) commented that the presence of students identified as gifted in one classroom leads the teacher to focus more on these students and their progress because a withdrawal gifted programme is offered to them. She said, "if I applied the programme to all girls in the school, this would mean that I would have challenged their abilities, and that might make the

mainstream girls feel frustrated." In contrast, Abeer (P) believes that the aim of the programme in her school is to provide services and support for all students, not only for students identified as gifted. She said that the reason for creating a gifted class is that Mawhiba believes that the presence of students identified as gifted in one classroom might save Mawhiba time and effort, making it easier for them to follow students' progress and to periodically evaluate their teachers. Moreover, Haya (P) said, "labelling a student as gifted is supposed to motivate the student to develop her capabilities and talents." She believes that gifted label might lead to "increased enthusiasm and competition among students." Noha (S) added that "gifted label allows students to participate in international and domestic activities, programmes and competitions, such as the Maths and Science Olympiad."

In addition, Abeer (P) believes that having students identified as gifted together in one class helps to train them on higher thinking skills, such as problem solving, making decisions and asking questions, which might require more time if they were integrated into the other classes. Zaynab (S) added that the gifted programme "focusses heavily on students' personal and social development." She believes that "gifted label has increased students' sense of responsibility, and they have grown in self-confidence." She thinks that "after they are labelled as gifted, students usually try to prove their giftedness through high achievement."

Although teachers of gifted programme in state schools believe that the gifted programme offers good services and support to students identified as gifted and that the additional curricula are diverse and very useful to them, they also feel that they are not fully applied in schools. Kholoud (S) and Zaynab (S) think

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that this is because there is not enough time to apply the enrichment curriculum and programmes, as the greatest interest and emphasis is on the regular curriculum. Moreover, Noha (S) and Kholoud (S) reported that in recent years, teachers of gifted programme had not received any sufficient training to deal with gifted students and their curricula.

By contrast, Noha (S) believes that attending the same class might help students identified as gifted to improve their relationships and to exchange scientific skills and collaborate. Haya (P) added that students identified as gifted see themselves as "role models for non-gifted students." She said that some of them try to help other non-gifted students in their studies and give them advice, both personal and educational.

On the other hand, some teachers of gifted programme mentioned certain "negative aspects" of the gifted label and placement. For instance, Noha (S) thought that "some hard-working students are afraid to join the gifted class because they think that they could not surpass the smart girls. They prefer to stay in the mainstream class to be in the top of the class." Kholoud (S) said, "Students have three problems after they are labelled as gifted and segregate in special class: Sensitivity to criticism, perfectionism and extra pressure from teachers and parents." She explained that some students identified as gifted never accept criticism; they sometimes cry or prefer to leave the gifted class because, for example, one of the teachers criticised them or asked them to rewrite their homework. This is also confirmed by Abeer (P), who said that students identified as gifted are "sensitive to criticism, they cry and are angry if teachers speak with them about their faults, either academically or personally."

Kholoud (S) said:

Perfectionism appears in two ways. First, they might be very proud – arrogant. Some gifted students feel vain, thinking that they are better than other students. Second, they might always try to do everything to the best of their ability and as perfectly as possible; they just want to turn in something that is error-free. They sometimes rewrite their homework more than once, sometimes even delaying its delivery. But when they do their work, they do fantastic and wonderful work.

Moreover, regarding pressure, Kholoud (S), Zaynab (S) and Abeer (P) all believed that students identified as gifted feel extra pressure from teachers. They think that teachers believe that students identified as gifted are perfect and expect them not to make any mistakes. Zaynab (S) said that teachers think that "gifted students must have high academic achievement." She thinks that teachers believe that if a student has low academic achievement, then she should not be labelled as gifted. Kholoud (S) said that some teachers believe that students identified as gifted have to be "inventors." She explained some teachers think that students identified as gifted must demonstrate her giftedness by offering unique works or ideas, and that might put extra pressure on gifted student. Abeer (P) added that some students want to be excluded from the gifted programme because their teachers put them "under the spotlight." She said that teachers think that students labelled as gifted should have extra homework, as well as participating in school radio programmes and in any competition both in and outside school.

On the other hand, all the teachers of gifted students believed that the gifted label might increase jealousy between students identified as gifted and students in mainstream classes, as well as among students identified as gifted. Zaynab

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(S) believed that girls in mainstream classes are jealous of girls identified as gifted. She thinks that some girls keep their distance and prefer not to be friends with girls identified as gifted because they think that they are arrogant. She added, "gifted girls also feel jealous of each other if a teacher praises one of them in the class."

Abeer (P), Zaynab (S) and Kholoud (S) believed that one of the drawbacks of labelling is that students identified as gifted might encounter problems in their relationships with their teachers. Abeer explained, "Gifted students are very smart, and sometimes they discover errors in the teacher's information. Unfortunately, some teachers do not want to recognise the error. This might create problems and squabbles between teachers and gifted students." Kholoud added that girls identified as gifted are bold and self-confident; they usually express their opinions and argue with the teachers regarding certain decisions. This angers some teachers, who describe them as "rude."

Finally, all the teachers of gifted programme believe that awareness should be raised among teachers in gifted schools about how to deal with students identified as gifted and how to treat them. As Kholoud said, teachers must understand that giftedness does not mean high academic achievement and does not mean that students identified as gifted are perfect in all aspects and not make any mistakes. She believes that student identified as gifted is "a person has a certain capacity in one or more aspects, and needs special support and care to invest her abilities". Abeer (P) confirmed, teachers should focus on students' social and emotional needs, in addition to their educational needs.

4.3 Part 2: The Description of Findings Pertaining to Emotional, Self-Perception, The Advantages and Disadvantages of the Gifted Label, Social and Academic Considerations

The information supplied by the students identified as gifted was organised into five areas: emotions, self-perception, the advantages and disadvantages of the gifted label, social and academic considerations. Although some overlap is inevitable, each topic is considered independently in this section. Pseudonyms have been used for each student. Pieces of text in speech marks, italic and in bold are sub-theme names.

4.3.1 Students' Emotions and Reactions to Others

The findings presented in this part pertain to students' emotional responses to the gifted label. Two topics are considered. First, I present feelings, which include: 1) positive feelings: feeling happy, proud and lucky; and 2) negative feelings: feeling under pressure, fear of failure, fear of others' opinions, parents' high expectations and students' self-blame. Second, I present the students' perceptions regarding others' views of students identified as gifted. I examine both people's assumptions about students identified as gifted (positive views, high expectations, thinking students identified as gifted are different and negative views) and others' influence on students identified as gifted, both positive and negative.

4.3.1.1 Positive Feelings

The findings described in this section examines how students identified as gifted feel about being labelled as gifted. Did labelling make their life happier or less happy than before? Students' responses varied, when they were first told

that they were gifted. Sara thought that it was "a very nice feeling", Anod and Manal describe it as "a wonderful feeling", and Nouf, Fatima and Hana felt "over the moon". Overall, these responses were all coded as "***happy***". Most participants expressed their happiness after being labelled as gifted. This happiness had many reasons. Fatima said that she felt happy after being labelled as gifted "because I have always wanted to be with the gifted students". She thought that she would enjoy being with gifted students because their "cognitive abilities are far better than those of other students". Hana felt "happy" because she considered being label as gifted a "very great achievement. I had not managed such an achievement before." Moreover, some students from state schools, like Nouf and Manal, felt "extremely happy" after being labelled because they would receive free scholarships to study at a private school. Nouf said, "it was a very good feeling to have got a scholarship." Manal also confirmed, "it was a very nice feeling to know that I would be studying in a private school."

Moreover, one reason the students felt happy is because they felt "***proud***", a positive sentiment expressed by all students in this study. When I asked them, "Did being identified as gifted make you feel proud or ashamed?", all of them answered, "it makes me feel proud". Hind boasts of being gifted, saying, "I want people to know that I am gifted. I feel proud, and even if I meet someone for the first time, I still tell them I am gifted." Hana noted that having "a special name" (label) made her feel proud: "I feel proud at school. They do not say 'Year 2' or 'Year 4', but 'the gifted class'. It's a feeling of elation." In contrast, Jude and Fatima were proud of being gifted but preferred not to use label and classifications because they did not want to be different from other students. Jude said, "I feel proud, but I don't really like being labelled as gifted or different from

anyone else. Gifted label makes me feel proud, but I just don't agree with these labels. We are all the same."

On the other hand, some students in this study associated their sense of pride and happiness with others' feelings. For example, Lulu believed she felt proud because her family were proud of her; she said, "I feel proud when my mum and dad brag about me." Moreover, Huda felt proud that she was gifted because she thought it would help her country rise to the top, saying, "I am the pride of Saudi Arabia." There is a positive association between the feelings of the Saudi child and her family or society. These associations might be relevant to cultural or religious beliefs, that will be discussed in the discussion chapter. This connection also appeared when I asked them, "Do you consider yourself lucky or unlucky?" Huda, Lulu and Sara answered that they were lucky because they had a good mother, father and friends around them. Most students felt "***lucky***", which is one of the positive feelings expressed by students identified as gifted. They described it in different ways. Nine said that they were lucky because they were in the gifted programme. Hind thought that she was lucky because "not everybody can get this opportunity and become gifted and be given special attention. I think I am lucky because I am in the gifted class." Nouf and Reem believed that they were lucky because they had the opportunity to access a different kind of learning and they had more knowledge than others.

However, Fatima had both positive and negative feelings about being label as gifted. She felt happy and lucky, but she was also afraid of others' opinions, saying,

> *I feel happy and proud [in a hesitant tone]. It's just that the girls might think that we are arrogant. I don't like praising myself in front of them. Otherwise,*

they might feel I am arrogant or get the wrong idea. It is nice that they call us gifted and place us in a separate class. It's just that some girls have other ideas about us.

Although all students in this study had some positive feelings about being labelled as gifted, some, like Fatima also experienced negative feelings and tensions about labelling. The next section will explore these experiences.

4.3.1.2 Negative Feelings.

Not all students identified as gifted in this study had only positive feelings about being labelled as gifted. Indeed, some students felt encumbered, isolated and pressured by the expectations associated with being gifted. When I asked Reem, "What do you feel about being identified as gifted?", she said, "I was annoyed." This answer was quite different from other students' answers. She explained that she was annoyed "because I have to work hard. I noticed that the other girls who are outside the gifted programme were taking it easy and did not feel under pressure." I asked her, "Do you feel that you are under pressure?" She answered, "Yes, I always get screaming episodes before exams. I fear failure, I mean, not being able to get high grades."

Reem and five students feel annoyed about being labelled because they feel that it puts them "***under pressure***". Jude mentioned that

one major challenge I have faced because of labelling is the psychological pressure. I feel that I have to put a lot of effort to develop myself in order to carry on in this place. I have to work on myself more to be the best I can be.

She was afraid of losing the label and being excluded from the programme. One of the reasons that Reem, Jude and others, like Fatima and Nouf, felt under

pressure is their "***fear of failure***". When I asked Nouf, "What makes you feel under pressure?", she answered, "Probably fear failure, when you stumble and fall, it is very hard to regain composure. The more you fall, the more difficult it gets to find your balance.".

Further, Jude and Fatima liked to participate in school radio programmes, but they become very nervous and embarrassed when talking in front of an audience because they feared failing in front of others. When I asked Jude, "How? Explain this to me, please", she said, "For example, I worry about what would happen if I made a mistake. How would people look at me? How would I look at myself if I got it wrong?" Fatima explained that she worried "when someone asks a question and I don't know the answer, I just get shy because I don't want people to get the wrong idea about me."

Jude and Fatima felt afraid of failure but because they "***feared others' opinions***". Nora also commented, "I'm really afraid of failure because I pay attention to what my parents say." Nora linked her fear of failure with a fear of parents' opinion in particular. Most students felt under pressure because of their "***parents' high expectations***", and they feared their parents' opinion. These students did not want to lose their families' trust in their abilities and efficiency. Sara noted that,

> *labelling makes me even more nervous because I am always fearful of failure. I just think I might miss something. I do like labelling, but I think it makes people more nervous. Because of this labelling, students feel tenser because they do not like to be seen by their parents as less competent. I think that this is one of the shortcomings of labelling. That's why I prefer not to have it. I don't think that there is a need for such a thing.*

Anod also felt nervous because of her parents' high expectations. She said:

label makes me feel nervous that if I do not get a high score, I will lose my family's trust in my abilities. They have very high expectations and confidence in me. If that's their expectation of me, then how would I see myself?

Parents' high expectations are one reason that some students experience feelings of "***self-blame***" if they get lower marks. Huda said:

I usually blame myself if I get low marks. I do feel very anxious and think to myself that if I don't do well, I might lose confidence. I just think about how my family will react and how they would look at me.

In contrast, Lulu said,

If I get lower marks, it doesn't really bother my family much. It is me who gets upset. I blame myself a lot if I lose half or even a quarter of a mark in some subjects. I feel heartbroken.

Because of labelling, many students in this study blame themselves when they get lower marks, as Lulu said, or when they saw the other gifted students' achievements and compared their own achievements to theirs, as Nouf pointed out. These results suggest that self-blame may emerge as a result of a student's expectations of herself or people's expectations of her.

4.3.1.3 People's Perceptions of Students Identified as Gifted.

The findings described in this section address people's views on students who are labelled as gifted and how these perceptions may affect gifted students.

a. People's Assumptions.

People's assumptions and expectations regarding students identified as gifted can vary. Some have a "*positive view*" of students identified as gifted, thinking that they are wonderful. As Manal explained, "Some people look at gifted students from a positive angle, thinking that these students will be the best of the best – they will be the creative minds, leaders and geniuses of the country." Fatima was happy about people's positive view of students identified as gifted, saying, "People think that I am a great student and that I have capabilities, creative ideas and talents. People think I am a someone who will go very far and who will be of value in our society". Fatima and Huda both expressed the idea that one reason people have a positive view of students identified as gifted is their sense that they are valued students in their society and a source of pride for their country. Huda believed that "people think that girls who are gifted and who attend gifted classes are a source of pride for Saudi Arabia." This echoes the aforementioned positive association between the feelings of the Saudi child and those of her family or her society.

On the other hand, Anod thinks that people perceive students identified as gifted as "faultless, perfectionist and possessing distinctive characteristics". She thought that this might be a positive view "because it offers me the incentive to be the best there is"; however, this is sometimes negative, because "I feel that I have to put a lot of effort to achieve what people expect of me." She assumed

that people thought that students identified as gifted had to be "supernatural", which really "annoys" her.

In fact, all participants considered "***people's high expectations***" of students labelled as gifted "annoying". Huda said,

> *People think that the gifted student must be gifted in everything. If I ever say I cannot do a certain task or activity, lots of my friends will turn around say: "How can you be gifted, if you cannot do it!!!!" [laughs]*

Hind mentioned, "If you are gifted, people think you are genius, which really annoys me." Manal offered an example of how people's high expectations might negatively affect her:

> *I sometimes have problems or come under too much pressure, which means I don't get full marks. So, they start nagging me about it. It's not my fault, but people just don't think about the reasons why I have not performed well. They only think about the surface and don't delve deeper into the crux of the matter. I have problems like anybody else, but I don't necessarily talk about them to anyone*

Moreover, all participants thought that people associated giftedness with certain positive personal traits, like being faultless, being a genius, knowing everything, and being wiser, more hard-working, calm and quiet. Nora laughed as she pointed out, "teachers say the gifted should be composed. Any move we make is counted." Similarly, Nouf exclaimed, "parents expect that the student in the gifted programme will be calm and quiet, but I can sometimes be funny and cheerful, given my age." People perceive the gifted as faultless and perfectionistic, and as possessing distinctive characteristics. For instance, Nouf said, "we need to get everything 100%. We have to be perfect." Huda added,

Also, if I was wrong, then my mistake would be far more serious than for any other ordinary student. I mean, if another student and I made the same mistake, I would get more of the blame because I am gifted, and being gifted means I have to be different.

Many students felt that people thought that "**gifted students were different**". Nouf explained, "People look at us as if we were completely different to them. We are like angels descending to planet Earth." Moreover, Hind and Lulu supposed that people thought that they were geniuses and different from them. Huda added:

The girls thought that we were weird or aliens. I want to change this line of thinking. We are just normal people, and we do not know everything. Because we are human, we cannot know everything and will make mistakes.

Moreover, Anod and Sara said that people did not only expect them to be different, but also people think that they have a disability. Anod said, "some people think we have learning difficulties." Moreover, Sara believed that it was possible that people linked being gifted with autism, as "some people say that gifted people are autistic".

Sometimes, people's perceptions of students identified as gifted can be harsh and negative. Anod said in sad tone, "people always look at us as gifted, and this means the opposite of having fun and enjoyment." Fatima, Hind and Hana confirmed that people would set students identified as gifted apart from others, such that gifted students would sometimes face psychological challenges and other issues because of *"people's negative views."*

Hana said, "I have always faced a lot of criticism from people just because I am gifted." She continued, "Some people just try to turn anything against you to

put you down. For example, if your own handwriting is bad. If I mumble, they repeat it a few times just to make you feel down." Moreover, Nora believes that students identified as gifted receive negative comments that make her feel frustrated. For example, people think a gifted student does not care about her outward appearance and is boring and unsociable.

In addition, many students suggested that people viewed students identified as gifted as unsociable because they are only dedicated to studying and thus have no time for people or socialising. Hind believed that people perceived the gifted as introverts and lacking in social skills.

All participants in this study believed that people's assumptions and views affected them in some way, either negatively or positively. For instance, Fatima said, "People's view of me sometimes makes me fly high and sometimes drops me down." Hana commented, "I pay attention to what people say, and it freaks me out."

b. The Influence of Others' Opinion on Student Identified as Gifted

As mentioned above, people can often affect the feelings of students identified as gifted, making them "happy", as Nouf described, or "upset", as Hana described. Sara, for example, said, "my mum and dad have always motivated me, and that made me feel great about my gifted label." She noted that the first people to provide unconditional support are parents, explaining that her parents "have a great impact on me". She further suggested that "If they do not have faith in you, then it's all pointless". Again, this echoes the relationship I mentioned before between students' feeling proud of themselves and their family's or society's faith in them, or when others influence them "*positively*." Anod

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confirmed, "the support of my family honed my giftedness, my ambition and my love for this label". Moreover, Reem, Manal and Hind believed that their families were a strong motivation for them to improve and to keep pushing; their families have a positive influence on them that increases their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Moreover, some students also felt that some teachers had had a positive influence in their lives. Huda, Lulu and Anod believed that teachers had a great deal of impact in terms of psychological and social support. Huda said, "my teacher has given me so much moral support. She usually encourages and supports me to be better, and that makes me feel strong and confident and proud." Lulu expressed, "teachers have had a significant impact on our psychological progress and self-esteem. If my teacher believes in my abilities, this makes me feel confident and makes me love to be called gifted." In addition, other students were pleased by the positive influence of their friends. Nora said, "friends have a psychological and educational impact on us." Manal and Anod believed that having good relationships with friends had a really strong impact on them, making them feel happy and proud of themselves. Nouf often talked about how her relationships with her friends had affected her psychologically. She said, "when my friends feel happy about me and my achievements, this makes me feel proud and happy with myself."

In contrast, however, Nouf noted that, although some people have a positive influence on gifted students, others have a "***negative influence***". For example, some students felt angry about people naming them and wanted to be excluded from the gifted programme because of this. In a sad tone, Reem described her feelings as follows:

Reem: Girls in my school call me gifted, which makes me feel guilty sometimes.

Interviewer: Why do you feel guilty?

Reem: I feel a bit different from them. I look at it as an insult [in frustrated tone].

Interviewer: Why do you feel it is an insult?

Reem: When I hear someone telling me I am a nerd or that I am too gifted for them. Some even go as far as calling me a source of bad luck because I study 24 hours a day. I sound too nerdy for them.

Huda, Hind and Anod would get annoyed because they were given all sorts of labels, like "gifted" or "nerd". They preferred not to hear their friends saying these words because they felt like they were being mocked. They thought that their friends were using these words in a derogatory way.

Moreover, all participants in this study expressed feeling angry and upset because of people's assumptions or high expectations of gifted students. Hana argued, "some students really do try to belittle us. For example, when I mention that the test or exam was easy, they just ascribe it to my giftedness, and this makes my very angry." Anod thought that many students wished that they had never been selected for the programme because of people's high expectations. This is also the case because they would pay attention to what people said, as Hana mentioned. Fatima said:

After being labelled as gifted, I did not like to participate in any competition inside the school, because people might think since I am gifted, I should know the answer. I sometimes feel afraid to give an answer because I could be wrong, and then it turns out to be the right one [laughs].

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Participants' responses regarding fearing people's opinions often overlapped. Although all participants in this study expressed this fear in several ways, few of them also said that they did not care what people said, worrying only about their own opinions.

4.3.2 Students' Self-perception

The findings presented in this part reveal how students see themselves after being labelled as gifted. For instance, do they feel that gifted label really describes them? How do they see themselves when compared to others of their age? Two topics are considered. First, I present students' self-motivation and expectations. Second, I examine students' self-evaluation, which covers: 1) feeling different from others, 2) feeling no different from others, 3) the dilemma of the gifted label, 4) identity crises and 5) academic self-concept.

4.3.2.1 Students' Self-motivation and Expectations

All the students in this study had high expectations of themselves, and they always aimed to be at the top in their schools. They had high ambitions, and they believed, as Jude said, that "the sky's the limit." Moreover, Hana, Nora and Hind believe that students identified as gifted often have higher abilities and better skills than students in mainstream classes. Hana said, "I feel that I am at the top in terms of intelligence and abilities. This is not the case for girls who attend mainstream classes."

Other students look to the future. Sara expects a student identified as gifted to be "a successful person," Nouf expects to be a "leader in the future," and Manal believes that students identified as gifted "have high status in society." Sara added that a student identified as gifted is someone who "has a goal and will have

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a prestigious job in the future." Few students want to be astronomers in the future, and other want to be doctors. Anod wants to be a doctor because she believes that this is a prestigious career worthy of a student identified as gifted. She believes that students labelled as gifted will be future leaders because they have certain characteristics that qualify them for this role, such as "ambition, confidence and genuine."

Reem, Lulu and Fatima all think that students identified as gifted are special, with unique characteristics, for example, intelligent, creative and social. The next section will explore these views.

4.3.2.2 Students' Self-evaluation

This section examines the findings on how students evaluate themselves after being labelled as gifted. For instance, how do they see themselves as compared to others? What are their strengths and weaknesses? What are their character traits? Finally, what are their beliefs regarding their academic abilities or skills?

a. Feeling Different from Others

All participants in this study felt different from other girls of their generation for several reasons. Hana feels different from her peers because "I am more intelligent than them." Similarly, Lulu and Fatima suppose that some of their peers have comparatively less cognitive abilities, which undermines their creativity. They think that while they are creative all the time, their peers are not. They "feel special and different" from their friends because they have a "different mindset." Fatima explained that some girls "do not pay attention to their studies or their

future, they are more interested in having fun. I do like to play and have fun, but also I am ambition and want to develop my skills."

In addition, Huda, Sara and Nora think that they are *"better"* than other students because they are "gifted students" with "distinctive characteristics," such as love learning, intelligence and self-confidence. Likewise, Reem and Anod feel that they are better than many other girls because they are "gifted students" who "have far more information and knowledge than others." Manal always feels that she is the best because "some people are very lazy and never try to improve. I might sometimes be better than the others in terms of conduct and academic achievement." Lulu declared: "deep down, I feel that I am the best person in the world, I feel that I am on top of the world and the best of my kind."

On the other hand, some students, like Hind, Anod, Nora and Jude, feel different than the rest of the girls because they feel they are *"older than their age,"* and their friends seem younger than them. Sara expressed the following:

> *Sara: There is an age gap between me and the girls who are my age.*
>
> *Interviewer: Why do you feel that?*
>
> *Sara: Sometimes I think and act in the same way an older person would do. I act like someone who's 18 years old. I think too much about the future and before making any decision.*

Moreover, Lulu feels older than her age because she takes on "many responsibilities" at home. For example, she explained, "when mum is poorly, I cook for the family, take care of my siblings and tidy up around the house."

b. *No Different from Others*

Although all the students in this study believe that they are different from the girls of their generation, few of them also feel that they are no different from others. This section will explore these views.

Participants' responses regarding how they saw themselves compared to others of their age in school often overlapped. Some students feel that they are different from others in some respects, but not in others. Fatima said, "I always tell mainstream students that we are no different from them. The only thing is that we passed a gifted exam to be included in the gifted class." Hind believes that giftedness is "something normal. Anyone can potentially be gifted." Nouf supposes that it is other people, not gifted students themselves, who think that gifted students are different from ordinary people, even though "we are all the same, at the end of the day. We are all human beings."

Furthermore, Nouf, Hind and Huda didn't like comparing themselves to anyone, as they felt they were like as all other student. They do believe, however, that students identified as gifted may have some distinguishing character traits, such as self-confidence, responsible and self-independent.

Table 6 below will review the character traits of students identified as gifted, as reported by the students, some of these became apparent after the labelling. This table presents the findings regarding these personal characteristics, some of which may be perceived positively, while others may be seen as negative.

Table 6: Positive and Negative Traits of Students Identified as Gifted as Mentioned by Participants

Positive Traits	Example	Negative Traits	Example
Responsibility	Nouf said that the "gifted label made me learn how to cope better with responsibility. Learning how to bear it, of course, is a great responsibility."	**Moodiness**	Few students feel that they have mood swings. Sara explained, "I mean, when I am in a good mood, I treat people well, but if I have a bad temper or mood swings, it's better to keep away from me."
Independence	Sara said, "I am independent. I feel better and stronger when accomplishing something by myself rather than seeking others' help."	**Hyperactivity**	Some students feel that they are hyperactive. Hind said, "I have hyperactivity. Well, all the class is hyperactive."
Self-confidence	Huda, Anod and Lulu said that the gifted label improved their self-confidence. They feel that this is one benefit of labelling because if they are self-confident, they can do anything.	**Sensitivity to Criticism**	Some students are sensitive to criticism. Hana: "I am a bit sensitive. I cry if someone is talking negatively about me or criticising me." Fatima: "I anger quickly if someone criticises me. I am very sensitive."
Intelligence	Reem said, "I feel that I am clever and intelligent, and that the gifted programme has honed these abilities."		
Love exploration	Manal said, "I love exploring. I always like to think outside the box."		
Sociability	Many students believe that they are very sociable.		
Love learning	Nouf loves learning about new things. She said, "Girls in the gifted class are always keen to learn. We want to participate in academic and scientific discussions."		

c. The Dilemma of Gifted Label

This section explores the labelling dilemma, where a dilemma is a situation in which there is a choice between alternatives, but both are equally desirable, or neither is favourable. The findings here reveal the tension students identified as gifted can feel because of labelling.

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As mentioned in the section on feelings, although all students in this study had some positive feelings about being labelled as gifted, some also had negative feelings and experienced tensions associated with being labelled as gifted. For example, Fatima feels proud and happy to be gifted, yet she fears her friends' opinions. She thinks that they might think that gifted students are "arrogant." She said, "It is nice that they call us gifted and place us in a separate class. It's just that I don't like being gifted when some girls have bad ideas about us."

Furthermore, some participants want to be labelled as gifted because label gave them the access to services and enriching materials. At the same time, they do not want to be labelled as gifted because of the increased stress and tension created through their efforts to keep their place in the programme and the gifted label. When I asked Sara how she felt about being labelled as gifted, she responded:

> *Sara: Sometimes I feel upset. I think I shouldn't have joined the gifted programme. And sometimes I say, "Thank God I did."*
>
> *Interviewer: When do you normally blame yourself, and when do you feel thankful?*
>
> *Sara: I am grateful when I remember my achievements and how the label offers me enriching materials that help to develop my abilities. However, I blame myself when I realise how joining this programme has affected me psychologically because of the pressure that comes with it.*

Jude explained, "Two months ago, I used to say, I wish I were not gifted. I want to quit the programme." She believes that the disadvantage of gifted label is that "I can end up psychologically drained because I have to work hard on myself to keep this label and to stay in this place." On a positive note, however, she said, "I want to keep this label because it encourages me to work all the time

to improve myself and reach my dreams." In contrast, Sara said that gaining gifted label was a good thing because "teachers always treat us nicely, and they try to encourage us and raise our spirits." However, sometimes she does not like being labelled as gifted because some students "do not like gifted students at all and are jealous."

Gifted label can be associate with feelings of jealousy not only when it comes to students identified as gifted and students in mainstream class, but also among students identified as gifted themselves. Anod said,

I want to be labelled as gifted because the gifted label develops cooperation and competition among gifted students, but on the other hand, I do not want this label because it has also increased jealousy and envy between us.

Moreover, Nouf, Huda and Anod believed that gifted label gives students a sense of pride and makes them feel happy. On the other hand, students labelled as gifted hate labelling because they hate to be addressed differently or because label may lead some to use derogatory epithets, such as "nerd" or "genius.". Huda mentioned:

I am happy to be gifted, but I get annoyed because I am given all sorts of labels, like "gifted" or "nerd." I prefer not to hear my friends say these things because I feel like we are being mocked. They say these words in a belittling way.

Expressing similar sentiments, Reem feels that, "sometimes, I wish I had never been chosen as gifted, but sometimes, I feel it's quite a good thing to be gifted because gifted label increases student confidence and responsibility." However, she also thinks that this responsibility can sometimes "lead to high

expectations from parents, teachers and friends, which might put extra pressure on gifted students. I can end up feeling very stressed out and upset."

This increased responsibility might affect students' personality negatively and lead to 'identity crises'. This will be illustrated in the next section.

d. Identity Crises

This section examines some of the psychological distress felt by students identified as gifted when they seek a clearer sense of self and their role in society. They feel confused about their goals and the future. For example, Reem is not entirely convinced about continuing in the gifted programme, and she just follows what her parents want. She said, "I try to find myself in the gifted programme and to convince myself to love it." She sometimes cries because she does not have the "full courage" to make decisions about her future. She said, "I am afraid to quit the gifted programme because I afraid that I'll regret it, as my parents say I will." She added, "I suffer from the inability to make decisions in my life."

Some students feel that they battle over their future plans with others (e.g., parents, teachers), as what they want and what others want seem to be in conflict. These students are unable to plan because of this, as seen in the following dialogue between Nouf and me:

Interviewer: Do you feel any struggle over your future between yourself and others?

Nouf: Yes.

Interviewer: How? Can you explain, please?

Nouf: My dad never gives me a chance to talk about it or to defend my choices. All he is interested in is seeing me become a doctor.

Interviewer: How about you? What have you decided?

Nouf: I hate medicine, even though I might be possibly heading that way, because my parents think that ingenuity is limited to careers in medicine. I have always wanted to be an astronomer, but I may end up becoming a doctor. To be honest, I don't know [laughs].

Similarly, Manal cannot make decisions about her hobbies or goals because she is afraid that her choice might be wrong. She is always "hesitant" and does not know what her role is in achieving her goals. Manal said:

I went to the summer programme for the gifted, which I was not keen on, because my mum was adamant that I participate. Then, I reluctantly joined a computing programme, even though I don't like this topic. I chose it because my father was hoping that I would become a financial engineer [very sad and frustrated tone].

Interviewer: How did you overcome this conflict?

Manal: I had a chat with them, and I told them that I do not like summer programmes, and if I participate, it is my right to choose a subject I love. But to be honest, I feel conflicted when I try to convince them because I'm afraid I'm making the wrong choice.

Fatima, Anod and Reem have felt "less confident" since being identified as gifted. They feel nervous in front of an audience. If someone asks a question and they don't know the answer, they get "shy" because they don't want people to get the wrong idea about them. They also "hesitate" to give an answer even if they are sure it is correct because they think that it still could be wrong.

One of the reasons that gifted students may prefer not to make mistakes in front of people is perfectionism, which is discussed in the next section.

e. Academic Self-concept

This section investigates the students' beliefs about their academic abilities or skills, as well as their satisfaction with their academic progress. Many students said that their academic abilities and capabilities had no limits. They think that students identified as gifted always strive for the best. Interestingly, few students think that students identified as gifted should not be judged according to their academic progress. They think that some students are gifted in areas that fall far outside the 'memorised curriculum'. I think that with this, students are referring to the curriculum style used in Saudi Arabia, which relies on memorisation, rather than on reasoning and comprehension. For example, Huda said:

> *I am negligent in terms of studying because I do not like to memorise stuff. I always get good marks in scientific subjects, but in religious studies, I don't get good marks because of my poor memorisation skills. I prefer reasoning and comprehension to memorisation.*

Despite this, they would still blame themselves if they get a low mark. This is because they think that society associates ingenuity and giftedness to academic progress.

As mentioned above, because of being labelled, some students in this study blamed themselves when they got lower marks or when they saw the other gifted students' achievements and compared their own achievements to theirs. For example, Anod said "I usually blame myself when I get low marks in exams." Nouf added "I blame myself when I see the gifted students' achievements and compare mine to theirs, I say to myself what I did, I did not do anything big like them, I wish I was like them."

When I asked the students, "Are you satisfied with your academic progress?", their answers surprised me. Most students answered "not really" because they always hoped "for the best." Jude noted, "I have to work a lot on myself to improve myself because I am gifted. That means that I have to strive to be the best and struggle to be at the top." Nora has become obsessed with high grades, and she aspires to reach and stay at the top. Manal confirmed that students identified as gifted only want to achieve Level 4; they don't fancy Levels 2 and 3 because 4 is the highest. When I asked her, "What do you feel if you get Level 3?", she answered, "I can get a bit depressed, but I try again, to achieve Level 4."

On the other hand, Lulu thinks that students after being labelled as gifted always strive to reach the top because gifted label increases the enthusiasm and competition among students. She feels upset when she compares her achievements to those of other students identified as gifted. She said, "I was so excited to be the top student in my class. When I lost a quarter mark, I felt really gutted because I was always seeing myself as belonging in the top spot." When I asked Lulu why she sought to be at the top of her class, she answered, "because I aspire to perfection." Sara also remarked, "Perfection is my ultimate goal. I always aspire to bring out the best in myself." Perfectionism has led Jude to rewrite her homework more than once, sometimes delaying its delivery: "I am a perfectionist, I just want to give something that is error-free. I always try to do a job to the best of my ability and as perfectly as possible." Taking a slightly different perspective, some students believe that gifted label makes them seek "perfection" in academics because society thinks that gifted students have to be the top students. Hana said, "society might doubt your abilities and giftedness if you do not get high marks." She thinks that this is one of the disadvantages of

gifted label. The next section will explore the advantages and disadvantages of gifted label.

4.3.3 The Advantages and Disadvantages of Gifted Label

The participants in this part were asked to describe what they thought was "good about being labelled gifted" and what they thought was "bad about being labelled gifted." The responses reflected some overlap in the way the students perceived labelling. In reference to the "positive aspects" of the gifted label, Anod commented, "It's good," but she after that described it as "cool." All participants mentioned that one advantage of gifted label is that it allows them access to better learning opportunities. Fatima described being gifted as meaning that you "receive new subjects and material that is not included in the normal curriculum."

Hana sees label as an incentive for better performance: "gifted label makes us compete with each other. If one of us gets a high score, the others will try to outperform her." Nouf confirms that being gifted increases enthusiasm and competition among students. Nora said, "before the label, it was normal for me to fall five marks behind. After the label, all of my colleagues were distinguished students. This makes me more excited to compete with them and strive to do better." Moreover, Manal believes that gifted label may be one of her strengths because it is "a great motivator for me to be the best." Likewise, Jude believes that the "gifted label makes me feel that I have to work harder."

Fatima thinks that it is "an excellent label." She is very proud because she has always wanted to be with gifted students. She said, "I felt over the moon because I got to receive a nice label like 'gifted.' Being with the gifted students means that you have far better mental abilities than the other girls." Huda said, "I

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like being labelled as gifted. It gives me a sense of pride and grow in my self-confidence," a sentiment also expressed by Anod. Moreover, Lulu and Hana think that after being labelled as gifted they became "more sociable." Moreover, Sara believes that gifted label gives gifted students "a special status in school and makes their voices heard." She thinks that teachers may focus more on students identified as gifted and their progress. She has been happy at school, with "a wonderful teacher, and friends who are like her." She also expressed enthusiasm for label: "People respect me more. It makes me feel good."

Lulu believes that having this label makes her feel that she is "part of a whole group of students who think like you." She added that gifted label had allowed her to be "more self-confident." She said, "When other students refer to us as 'nerds' or use other labels, probably because I am with a group and we have a common label, I am not bothered because I am with a group." Sara added that the common label given to gifted students has improved their relationship: "There are so many things in common, and usually we share information and knowledge." In contrast, Hind's and Reem's responses were different. Hind thinks the advantage of gifted label is about "getting a scholarship to study in private school." While, Reem thinks that the advantage of gifted label is that "it helps with getting accepted into a university". She said, "that's why I want to carry on with this label. It's the only reason I am holding on to it."

The "negative aspects" of gifted label mentioned by the students were predominantly of a social nature. Reem, who seemed particularly upset, commented, "being gifted is a somewhat heavy burden in society. Being gifted means you have greater responsibilities in family or at school." Moreover, Hana indicated that there was a "possibility for social problems." As I mentioned above

gifted label might increase "jealousy" between students identified as gifted and students in mainstream class, as Lulu said. Or might increase "envy" and "jealousy" also among students identified as gifted. Another social concern expressed by Nouf was that she no longer communicated with former friends: "Label sometimes made me feel sad because I lost some former friends." She explained that this was because "I spend so much time in the gifted class." Hind stated, "students make fun of you and make you feel different," noting that she felt "sad when other students ostracised me." Moreover, as mentioned above, some students felt upset when people called them names. Anod explained, "Label makes students call me a 'geek' or 'nerd.' It annoys me to hear people describe me as different from others."

Hana added that one of the drawbacks of labelling is others' perceptions, as some people think that their life is based on studying and isolation. She believes that people also think that they are introverts who do not go out or want to meet people. Moreover, as I mentioned above, Sara noted that some people think that students identified as gifted are "autistic," while Anod said that they think that they have "learning difficulties." In addition, Hana said that after receiving gifted label, people put you under a "spotlight." For her, this is annoying because "I am constantly being monitored. Errors are forbidden, and we have to be 100% perfect." Jude commented: "we do not like being given labels or being distinguished from the other students. We really hate to be addressed or spoken to in such a way. We want to be the same as the students attending mainstream classes." Manal added, "I want to be a normal person. I mean, a girl who does not carry any label that increases the burden and responsibility she has to shoulder." Indeed, all the participants in this study recognise negative social

implications (e.g., teasing or nonacceptance by others) that stem from gifted labelling process.

4.3.4 Social Considerations

This section examines the social issues the students discussed when describing their relationships with their parents and siblings after being labelled, as well as their friendship patterns both within and outside the gifted class.

4.3.4.1 Pressure from Parents

All participants cited their parents as a primary source of pressure and stress. Hana, Anood, Nouf and Fatima have felt pressured after being labelled because their parents did not allow them to enjoy themselves or have fun. Hana, who thinks that her parents want her to be a "robot" that does nothing but study, said, "my parents make me angry. If they see me playing on my mobile, they say that I am a wasted and negligent gifted student." She then asked me, "Do you think that giftedness forbids fun?" Similarly, Nouf added, "in my father's view, I can't spend any time on my mobile or watching a movie or a TV series. I shouldn't be allowed to go out or waste my time on anything but studying." She remarked, "remember when I mentioned that people think that we are not sociable and that all we do is study? My dad probably thinks this way more than anyone else." Fatima also described the same problem. She thinks that her parents are really proud of her, that they are happy that she is part of the programme and that they feel it is an achievement. However, she noted that "they are constantly reminding me that it's not just about joining, but about carrying on and never stopping. They usually put extra pressure on me."

Some students felt pressured by their parents because they always urge them to work harder to be able to carry on and keep their place in the gifted programme. Reem believes that her parents' only concern is her keeping her place in the gifted programme so that she can get a scholarship and continue to study in private school. As I mentioned in part 1 of this study, students who score within the top 1% of all students in Saudi Arabia on the Multiple Cognitive Aptitude Test (MCAT) receive a scholarship to study at a private school. In a similar situation, Jude added, "my parents always ask me to read more and study harder. They want me to stay in the programme because it is a brilliant initiative for students." She feels pressured because her parents think that "I should not waste any time on the iPad, but I spend a lot of time on it because I am looking for ideas or drawing, which is my hobby." Fatima believes that after she received gifted label, her family started to put her "under the spotlight." She explained, "there is more checking and accountability because of my label. This has made me feel pressured because I am constantly being monitored." Nouf, on the other hand, feels pressured by her parents when they compare her to other gifted girls, which they do often: "My dad always asks the same questions: 'Why haven't you done the same? What stopped you from achieving the same results?' He always compares me to others."

Anood feels pressure from her mum because "she always wants me to get high scores and to stay at the top. She is not even satisfied with 99%." In this light, it seems that parents' high expectations might be one of the reasons that gifted students feel pressured, as illustrated in the next section.

4.3.4.2 Parents' High Expectations

As I mentioned above, most students felt under pressure because of their parents' high expectations, and they feared their parents' opinions. All participants noted that their parents' opinions held weight for them and might affect them, either positively or negatively. Lulu said angrily:

> *I do not know how to satisfy my parents. If I get 96%, then they want me to get 97%, and if I get 97%, they expect me to get 98%, and if I get 99%, they will not be satisfied unless I am first. They just want me to be on top.*

Huda added, "my father always expected me to achieve 99, but I cannot; I can probably get 96 or 95." Anod said, "My mum wants me to reach higher than my current level and abilities because I am gifted."

Lulu and Nouf both think that their parents also believe that students identified as gifted must be independent. Lulu said, "my mother usually helps my brother, who is older than me, with his homework, but if I ask her to help me, she says that I am intelligent and do not need help." Fatima added being gifted means that you have more family responsibilities. She explained, "my parents tell me that I am a responsible person because I am gifted. I am in charge of my siblings and their education."

Other students say that their parents have high expectations of their future. Fatima noted that her parents always said, "we hope to see your name engraved in history." Nora added, "my father wants me to come up with an invention. He wants me to have a prominent position in society." Similarly, Huda said, "my mother is always saying that she wants me to be a doctor." Lulu's mum wants her to be "a leader" because she is gifted.

Nouf believes that most parents have high expectations of their gifted children: "some students are fortunate because their parents do not fall into this category, but most parents do." In contrast, Huda said in a sad tone, "I do not really aim to please my parents because it is a mission impossible to try to please them – especially my father. He expects the unexpected out of me." Anood added, "I hated being gifted because of my parents' high expectations of me. Mum always compares me to my successful sister, who is a doctor, even though she is older than me." She continued, "there is no reason for comparison because of the huge age gap between us." Such sibling comparisons will be explored in the next section.

4.3.4.3 Parents' Comparisons and Sibling Relationships

Some participants believe that their parents compare them to their successful siblings, such as Anood in the previous section. Others believe that their parents might compare the gifted child to non-gifted siblings, as in Nouf's case:

> *My parents always compare me with my siblings and tell them to follow in my footsteps. I do not think it is right because no matter how close we are to each other, and even if she were my twin sister, we don't need to be the same.*

Moreover, Manal believes that her younger sister is a bit jealous. She explains that this is "because sometimes I get my gifted coursebook out to do my homework, and my mother starts urging her to follow in my footsteps." Sara added that some parents may cause jealousy between their children with such comparisons.

The general findings show that the relationships between non-gifted children and their gifted siblings, as reported by gifted students, are good. When I asked the students, "Has being identified as gifted changed your relationship with your siblings?", most responded "no"; their descriptions of their relationships with their siblings were positive. This might be because their siblings are "too young," as Hana said, or "much bigger than me," as is Anod's case, "they aren't aware of what 'gifted' means," as Fatima said, or "they would not like to be gifted," as Nora suggested.

Anod described her relationship with her sisters after her being labelled: "is good", she said, "my sisters are very happy about my achievements." She believes that "they feel happier about my success than I do myself. They are very proud of me, too." Jude added, "my elder sister always encourages me and expects me to become someone special in society. She is a great motivator for me." In addition, Sara said, "my younger siblings see me as a leader. They love me, and anytime I do anything, they try to emulate me."

In contrast, few students have a negative relationship with their siblings because their siblings mock them. Lulu said, "my brother keeps telling me that he does not know why I am [labelled as] gifted. He thinks I am too dumb to be a part of it." Nouf added, "my younger brother sometimes jokes by telling me to go and do my homework. He keeps calling me a nerd." She said, "sometimes that upsets me."

Fatima added, "siblings' and friends' mocking has a real effect on a student's self-esteem and her social interactions with others." The next section will explore the relationships between gifted students and their friends.

4.3.4.4 Friendships

This section discusses the study participants' friendship patterns both within and outside the gifted class. The findings show the kinds of relationship that connect gifted students to each other and to their friends, as well as how the label influences their friendships.

a. Friendship Patterns with Peers from Outside the Gifted Class

All participants in this study perceived non-gifted peers as having negative views of them. They believed that their peers were unlikely to accept a demonstrated interest in academic pursuits or the achievement of outstanding grades. When I asked the students identified as gifted, "Has being identified as gifted changed your relationship with your friends?", all of them responded that it had done. Sara explained:

> *Since I left my class and went to the gifted class my relationship with my friends was changed, there has not been much contact between us, not just because I am in the gifted class, but also because of time. I spend most of my time in the gifted class, and this has had an impact on our relationship. Now I feel sad because I have lost some former friends.*

Likewise, Manal believes that her relationships with her non-gifted friends have not been the same: "Maybe because I moved to another school that provides a gifted programme. We don't hang out anymore. We used to be good friends, but we only barely know each other now." Hana added, after students were labelled as gifted and placed in their own class, their relationships with non-gifted students changed. For example, "when they go somewhere after school time, they do not tell us because they think we will be talking about school or that we prefer reviewing at home to going out with them."

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Some students believe that their friends simply do not like them. Jude said, "sometimes, the other girls try to avoid talking to us. Maybe they do not like us. Perhaps they do not like the fact that we are labelled, and they are not." Hana believes that some students keep their distance and prefer not to be her friend, as they think that students identified as gifted do nothing but study and have no time for fun. Huda added that some non-gifted students are "afraid to make friends with the gifted students. They think we are from a different planet, geniuses, and that all we are interested in is our studies."

The findings revealed that gifted students' perceptions of "stigma" regarding their giftedness have a real effect on their social interactions with other people. Sara noted that perceived difference and lack of peer acceptance affect their interpersonal abilities, in particular, peer relationships and social coping skills. For example, Hana believes that students identified as gifted who are unable to find same-age peers who share their interests and general beliefs about friendship may choose to more or less "opt out of the social scene" altogether.

Students identified as gifted who cannot find appropriate peers may try to find a new social relationship by "seeking out the companionship of gifted students," Nouf said. She explained:

> *I tried to make friends from outside gifted class, but I do not think I get on with them very well. My friends are those attending the gifted class only, I prefer them to others because our thoughts and interests are the same. The other girls only think about make-up and dressing up, which I do not find appealing.*

More negatively, Reem noted that in response to the lack of similarly-minded same-age peers, students identified as gifted may be "tempted to hide or

deny their giftedness," which they perceive as the primary cause of their lack of acceptance by the peers.

b. Friendship Patterns within the Gifted Class

When I asked the students identified as gifted, what kind of relationships they had with other students identified as gifted, all the responses described positive relationships. All participants believed that students identified as gifted support one another; if one gifted student needs assistance or support or feels down, the rest will be there to help her. They feel like they are part of a group. Moreover, Reem added that "gifted students have similar goals," that they "have sought to achieve these goals together and that they have achieved a lot as a unit." Similarly, Manal believes that students identified as gifted have the same mentality:

> *We all understand each other, especially whenever we discuss certain topics. It is difficult to discuss these things with mainstream students, as they usually find it hard to understand the things a gifted student knows or is trying to research. It is very hard to reach an agreement or get along with a mainstream student like I do, for example, with a gifted student. The latter studies similar subjects and shares the same curriculum.*

Moreover, all participants believed that students identified as gifted have a positive psychological impact on each other. Nouf confirmed that she thinks that students identified as gifted always seek to influence one another and provide support to those who need it. She gave the following example: "Some girls can be put under a lot of pressure by their parents, and they break down very easily. If a girl is going through a bad patch, the whole class will rush to offer her support." Anod added, "As we are now under one roof, we have become a unit. When one of us is not feeling well, the rest will do our best to support her." Huda, Anod and

Nora think that students identified as gifted have very strong ties. They love each other and engage in honest competition.

Other participants pointed out that students identified as gifted also have a positive impact on each other educationally. Nora has seen educational collaboration among students identified as gifted, such as "when a friend of mine got 97% and I got 94%, we got together to see how I could improve to catch up with her. She showed me how to review better and how to summarise some of the material." Similarly, Lulu gave the following example:

> *When I was in the mainstream class, I used to complain to my classmates that I was not very good at English, but they did not care at all. With the gifted students, I get a much better response. They suggest programmes and share their own experiences with me. They are much more helpful. They can even identify my weakest language skills and try to suggest ways to develop them. It is not the same in mainstream classes; they are only good at making fun of me.*

Anod also believes that students identified as gifted have common interests, such as maths and science.

Although all participants in this study had some positive feelings about their relationships with other gifted friends, some, like Huda, Anod, Hana and Manal, also feel that there is jealousy among students identified as gifted. Anod said, "there is a strong competition among gifted students, but there is also jealousy, not because of academic achievement, but because of competition." For instance, "I can get extremely jealous if the school nominates someone else to take part in a competition or an activity." Huda, on the other hand, saw teachers as the source of jealousy among students identified as gifted: "If the teacher praises one of the girls in the class, the rest get jealous of her." Hana concurred,

"We can get very upset if one of us gets a better grade, or when the teacher praises one of us, the others feel jealous." Manal believes that "we are very ambitious because we all want to reach the highest level. This is why we feel jealous of each other."

4.3.5 Educational Considerations

This section focusses on students' description of their life at school, with three main components: a) the gifted programme, b) the gifted class and c) teachers.

4.3.5.1 Gifted Programme (GP)

There was no disagreement among the students on the importance of the GP and its benefits. Participants mentioned various benefits, ranging from the personal and social to the academic. In general, based on teachers' descriptions in part 1 and students' perceptions of the GP, it can be concluded that the GP in state and private schools differs in several ways (e.g., curricular demands, teacher expectations and learning environments). This variability is apparent in the responses across participants.

a. Gifted Programme in State Schools

Although all students agree that the GP is more beneficial personally and socially than educationally, the students in one of the schools believe that the programme also has some academic benefits (Ruby School [RS]). However, students in the other school see no academic benefit at all (Diamond School [DS]). For example, all students agree that the programme developed students' self-confidence and offered many things to hone students' personal skills and

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social abilities. However, the additional curricula in math and science are not fully applied in schools, this is because there is not enough time to apply the enrichment curriculum, as the greatest interest and emphasis is on the regular curriculum.

Hind (DS) remarked that, "In the gifted programme, we are offered so many things to hone our personal skills and individual abilities. It has nothing to do with educational skills." She added, "The programme is useful and has helped me discover more about myself." Hana (RS) believes that the programme promotes self-confidence. She explained, "At first, I was very shy and felt nervous about participating and speaking in front of the class. Now, thanks to the programme, I have gained more confidence. Now I really like presenting and taking part." She added, "there are also some enriching materials that improve students' academic progress."

Anod (RS) thinks that the programme hones students' hobbies and consolidates their positive qualities. She said, "For me, the gifted programme has strengthened me personally and socially. For many of us, it has strengthened the spirit of collaboration. Many of our skills have been enhanced, including working as a team." She added, "Also, there are some enriching materials provided in mathematics and science. This can be very useful and supportive in our academic development." Moreover, Lulu (DS) believes that the programme helps uncover hidden talents in students that would never have been discovered if they had stayed in a mainstream environment. She said that the GP gives them an opportunity to participate in various activities, such as mathematics competition and programming robots. However, she was upset by repetitious teaching and she believes that "for subjects such as mathematics and science, we study the

same materials as the mainstream classes. There's not much difference, such as extra items or enrichment programmes." Huda (DS) added, "I feel like the GP does not pay much attention to academics. It is just interested in the development of personal and social skills."

b. Gifted Programme in Private Schools: "Mawhiba Programme"

As mentioned earlier, all the students from private schools believe that the programme offers more educational benefits than personal or social. Sara confirmed that the programme is "useful possibly in terms of academics, but not much psychologically or socially." She explained, "I have been able to gain more knowledge, which has improved my academic progress." Moreover, Nouf said, "the programme allows students to participate in international and domestic activities, programmes and competitions, such as the Maths and Science Olympiad." Nora likes the programme and thinks it is useful because in the gifted programme, the teachers ask the students to write more academically. She said, "This is useful for us because if we start learning how to carry out research now, in preparation for the university, it will become easy for us." Reem added, "the gifted programme is very useful, as it allows me to gather a lot of information and knowledge." She explained, "I think that mainstream coursebooks are very basic, but not the gifted curriculum, which is quite detailed and fascinating." Manal believes that the greatest benefit of the programme is "having enriching materials in science and maths, which improves students' academic progress." However, Reem said, "the greatest benefit of the programme is that the students obtain financial support through a scholarship to study at a private school."

Huda is an interesting case, as she has had experience with GP in both private and state schools. She used to study in private school before she was

excluded from the Mawhiba programme because she scored below the top 1% in the (MCAT) test. She believes that GP in private school is better than the state GP. Huda explained:

> *When I went to a private school, my level was higher and better than it is now. The gifted programme is better implemented in private school. The maths and science teachers in private school, for example, are much better than the teachers in this school. They offered us an enriching curriculum in maths and science. Here, all they give us that is extra are the mentoring and personal programmes.*

She further remarked:

> *The level of students in this state school is much lower than the level of the girls in the private school. The enrichment books in mathematics and science that we used there are more difficult. I do not think mainstream students here would be able to handle them.*

On the other hand, all the participants in this study also cited some disadvantages of the GP. For example, the amount of homework assigned caused tension for all students. Lulu said:

> *The programme puts a lot of pressure on us. As soon as one teacher gives us a task or an extracurricular activity, another decides to pile more homework and exams into our schedule. This is too much pressure to handle. I sometimes get so frustrated and stressed out that I stop doing anything.*

Fatima added that when a student got into the gifted programme, she had to cope with extra tasks and homework. She said, "this is so exhausting and demanding, even though we know that we will gain more information and knowledge." Nora, however, tries to see the issue from another angle. She said, "the programme requirements are cumbersome, but they are necessary for a

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successful future career." Reem wants to quit the programme because it is "overwrought":

> *I look at my siblings and friends and see how they lead a normal lifestyle and enjoy so much free time. They have time for their computer games, while I am stuck with so much homework and studying. This makes me feel really guilty and frustrated.*

Sara added, "sometimes, I go home and break down in tears. I feel exhausted by my many school requirements and duties. Sometimes I am so stressed that I make a mess of my homework or don't do it at all."

Moreover, Nouf and Anod thought that curriculum was not advanced enough and there are a lot of knowledge within enrichment curriculum do not keep up with modern era. However, some students think that one of the disadvantages of the GP is that it requires students to leave their class or school. Hind said that when she was selected to join the programme, "I was nervous because I was being transferred from my school." Nouf, Anod and Hana were also forced to change classes and transfer to the gifted class. Hana said, "in the beginning, I felt shocked, and I wanted to return to my class and my friends."

Being in a gifted class is a new experience for some students, and this may be felt as positive or negative.

4.3.5.2 Segregating Students Identified as Gifted in Gifted Classes (GC)

This section explores participants' responses regarding "***the advantages of segregating in gifted class***" and the "***disadvantages of segregating in gifted class***." The responses show some overlap in how students approach this issue. Anod, Jude, Reem and Sara have previous experience with integration

(which is the former educational system for students identified as gifted in the KSA, where students identified as gifted were integrated with mainstream students in the same class, as I mentioned in part 1).

In reference to the positive aspects of the gifted class, Anod, said:

> *When we were integrated with the mainstream pupils, there were only a few of us in a large classroom. That also meant that we couldn't access the gifted programme materials all the time, either, because of a lack of time or the teacher's inability to focus on us.*

Jude commented that being part of the gifted class gives students extra incentive. She explained:

> *Sometimes, when I feel down or lack motivation, I have to remind myself that I belong to the gifted group, and that will provide extra motivation and a massive incentive for me to be better and to compete with them.*

Sara added that being part of the same gifted class helps students to "exchange scientific skills and collaborate." Lulu confirmed that being in a separate class "allows gifted students to talk about common topics. For example, we discuss subjects like the Mathematical Olympics, the Science Olympiad and the summer programme." She remarked that "students in the mainstream class are not interested in these subjects."

Once, Nora attended a lesson in mainstream classes. She described it as follows: "the teacher was in the process of giving the lesson, but there was not much competition. It was low key at best. They were all desperate for the lesson to finish." She found mainstream classes to be lacking "an incentive environment; there was no competition."

Fatima believes that the GC is admired by the teachers, who find the students easy to deal with and who seem relaxed during lesson delivery and explanation. She said, "one of the teachers always tells us that feels most motivated and stress-free when she comes into our class." Moreover, Nouf and Manal believe that the GC is a "good learning environment." For example, Nora said:

> *Being part of the gifted class has had an impact on me, especially at a young age. It is easy to be influenced by others. I don't really want to underestimate other students because there are plenty out there who are very clever and decent, but if I mix with the right people in the right environment, this can have a significant impact on my academic progress.*

Moreover, Sara believes that attending the same class help students identified as gifted improve their relationships, bonding with each other as they get to know one another. She thinks that "it is important to establish a rapport between gifted students because that will help them to exchange information and knowledge and increase cooperation."

On the other hand, some students mentioned some negative aspects of the GC. For instance, Jude said, "being in the same class has created feelings of envy." She explained: "each of us wants to be the best and the most distinguished in the eyes of the teachers." Moreover, the number of students in the gifted class is small, which leads to boredom for some students. For example, Hind said, "the small number of students sometimes make me feel bored because sometimes I spend hours with no talking, nothing new, no fun." Hana added, "the small number [of students] in the classroom make me feel bored. I always run away from the gifted class and go to another class [laughs]." Reem also feels bored but because

"most of the conversation among the students is about studying." Moreover, Anod added,

> *Because we are minority, other girls think we are different from them. They always ask me why we are isolated or why there are only a few of us or why we are not part of the regular classes. This is one of the problems of being in the gifted class.*

Sara also believes that because students identified as gifted are isolated in a separate class, some people think that they are different and that they have "autism" (as mentioned above). Hana also mentioned this. She thinks that one of the disadvantages of being in the GC is that some non-gifted students think that gifted students' life is based solely on studying. This, she said, is because they are isolated from them. Jude said that some students also think that students identified as gifted are introverts who do not go out or want to meet people. On the other hand, Fatima thinks that the GC is not good because it "make teachers focus more on us and treat us differently from other students." Students' perceptions of teachers will be discussed in the next section.

4.3.5.3 Teachers

This section discusses how the teachers are perceived by the students identified as gifted. Has being identified as gifted changed their relationship with teachers? How do teachers treat the students identified as gifted? Two topics are considered: a) teachers' high expectations; and b) teachers' lack of awareness.

a. Teachers' High Expectations

The students, overall, were not very satisfied with their teachers because of the teachers' high expectations, though the individual descriptions were diverse.

On the positive side, Huda believes that her gifted teacher "treat me nicely," Lulu feels that her English teacher "pushes me to have more self-confidence." Anod believes that teachers "usually encourage and support me to be better," and Jude thinks that teachers are "really supportive and helpful, even if it is something that has nothing to do with school or the curriculum." However, Sara said that the teachers offered "little in terms of psychological and social support, but plenty of academic support."

On the negative side, teachers believe that students identified as gifted are perfect, Manal complained that teachers "expect gifted students not to make any mistakes". Anod asserted, "Just because we are labelled gifted, teachers think we have to know everything," and Nouf remarked that "the teachers expect us to get 99.9%." Reem said that teachers think that students identified as gifted must have high academic achievement. She thinks that teachers believe that "if a gifted student has low academic achievement, then she cannot be labelled as gifted."

Moreover, Hana said some teachers expect that students identified as gifted should have extra homework and hard questions because they are gifted. Fatima thinks that the girls in the gifted class are always "getting angry" and says that they are "never satisfied with their teachers" because the teachers "give them a lot of homework, and [the teachers] think that because they are gifted, they should be given more assignments than anyone else." Fatima added teachers usually say that there "is no need to go into detail in the lessons because they expect us to understand. Therefore, there is no need to do any explaining since we can figure it out ourselves."

Jude believes that teachers distinguish between students identified as gifted and students in mainstream class; for example, they give students identified as

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gifted additional questions or tasks. In addition, Hana noted that "on exams, the teachers give us questions that are a lot more difficult than the ones for non-gifted students, even though we use the same coursebook, because we are gifted."

Expressing exasperation, Sara thinks that her teachers do not understand her:

> *The teachers expect us to achieve the highest grades and to perform any task with the highest accuracy and meticulousness, and within a very short timescale. I get asked to prepare an assignment within two to three days, which I do not agree with. I don't want to submit a basic study. I prefer to spend up to a week on an assignment and create an excellent piece of work. Teachers pay more attention to deadlines than quality. This can be frustrating for me because lack of time does not allow me to produce quality work and to show what I am really capable of.*

This might be because of teachers' lack of awareness about students' identified as gifted needs and how to deal with and treat them, as teachers of gifted programme mentioned in part 1, a problem which is discussed in the next section.

b. Teachers' Lack of Awareness

Some students stated that some teachers were unaware of the nature and needs of students identified as gifted. Sara said, "I feel that the teachers are not qualified to deal with gifted students." She thinks that one of the characteristics of students identified as gifted is that they do not accept just any answer, and they try to verify the information they receive. This disturbs the teachers a lot. She gave the following example:

If we tell a teacher that she has made a mistake, she will automatically take it personally and defend her view, even though she is in the wrong. This happens a lot with the gifted students, and the teachers never accept that we might be right.

Moreover, Jude believes that teachers do not understand her or her way of thinking. She explained:

I cannot focus on one thing only. It always annoys the teachers to see me drawing during the lesson, but I'm still paying attention to them. I know that they do not like it because they probably think I am bored or distracted. In fact, I love listening to the teacher while drawing or doodling; it helps me to focus. If I don't do it, then I might get bored or distracted, but unfortunately, teachers don't understand that.

Similarly, Sara commented:

I may be busy, but I am still all ears in the classroom. The teacher keeps telling me to put aside anything I have in my hand, but as soon as I do and try to concentrate, I drift away. Teachers do not understand me.

There are many traits and characteristics that characterise students identified as gifted, which some teachers may be unaware of it. This will be mentioned in the discussion chapter.

Moreover, Nora believes that "teachers do not understand the meaning of giftedness", because they usually link it with academic achievement. She said, "one of the teachers told us that anyone with less than 90% would be disqualified from the gifted programme." She continued, "I was really shocked to hear a teacher say that. Why did the teacher link giftedness and academic achievement?" In addition, Manal thinks that "teachers did not know anything about us or how to deal with us because each one of us had a different character."

She believes that teachers are "not aware of the fact that there is not much difference between gifted students and mainstream students." She said that many teachers are

> *unaware that gifted students have feelings, so it's not right to keep reminding them that they are gifted and, as such, cannot fail or make a mistake. It really hurts because I am only human, and humans are not infallible or perfect beings. It's really annoying.*

Anod believes that teachers sometimes compare students identified as gifted to non-gifted students. She said, "they talk to other students about our achievements and our high level, which can lead to jealousy. I think that good teachers should not do that." Huda added, "some teachers tell the girls in the mainstream classes that we are better than them. They shouldn't do that because that can create tension between us." On the other hand, Hana believes that teachers also differentiate between students identified as gifted, "If one of them is far more intelligent than the others, they pay more attention to her. It can be very annoying for the rest of us if the highest-level students in the gifted class get all the attention."

4.4 Summary

This chapter was organised into two complementary parts, and within each main themes and subthemes of the study were presented. Information discussed in the first part was supplied by the teachers of gifted programme, the directors of the gifted programme at the General Administration for Gifted Students (GAGS) and the King Abdul Aziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (Mawhiba), and documentary analysis. The main aim of this part was to understand the Saudi students' context. This information was organised

into four areas: (a) gifted programme; (b) school selection; (c) students' identity; and (d) the teachers' of gifted programme views on the advantages and disadvantages of labelling and segregating students identified as gifted in gifted classes.

In the second part, the information supplied by the students identified as gifted was organised into five areas. The first one was students' emotions and reactions to others, which include, positive feelings: (feeling happy, proud and lucky); and negative feelings: (feeling under pressure, fear of failure, fear of others' opinions, parents' high expectations and students' self-blame). Moreover, I presented the students' perceptions regarding others' views of students identified as gifted. I examined both people's assumptions about students identified as gifted (positive views, high expectations, thinking students identified as gifted are different and negative views) and others' influence on students identified as gifted, both positive and negative.

Second, the findings about students' self-perception were presented as two main themes. First, I presented students' self-motivation and expectations. Second, I examined students' self-evaluation, which covers: 1) feeling different from others, 2) feeling no different from others, 3) the dilemma of the gifted label, 4) identity crises and 5) academic self-concept.

Third, the results under the theme advantages and disadvantages of the gifted label revealed what the students thought was "good about being labelled gifted" and what they thought was "bad about being labelled gifted."

Fourthly, in the social considerations theme the main themes were: pressure from parents, parents' high expectations, parents' comparisons and sibling relationships and friendships from outside and inside the gifted class.

Finally, the educational considerations theme focussed on students' description of their life at school, with three main components: a) the gifted programme, b) the gifted class and c) teachers.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of this study examining the perceptions of 12 students regarding being labelled as gifted. The aim was to explore how these students perceived themselves and how others viewed their 'giftedness' by focusing on the meanings that the students imputed to their lived experiences. Thus, this part of the study will discuss the findings, the findings in relation to the literature, contributions to knowledge, implications of the findings, recommendations for further research, and end with some concluding comments.

5.1 Overview of the findings

This study had two parts. The first aimed to learn more about the students' context through descriptive semi-structured interviews with teachers and directors of gifted programme and documentary analysis. The second included in-depth semi-structured exploratory interviews with students identified as gifted.

5.1.1 Part 1

There are two organisations in Riyadh that offer gifted programmes in schools. The first is the non-profit national cultural foundation King Abdul Aziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (Mawhiba), which implements the programme only in private schools. The second is the General Administration for Gifted Students (GAGS) in the Ministry of Education, which implements the programme only in state schools.

In general, identifying gifted students in the KSA has three main steps. First, students are nominated (a) by the school, (b) by their parents or (c) by themselves. Nomination is available to all students in the KSA in third, sixth and

ninth grades. Second, a Multiple Cognitive Aptitude Test is applied on the same day to all nominated students in the KSA. Finally, students who score in the top 5% of all students are selected.

Students identified as gifted in state and private schools are placed in self-contained classrooms (gifted classes) to receive special support and services. However, the services and programmes in state schools differ from what is offered in private schools, as these are supported by two different organisations. The gifted programme in state schools focusses heavily on students' personal and social development. This kind of programme includes many activities to develop all aspects of students' personality, helping them to achieve psychological compatibility both within and outside of school. These programmes also develop students' self-confidence and help them to overcome academic and emotional problems. However, the additional curricula in math and science are not fully applied in these schools because there is not enough time to apply the enrichment curriculum; the greatest interest and emphasis is on the regular curriculum. In contrast, gifted programmes in private schools are more beneficial educationally than they are personally or socially. This is because Mawhiba is keen to provide additional curriculum in math and science for students identified as gifted in private schools, which is meant to be applied in conjunction with the regular curriculum.

5.1.2 Part 2

As mentioned above, part 2 involved in depth semi-structured exploratory interviews with students identified as gifted. This section summarises the responses to each research question. As the findings are quite lengthy, these summaries set the foundation for the subsequent discussion and interpretation,

as they bring the findings together and prepare the reader for the important issues discussed in this chapter.

5.1.2.1 Question 1. What Are the Current Beliefs and Feelings of Students Regarding Being Labelled as Gifted?

Most participants expressed feeling happy and proud after being labelled as gifted, which some associated with their parents' perceptions of the label. However, not all students identified as gifted in this study had only positive feelings about being labelled as gifted. Indeed, some felt encumbered, isolated and pressured by the expectations associated with being gifted. All participants considered people's high expectations of students identified as gifted 'annoying' and believed that people's assumptions and views affected them in some way, either negatively or positively. The findings reveal the tension students identified as gifted felt because of labelling. For example, it can put them under pressure and make them fear of failure because of others' opinions.

5.1.2.2 Question 2. How Did the Students Perceive Themselves When they Were Labelled as Gifted?

All the students in this study had high expectations of themselves, and they always aimed to be the top student in school. They had high ambitions and believed that the sky was the limit. Some thought that students identified as gifted had higher abilities and better skills than students in mainstream classes. All participants in this study felt different from other girls of their generation for several reasons. For example, some believed that they were more intelligent than other students, with far more information and knowledge and higher academic achievement. Nonetheless, they still blamed themselves if they got a low mark.

This is because they thought that society associated ingenuity and giftedness with academic progress. In fact, most students were not satisfied with their academic progress because they always strove to be better and to reach perfection.

5.1.2.3 Question 3. What Are Students' Views about How the Gifted Label Influenced their Social Acceptance and their Relationships with Parents, Siblings and Peers?

The negative aspects of the gifted label mentioned by the students were predominantly of a social nature. All participants cited their parents as a primary source of pressure and stress. Most students felt under pressure because of their parents' high expectations, and they feared their parents' opinions. All participants noted that their parents' opinions held weight for them and might affect them, either positively or negatively.

However, the general findings show that the relationships between non-gifted children and their gifted siblings, as reported by gifted students, were good. Most students thought that the gifted label had not changed their relationship with their siblings, and their descriptions of their relationships with their siblings were positive.

On the other hand, all participants in this study perceived non-gifted peers as having negative views of them. They believed that their peers were unlikely to accept a demonstrated interest in academic pursuits or the achievement of outstanding grades. Some students identified as gifted may choose to isolate themselves if they do not find same-age peers who share their interests and general beliefs about friendship. Moreover, these students may seek a new,

alternative social scene through companionship with students identified as gifted if they cannot find other peers in their own age group to share their interests. In more serious situations, these students, upon perceiving a lack or unavailability of appropriate peers, may try to adjust to the given social scene by concealing or dismissing their giftedness, blaming it for their peers' rejection.

5.1.2.4 Question 4. What Are Students' Views about the Educational Effects of Being Labelled as Gifted?

There was no disagreement among the students regarding the importance of the gifted programme and its benefits. Participants mentioned various benefits, ranging from the personal and social to the academic. For most students from state schools, the gifted programme has more personal and social benefits than educational. For example, the gifted programme offered many resources to hone students' personal skills and individual abilities, promoting their self-confidence. In contrast, for most students from private schools, the programme was perceived to be more beneficial educationally than personally or socially. In general, based on teachers' descriptions in part 1 and students' perceptions of the gifted programme, it can be concluded that the gifted programme in state and private schools differs in several ways, such as curricular demands, teachers' expectations and learning environments.

Overall, the positive aspects of the gifted label mentioned by the students in this study were predominantly academic in nature. All participants mentioned that the advantages of gifted label were that it allowed them to access better learning opportunities and to receive new subjects and material not available in mainstream classes, thereby increasing enthusiasm and competition among students.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings

Three separate areas are examined, as detailed below. First, the discussion focuses on the meaning of the gifted label for students' self-concept, including the students' beliefs and feelings about being labelled as gifted. The discussion also centres around their understandings of their self and how they evaluated themselves after being labelled. Second, the social implications of gifted labelling are explored. This includes a consideration of the social issues the students raised as they described their post-labelling family relationships, as well as their friendship patterns both within and outside the gifted class. Third, the academic implications of gifted labelling are examined, including experiences of segregation in self-contained classrooms, factors that may affect gifted programme suitability and how gifted label might increase students' burden and responsibility.

5.2.1 The Meaning of the Gifted Label for Students' Self-concept

The gifted label can affect a student's self-concept, in part because the term "gifted" is in itself controversial. Therefore, upon being given this label, a student may feel confused about what will happen next, what is requested of her, and how to answer any questions that might be raised.

Labelling can have significant implications for students, depending on their conceptualisation of intelligence and their learning environment (Foster, 2000). Labelling is not inherently advantageous or harmful; this study reveals that the experience of labelling depends on the student's environment and how this environment mediates the effects of the stereotype threat. All participants in this study believed that other people's assumptions and views affected them in some

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way, either negatively or positively. For instance, one student commented that people's views sometimes raised her spirits high and sometimes left her feeling down. It seems that students' learning opportunities, experiences, and social and academic environments have a profound effect on how they perceive their giftedness (Foster, 2000).

In this study, students' responses regarding how they perceived themselves when they were labelled as gifted varied. Generally, students' identified as gifted self-concepts and beliefs about their own worth as individuals vary (Li, 1988; McCoach & Siegle, 2002). However, among the students in this study, there were also some commonalities in how they saw themselves after being labelled as gifted. For instance, they thought that they had a 'better mind' than students who were not identified as gifted, with greater learning competence, potential and creative thinking, and they also felt wise, or older than their actual age.

5.2.1.1 Students' Feelings about Being Labelled Gifted

Generally, the participants in this study perceived being identified as gifted as an accomplishment and a way of accessing educational interventions that would allow them to meet their educational potential. Upon being given the gifted label, the students responded in a positive manner, such as feeling happy, proud or lucky. The students in this study explained that elements like a sense of achievement, feeling unique and the ability to cover material in more detail made them feel happy and fortunate.

On the other hand, some students in this study associated their joy and pride with their parents' perceptions. For example, some students felt proud when their parents bragged about them. Moreover, others felt happy that they were

gifted because the label delighted their parents. This is in line with Suldo, Hearon and Shaunessy-Dedrick's (2018) finding that life satisfaction among gifted adolescents is linked to their parents' acceptance and satisfaction and to their perception of their parents as warm, approachable and emotionally reassuring. In other words, family was found to have a significant impact on students' identified as gifted life and perceptions.

As mentioned in the literature chapter, there can be a positive association between the feelings of the Saudi child and her family or society (Baki, 2004; Hamdan, 2005). This association might be tied to cultural or religious beliefs. In Islam and in the Saudi culture, obedience and parental consent are obligatory. Many children seek their parents' approval and feel happy when they feel that their parents are satisfied with them. Saudi children's lives are structured according to the laws of Islam (Almutairi, 2008), which governs people's interpersonal relationships, including their relationships with their parents. So, it could be argued that parents' opinions carry great weight with their children, gifted or otherwise. One of the students said that her parents had a great impact on her life, and she believed that if parents did not have faith in their child's abilities, then the gifted label would be worthless.

Although all the students in this study had some positive feelings about being labelled as gifted, some also experienced negative feelings and tensions around labelling. Some felt that it made them afraid of challenges, such as participating in school radio programmes, which might endanger their status as a gifted student. They expressed a fear of failure, worrying about what might happen if they made a mistake and how would people regard them. Dweck (2007) claimed that students identified as gifted could end up constrained by their label,

becoming afraid of challenges that might jeopardise their gifted status. Dweck suggested that there were two types of mindsets among students: Those with a "fixed mindset" think that their ability is fixed, so they may stay away from challenges and be afraid of making mistakes, while those with a "growth mindset" are more able to enjoy challenges and encourage themselves to engage with new experiences and challenges. If students think that their intelligence is fixed, average or poor performance may be interpreted by them as incompetence and they might feel unworthy of being labelled as gifted. On the contrary, if students possess a growth mindset, maintaining their identity as gifted individuals is determined by the effort they are making, not only by their results. The latter perception might be considered less confining than the former because it can greatly reduce the pressures felt by students.

On other hand, the findings suggested that some of the girls felt that others (parents, teachers and peers) have high expectations of them and they expected gifted students not to make any mistakes, and they seemed to believe that if a gifted student had low academic achievement, then she could not be labelled as gifted. Some people surrounding the gifted girls in the KSA had a fixed mindset, which was partly responsible for the problems these gifted girls were experiencing. Some students in this study often feared failure because they paid attention to what others might have said, and they feared others' opinions. These students might not want to jeopardise their status as representatives of the positive stereotype of students identified as gifted often associated with intellectually competent students who are dependable, clever and clear-thinking. Therefore, this fixed mindset of people surrounding gifted girls may lead the labelled individual to feel anxious socially or pressured to act in a certain way. Steele's (2010) argument about stereotype anxiety is that being stereotyped can

affect people's performance, whether they are either attempting to support a positive stereotype or afraid of confirming a negative one. He argued that not only does the pressure of stereotypes makes it difficult for people to work, but it also detracts from their ability to perform at their highest potential. Generally, there can be positive and negative aspects of the gifted label, and some of these are reflected in individuals' feelings.

a. Positive Aspects of Gifted Labelling

All participants mentioned that one of the advantages of the gifted label was that it allowed them access to better learning opportunities. The students agreed that the gifted label opened the door to studying new subjects and material not included in the regular curriculum. Moreover, it allowed them to participate in international and domestic activities, programmes and competitions, and increased enthusiasm and competition among students. This is in line with Berlin (2009) Henfield, Moore and Wood (2008) and Shaunessy et al. (2007), who indicated that access to gifted programmes, special curricula, more opportunities and engagement is the main advantage of the gifted label reported by students identified as gifted.

Overall, the positive aspects of the gifted label mentioned by the students in this study were predominantly academic in nature (see Table 7). This is the same result that Berlin (2009) found in his research on the positive and negative attributes of being labelled gifted, where 66 sixth- through eighth-grade public school students, identified as either gifted or highly gifted, in the Midwest (USA), were surveyed. Students in both studies believed that labelling could help them receive the educational support and services they otherwise would not have received without this label.

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On the other hand, some students in this study preferred being labelled as gifted because it made them proud to think that they had far better mental abilities, far more information and knowledge than their non-identified peers and had abilities and interests that non-identified peers did not. This shows the power a label can have on students' thoughts and behaviour. Students associated giftedness with intelligence because they lived in a society that often associates giftedness with high intellectual abilities. Yet, as mentioned before, students identified as gifted live in a world filled with mixed messages for them, many of which convey unfavourable notions about what it is like to be gifted (Cross, 1999). These students may be influenced by others' views and may embrace the beliefs of social groups that they perceive themselves to belong to. This idea is supported by self-categorization theory (Turner, 1987), according to which people categorise themselves in terms of a particular social group (e.g., as a member of a given sports team or as gifted) rather than just as an individual. When this happens, people see themselves less in terms of their distinctive characteristics and more in terms of the social groups to which they think they belong, which entails a shift from "I" to "we". In a similar way, while categorising others, the perceiver considers a person as a member of a bigger social grouping rather than as a distinctive or individualised entity. Thus, self-evaluations are affected by personal identity, such as certain qualities (e.g. competency, talent or capability), as well as by social or collective identities, which come from belonging to groups, teams and classes, alongside the values and emotional impact attached to those affiliations (Tajfel, 1981). For instance, students often compare themselves socially with their peers in their own self-evaluations.

Although labels are associated with attributes (e.g., giftedness or specific learning disability) and can help educators to meet a student's individual needs,

excessive emphasis on labels might devalue the student as a person (Gates, 2010).

Table 7: Positive Perceptions of Gifted Label Mentioned by Participants – thematic analysis themes

Positive perceptions of Gifted Label
Special experiences
Received greater opportunities
Exposed to different curriculum
Better teachers
Participated in international and domestic activities, programmes and competitions
Made parents happy/proud

b. Negative Aspects of Gifted Labelling

The "negative aspects" of the gifted label mentioned by the students in this study were predominantly of a social nature. All the participants in this study recognised the negative social implications (e.g., teasing, parent and teacher pressure and higher expectations from people) that can stem from the gifted labelling process (see Table 8).

Regarding the negative aspects of being labelled as gifted, this study's results had much in common with the previous literature (e.g., Berlin, 2009; Pereira & Gentry, 2013; Shaunessy, McHatton, Hughes, Brice, & Ratliff, 2007). The students in this study revealed negative opinions about being gifted emanating from parents', teachers' and others' extremely high expectations of them. The students believed that after they received the gifted label, people put them under a spotlight, errors were forbidden, and they had to be 100% perfect. This study, however, found some subtle differences in how students perceived their label of gifted. Although not reported elsewhere in the literature, fear of losing friends was also found to be a negative aspect of the gifted label, as

students believed that after they were labelled as gifted and placed in special classes, their relationships with their friends outside gifted classes were negatively affected.

Moreover, some students in this study reported that being called names such as "nerd," "genius" or "geek" evoked negative feelings toward their label of gifted. Some peers or siblings intentionally used such informal labels to tease students identified as gifted who have gained access to non-regular educational services at school. Several labels are reported in the literature to be used to deprecate students identified as gifted, such as "nerd" (Brown, Mory & Kinney 1994; Kinney, 1993), "brain" (Prinstein & La Greca, 2002), "geek" (Tyson, Darity, & Castellino, 2005) or "teacher's pet" (Tal & Babad, 1990).

It has been found that the label of gifted generally designates one of the least liked types of people at school (Brown et al., 1994). Students identified as gifted are generally thought to have the following characteristics (stereotypes): studying a lot, being unsociable, having few friends, not wearing fashionable clothes, not liking to have fun and isolating themselves, as found in this study and in Rentzsch and Schutz's (2012) study.

As mentioned in the literature chapter, students to whom the gifted label is attached may be exposed to stigmatising, leaving them open to discrimination (Ryan, 2013). Goffman (2009) defined stigma as a process by which the reaction of others spoils 'normal' identity. The students in this study described several strategies they have adopted to deal with social situations by camouflaging their giftedness. This is in line with Cross et al. (1991), Gross (1989) and Silverman (2002), who indicated that some students identified as gifted may choose to isolate themselves if they do not find same-age peers who share their interests.

However, some may try to find new social relationships by seeking out the companionship of other gifted students, and most students in this study said that their relationships with students identified as gifted were better than those with students in mainstream classes. On a more negative note, some students noted that given the lack of similarly minded same-age peers, students identified as gifted may be tempted to hide or deny their giftedness, which they perceive as the primary cause of their peers' lack of acceptance.

Table 8: Negative Perceptions of Gifted Label Mentioned by Participants– thematic analysis themes

Negative Perceptions of Gifted Label
Parental expectations/pressure
More homework/schoolwork
Internal pressure to do well
Teacher expectations/pressure
Higher expectations from people
Increased "envy" and "jealousy" between students
Loss of some friends
Being called names

c. Feeling Different from Others

All participants in this study felt different from other girls of their generation in terms of academic achievement and creative thinking. They felt that they were better than their non-identified peers both personally and academically. The personal aspects they mentioned included higher self-confidence, responsibility and independence. The academic aspects consisted of things like loving learning and exploration, intelligence and having far more information and knowledge than others. In contrast, most students were not satisfied with their own academic progress because they expected the academic abilities and capabilities of students identified as gifted to have no limits, so they always strove to be the best, struggling to be consistently at the top.

Interestingly, the students in this study did not explicitly say that they were different from their peers, although they believed that they learnt faster and had abilities and interests that non-identified peers did not. The literature suggests that students identified as gifted often recognise their differentness (Coleman, 2015), and it seems that the source of feeling different might come from outside rather than within, established through the students' social interactions. This might reflect the pressure that stereotypes place on students identified as gifted, as others' expectations can impact on the students' feelings and behaviours (Steele, 2010). The attraction of acceptability is powerful when a student is unsure of what her behaviour should be. As mentioned above, upon being given this labelling, a student may feel confused about what will happen next, what is requested of her, and what is the expected behaviour to do. Coleman et al. (2015) mentioned that, a student's uncertainty may affect their choices about interests, friends and actions, and it can sometimes negatively affect their future development. If parents and teachers perceive the students identified as gifted as perfect, with unique characteristics that non-identified students do not have, the students identified as gifted may feel different. Then, in turn, she may act based on others' perceptions, although she does not welcome being different, as what happened with students in this study.

5.2.1.2 The Gifted Label and the Dilemma of Difference

This study illustrated tensions associated with the experience of being labelled and treated as gifted. Although all the students in this study had some positive feelings about being labelled as gifted, some also experienced negative feelings and tensions around labelling. As with all other academic labels, the gifted label carries with it tensions and burdens that students identified as gifted

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without the label may not wrestle with in their academic experience. Not all the effects of this label are positive; to the contrary, the disadvantages may outweigh the advantages for some students.

This study's findings reveal the tension that students identified as gifted may feel because of labelling. For example, some participants wanted to be labelled as gifted because the label gave them access to services and enriching materials. At the same time, they did not want to be labelled as gifted because of the increased stress and tension resulting from their efforts to keep the gifted label and their place in the programme. Some students believed that the gifted label gives students a sense of pride and makes them happy, while they resent the label because they hate being addressed differently or because the label may lead peers to use derogatory epithets, such as "nerd" or "genius". These tensions might lead these students to experience dilemmas about their approach to being identified as gifted. The term dilemma refers to "a situation when there is a choice between alternatives when neither is favourable" (Norwich, 2009. P. 448) or both are equally desirable.

Self-determination theory suggests that there are three basic psychological needs that combine to motivate the self to initiate behaviour and identify what is required for psychological well-being and health. These innate and universal psychological needs are competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2012). In addition, Deci and Ryan (2012) also regard self-determination as an essential concept, indicating that each person is capable of making informed decisions and managing their own life and choices. This capability contributes significantly to psychological health and welfare, as people feel more motivated to act when they realise that what they do will impact the outcome.

With regards to gifted students, once students are labelled as gifted, these students are more likely to feel more able to achieve and develop their high ability. However, they still feel the need to connect with or relate to others. People need to experience a feeling of belonging and relatedness to others, as attachment is crucial for the development of self-determination and a strong will. In this study, students identified as gifted reported that being labelled as gifted led to more social difficulties and greater peer pressure. There was a tension in these girls between a need for relatedness and connection with friends, on the one hand, and a need to demonstrate their competence and develop their high abilities within the programme being offered to them. Some students in this study felt stressed and tense after being labelled as gifted because, while labelling helped them gain mastery of tasks and learn different skills that would help them achieve their goals, it also led them to lose many friends. This conflict of needs might increase the labelling-related tension felt by students identified as gifted, which, in turn, could lead these students to experience dilemmas.

Some students may choose to adopt this label, but others could not decide whether to accept it or not because they are young, and this is a decision made by adults. They may not experience a dilemma (a hard choice), yet their experiences do raise questions for adults about identification. Nevertheless, labelling students as gifted can lead to a dilemma: It establishes a foundation for those students to acquire support and resources and gives them access to better learning opportunities, but it also brings negative consequences associated with stigma and with adults' high expectations that place pressure on the students. Labelling students as gifted may lead students to believe and feel that they are different; this might affect students' self-concept positively or negatively, and make some students feel satisfaction and pride or resent the label.

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Experiencing this dilemma demands a resolution that allows students to minimise negative experiences associated with the dilemma of difference. To my knowledge, previous studies have focused on studying and addressing this dilemma in the context of disability, but no study has addressed the dilemma of difference in the context of gifted education. Norwich (2013) states that in education of children with disability "differentiation strategies were still seen as necessary, but at a reduced level, what some called a minimal labelling approach" (p. 48). This means that when labels become necessary, resolutions can involve strategies that go beyond negative labels. Some students in this study used some strategies to minimise the experience of such dilemmas. For example, some students may seek a new, alternative social scene through companionship with students identified as gifted if they face rejection from other peers. Moreover, some students, upon perceiving a lack or unavailability of appropriate peers, may try to adjust to the given social scene by concealing or dismissing their giftedness, blaming it for their peers' rejection.

However, adults' practices can contribute considerably to support the development of positive coping strategies. Deci and Ryan (2012) suggested that the tendency to be either passive or enterprising is generally affected by the social conditions in which people have grown up. Thus, social support is important, as it is through our relationships and interactions with others that we can either foster or inhibit well-being and personal development. The implications of the students' experiences in this study suggest that educators need to give the child precedence over the label. It is essential to identify the individual child's needs, wants, strengths and challenges before formulating an educational plan or creating a fixed set of expectations for the child's conduct and achievement. Going beyond the gifted label means referring to students' other characteristics

in addition to giftedness and focussing on their individuality. Moreover, general school systems should be improved with clear plans and strategies for meeting the needs of these students. Strategies should be devised to raise public awareness and to nurture a better understanding of the needs of students identified as gifted as well as to raise students' awareness of their giftedness and abilities, perhaps by determining their strengths and weaknesses and then seeking to enhance their strengths. Better staff training, the promotion of positive images of giftedness and the encouragement of greater peer acceptance of students identified as gifted are all strategies that can reduce the dilemmas that students identified as gifted might experience because of labelling.

5.2.1.3 Gifted Label in Relation to Students' Identity

One of the most distinctive findings of this study is that labelling and stereotyping might influence students' identity as they seek a clearer sense of self and their role in society. These students' identity can be influenced by their label of gifted and social attitudes. In the literature, students identified as gifted were often reported to be confined by the assumptions that accompany the label (Ryan, 2013). Some students identified as gifted might face an identity crisis a few years before their peers (Wright & Leroux, 1997) because they may be inclined to be more analytical and critical thinkers. They probably recognise early the discrepancies between what their teachers, parents and peers expect of them and what is expected of others. Hebert (2011), who reviewed research on the development of identity in students identified as gifted, found that although these students tend to reach the stage of critical and analytical thinking earlier than their same-age peers, many of them lack the emotional maturity to deal with any crisis. Parents and educators might not try to help these students cope with these crises

simply because they might not realise that their children are subject to an internal crisis at such a young age.

Adolescents identified as gifted might come to believe that being gifted is something that must be frequently demonstrated and proven (Ryan, 2013). They may also feel confused about their goals and hobbies, and they might not have the courage to make decisions about their future, as noted by students in this study. This might be because they are afraid of making the wrong choice and endangering their status as a gifted student. These students expressed that they did not want to lose their families' and teachers' trust in their abilities and efficiency. According to Rimm (2008), the label might lead students identified as gifted to have high expectations of themselves and see themselves as different and far better than other students, and it often limits their thinking when contemplating the range of social and academic options available to them.

5.2.1.4 Seeking Perfection

Perfectionism, a form of pressure associated with the gifted label, might prevent students from forming positive conceptions of their self. When students develop an understanding of their intelligence through social signals about giftedness, they might conclude that they have to maintain perfect work and to be among the top performing students. Thus, students may set unachievable goals for their work, and when they do so, perfection and competition become sources of unjustified tension, negatively affecting their perception of their own intelligence (Greenspon, 2000; Peterson, Duncan, & Canady, 2009; Siegle & Schuler, 2000).

Participants in this study wanted to live up to unrealistic expectations, sometimes imposed by others, so they were always dissatisfied with their current academic progress, aiming to be the top student at school. If they failed to achieve these expectations, they could face numerous problems, such as low academic achievement, depression and acute personality disorders (Hewitt & Dyck, 1996; Rasmussen & Eisen, 1992). The literature argues that when students feel unsuccessful in achieving the desired quality on an academic task, or if they fear negative feedback, they are likely to be less motivated to attempt the task (Ryan, 2013). Arguably, perfectionistic predispositions among students in this study have manifested themselves in class in the form of delays in starting assignments, procrastination or reluctance to submit finished assignments, and disinclination to participate unless completely sure of the right answer, as mentioned by gifted programme teachers and the students themselves.

Moreover, because of the high expectations associated with giftedness, the students in this study have adopted a perfectionist approach to their work because they wanted to keep their label. Some students in this study believed that perfection in their work was proof of their eligibility for being labelled as gifted. This can be distinguished from other forms of labelling (e.g., labelling of people with disabilities) in that students identified as gifted often seek to maintain the label and wish to prove that they deserve it, although they also mention its many negative effects on their self-concept and social life. It seems that if students identified as gifted are accustomed to receiving compliments for their performance, it follows that they would be excited to maintain that recognition; this might explain much of this inclination. The gifted label has two faces (Robinson, 1989), representing the dilemma faced by students identified as gifted and revealing the tension these students feel because of labelling. Labelling is a

social process that can have both positive and negative effects on the labelled student.

Nonetheless, some students in this study explained that seeking perfection encouraged them to put forward their best work and always inspired them to bring out the best in themselves. Students also indicated that because of perfectionism, they tended to be more competitive than non-identified students. Thus, not all perfectionism and competition are negative, and some studies have found that competition can be a great motivating factor for students to succeed and excel (Phillips & Lindsay, 2006; Rimm, 2008; Udvari & Schneider, 2000).

5.2.2 Social Acceptance and Friendship Patterns of Students Identified as Gifted

One of the most important questions raised by this study on social self-concept was what the students' views were on how the gifted label had influenced their social acceptance and their social relationships. Generally, students believed that others (especially peers) perceived their label negatively and had negative views of them. This can be discussed along several points. Firstly, students' belief and feeling that they are different may affect their perspective about how the gifted label has influenced their social relationships. The way an individual interprets their surroundings can become their reality, due to a potential relationship between belief and behaviour (Darley & Gross, 1983), regardless of the accuracy of their interpretation. Such a belief may affect students' interactions with others (peers, parents, siblings, teachers) and lead to a lower social self-concept if they believe that others do not accept their labelling. Thus, even if others do not actually treat them differently or think negatively about their label, if students identified as gifted believe that they stand out because of their label,

their social self-concept may be influenced accordingly. This is in line with Wright and Leroux's (1997) finding that although students identified as gifted believed that the label was positive in their academic lives, they thought that they faced difficulties in social adjustment because they believed that students not labelled did not accept them. These students' beliefs and expectations about their label might have led them to feel isolated from other students (Robinson, 2002).

Secondly, because the participants in this study were girls, some findings might be attributed to gifted girls' individual characteristics, such as high standards for their own performance in the context of peer relations. There is some evidence of gender differences in social self-concept of students identified as gifted (Norman et al., 2000; Schapiro, Schneider, Shore, Margison, & Udvari, 2009; Preckel, Zeidner, Goetz, & Schleyer, 2008; Rimm, 2002), as discussed above in the literature chapter (see section 2.11.1, p. 61). Each study recognised that boys and girls responded differently to the social pressures associated with labelling, and all agreed that girls identified as gifted were more sensitive to peer pressure and were more aware of their gifted identity.

Finally, it seems that the label might influence the way others perceive the students and how the students perceive themselves, as mentioned by the students in this study. It is likely that the perceptions and expectations of a child's performance may change overnight as a result of this label, when in reality the child remains the same. Thus, labelling may generate behaviours and expectations on part of the student and in the reactions of others toward the student, as will be discussed in the next section.

5.2.2.1 The Gifted Label in the Family Context

In general, the findings show that the participants had family harmony, with no reports of sibling negative attitudes or significant family friction after they were identified as gifted. This contradicts with Lapidot-Berman & Oshrat (2009) study which reported that the relations between the gifted children and their non-gifted siblings, as reported by them, were less intimate than those reported by non-gifted children with their non-gifted siblings. The non-gifted children in that study were reported to have disliked their gifted siblings' arrogance and they desired they had similar intellectual capacity as their gifted siblings. Although the students in this study reported no excessive changes within their family circles after they were labelled, some were anxious about their siblings' feelings and perceived parental pressure, believing that their parents might create jealousy between their children by frequently comparing them.

As mentioned in the literature and findings chapters, parents' opinions were found to hold weight for their children and could affect them, either positively or negatively (Baki, 2004; Hamdan, 2005). Some students in this study believed that their parents offered strong motivation and encouragement for them to improve, having a positive influence on them, increasing their self-confidence and self-esteem. Nonetheless, they also saw parents as a primary source of pressure and stress, in line with the previous literature (e.g., Assouline & Colangelo, 2006; Cornell, 1989; Fletcher & Neumeister, 2012; Moulton et al., 1998; Rimm, 2008; Robinson, Shore & Enersen, 2007; Schulz, 2005; Udvari & Schneider, 2000). Within the current study, parental expectations and pressure was the most commonly reported negative aspect of the gifted label. This is in line with Moulton et al. (1998), who asked students to generate lists of the 13 most positive and

most negative aspects of being labelled as gifted. Here, too, parental expectations and pressure was the most commonly cited negative answer; on a scale of one to 13, with one being the least negative and 13 being the most negative, parental expectations and pressure averaged at 10.5.

The data collected in this study revealed that the label was perceived by the students as affecting their relationships with their parents. It can put more pressure on them to perform in a way that corresponds with the new expectations connected to the label. These expectations, and the pressure they induce, may become particularly amplified when parents emphasise their children's giftedness, as children may feel more obliged to confirm their giftedness through academic performance (Renati, Bonfiglio, & Pfeiffer, 2017). The current study also found that parents' reported glorification and sense of pride in their gifted child may be one source of increased pressure on the child; this has not been reported elsewhere in the literature. All the participants reported that they always sought to prove their giftedness because they did not want to lose their family's faith in their abilities. Consequently, as mentioned in the literature review chapter, if parents constantly emphasise their children's giftedness, this could lead the students to develop unrealistic achievement expectations of themselves. Parents' belief that their children have exceptional intelligence and abilities may give students a sense of being "enthroned," which may later mean that they are "dethroned" if they feel that they are no longer able to maintain the required level of performance (Rimm, 2008, p. 41).

Moreover, the students in this study felt pressured by their parents because they always urged them to work harder to be able to carry on and keep their place in the gifted programme. Parents may send an implicit message to their children

that they should not "waste" their giftedness by preventing them from enjoying themselves or having fun. In this way, students identified as gifted may run the risk of having their parents impose their own choices in the academic and career options available to them. If their own desires differed, this might lead to tensions. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, parental pressure on students to achieve academic success often stems from a constant emphasis on meeting an established career target, one which was not necessarily the path chosen by the student. Instead of formulating an identity to their liking, students are often forced to accept one that has been predetermined by the options given to them (Vadeboncouer & Portes, 2002).

5.2.2.2 Labelling and Placement in Relation to Friendship Patterns

As mentioned in the findings chapter, part 1, the students participating in this study were required to change their classes or schools to attend full-time gifted programme. Some were pleased to start over in new social milieu, but others were hesitant. These students were moved from the regular classrooms, where they were likely perceived as the top of their classes in terms of intellectual ability, to gifted classes, where they had to strive to be the best. Some students in this study expressed a desire to quit the programme because they thought that they might end up psychologically drained by the envy the gifted label created among students identified as gifted. They thought that the gifted label often led them to blame themselves when they compared their own achievement to those of other gifted students.

A self-contained classroom may provide academic opportunities for students identified as gifted, but it also might have a significant impact on their peer relationships. According to Harter (1999), "A new school environment brings

different academic expectations and shifting standards of social comparisons in the face of a new social reference group" (p. 319). The student's sense of social comfort may fluctuate within a new school environment, influenced by the acceptance of her new peer group. For example, some students in this study believed that having the gifted label and being placed in a separate class was positive because it gave members a sense of confidence and a self-justifying rationale. They believed that being a member of the gifted group meant that a person was no longer alone and that there were people like them who could support them. This idea is supported by labelling theory, in which members of the labelled group have things in common, giving them a sense of a "common fate, of being in the same boat" (Becker, 1963, p. 38). They face the same problems, the same social perspective and the same consequences.

On the other hand, being placed in a new learning environment might require a certain period of adjustment and might affect students' relationships with peers outside the gifted class. The findings revealed that being labelled as gifted might pose more social difficulties, as students identified as gifted reported seeking others like them, facing pressure from peers and coping with teasing by non-identified peers. For example, some students who participated in this study indicated that non-identified peers had not been very friendly with them and that belonging could be elusive; they believed that some non-identified peers kept their distance and preferred not to be their friend because they thought that students identified as gifted did nothing but study, with no time for fun. The response of the students identified as gifted in terms of overcoming these difficulties is different and reflects the many personal aspects of who and what they are, and how they interact with others (Foster, 2000). A student's social adjustment is considered an individual issue, as no two students will have the

same social experience. This is confirmed by Bickley (2002), Silverman (2002) and Lovecky (1992), who all offered evidence that some students identified as gifted may feel non-acceptance by age mates who are not identified as gifted, causing difficulties in creating and maintaining relationships; while other students may not feel like that.

The lack of peer acceptance can impact the interpersonal abilities and social coping skills of students identified as gifted, as shown in this study and a number of other empirical studies mentioned in literature chapter (Davis & Rimm, 1998; Gross, 1989; Silverman, 2002). For example, some students identified as gifted may choose to isolate themselves if they do not find same-age peers who share their interests and general beliefs about friendship. Moreover, these students may alternatively seek a new social scene through companionship with students identified as gifted if they cannot find other peers in their own age group to share their interests. In more serious situations, these students, upon perceiving a lack or unavailability of appropriate peers, may try to adjust to the given social scene by concealing or dismissing their giftedness, blaming it for their peers' rejection. These patterns may be evidence that students identified as gifted perceive their label as social discrimination; otherwise, they would not need to adopt new social patterns.

Students' motivation can also decrease due to lack of peer acceptance. According to the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2001), decreases in both social and academic self-concept can cause decreases in motivation. Students identified as gifted, might have higher intrinsic motivation due to their potential for learning; however, extrinsic motivation can also easily be promoted by their environment. When students feel disconnected from their peers, they are

likely to feel less intrinsic motivation to carry on their work. Thus, if students believe that their label will result in a disconnect between them and their peers, they might start thinking more about their social goals than their academic ones (Greenspon, 2000; Gross, 2002).

Thus, it is probable that students who are labelled and placed in a new setting, where they experience a change in their reference group, may need additional support and encouragement (Berlin, 2009; Coleman and Cross, 2014; Gates, 2010; Vialle et al., 2007). They may need help to acquire a sense of belonging and social interaction skills. Students identified as gifted are often emotionally and socially sensitive (Peterson, 2006; Reis & Renzulli, 2004), perhaps because they believe that people put them under a "spotlight" and they feel constantly monitored, as mentioned by the students who participated in this study.

5.2.3 The Perceived Educational Effects of the Gifted Label

The findings in the current study showed that for many of the students, school well-being was about having peers who understood and accepted them, more than about academic provisions. Students most often desire acceptance and connection to peers at school, so the social context of learning environments needs to be considered. This is in line with Csikszentmihalyi et al. (1993) and Moon et al. (2002), who confirmed the importance of social support in academic outcomes for students identified as gifted and mentioned that a supportive school context can help students overcome academic challenges and encourage them to learn and develop to the best of their ability, as mentioned in the literature chapter.

5.2.3.1 School Context

The school's environment seems to have a great impact on students' perception of feeling accepted and their level of academic satisfaction. When these students go to school, they might encounter an institution that is not directed toward them as persons who are identified as gifted. Children identified as gifted may face situations in which biological age, rather than competency, determines educational opportunities, and the group, not the person, is the focus (Coleman et al., 2015).

The interviews conducted with the director and teachers of the gifted programme in state schools in part 1 of this study showed limited evidence of a clear strategy to meet the needs of students identified as gifted in schools. There were no clear plans or strategies to support students identified as gifted psychologically, socially or even academically; instead, schools depended heavily on the personal diligence of the teacher and her desire to support these students. For example, some teachers of the gifted programme and students in state schools in this study indicated that the enrichment curricula were not fully applied in the schools. This is because there is not enough time to apply these curricula and programmes, as the greatest interest and emphasis in Saudi Arabia is on the regular curriculum, which is intended for all students, regardless of their abilities. The result is that students identified as gifted complained that their educational situations were not intellectually challenging, even though they had special classes. Coleman (2011) summarised students' identified as gifted lived experience in some schools as "advanced academic development clashing with uninteresting, undemanding and slow-moving curriculum" (p. 382).

On the other hand, the lived experiences of students identified as gifted changes when students attend schools tailored to the development of their academic domains (Coleman, 2011). Participants who attended private schools believed that the gifted programme was very useful, as it allowed them to gather a lot of information and knowledge. They believed that the greatest benefit of this programme was having enriching materials in science and maths, which improved their academic progress. Although students in this study believed that private schools were more successful in making adequate educational provisions than those in the state schools, their social and emotional needs still may not be seen as a priority in these schools, notwithstanding the importance of social support in academic outcomes for students identified as gifted (Vialle et al., 2007). These students felt that their school's personal and social support system was lacking, despite their need for it as they struggled to meet new social and educational challenges.

The findings of this study showed that the lived experiences of students identified as gifted vary greatly, depending on the context in which the students learn and how others treat them. Coleman & Cross (2014) found that the type of school the students identified as gifted attend might influence students' experience of giftedness. The lack of clear strategies to support these students may negatively impact many of the young students (Coleman et al., 2015). However, careful planning can ensure that students do improve academically and at the same time have less psychological and social problems.

5.2.3.2 Segregating Students Identified as Gifted in Gifted Classes

The students in this study were asked to reflect upon their educational experiences within their gifted classes. Some students thought back to when they

were in regular classrooms and compared the educational experiences there with those in the gifted classroom. These students reported a lack of challenges or motivation when they were in regular classrooms. They added that being in gifted class gave students extra incentive and helped students identified as gifted to exchange scientific skills and collaborate. For all students, the offer to transfer into a gifted class and be labelled as gifted was seen as a great opportunity. On the other hand, some students mentioned some negative elements of the gifted classrooms. For instance, being in the same class created feelings of envy and jealousy among students identified as gifted, often causing fierce and detrimental competition among them.

When students focus heavily on competition with others rather than on personal improvement, they can develop a negative academic self-concept (Adams-Byers, Whitesell, & Moon, 2004; Rimm, 2008). This is particularly problematic in self-contained classrooms because most of the students within these classrooms are accustomed to being praised for their work (Ryan, 2013). Consistent with Adams-Byers et al. (2004) findings, the current study found that students frequently considered high competitiveness as one of the most negative aspects of attending gifted classes. The students also clarified that the stress that emerged from such competition impeded their achievement and progress because it usually left them blaming themselves and feeling anxious, if they thought they could not keep up with their peers. Moreover, many studies have indicated that competition affects students' self-concept most negatively when students identified as gifted move from heterogeneous capability classrooms to self-contained classrooms (e.g., Marsh, Chessor, Craven, & Roche, 1995; Udvari & Schneider, 2000; Weinstein, 2002; Zeidner & Schleyer, 1999). This competition becomes more difficult because students in gifted classrooms may all be exposed

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to the same intellectual challenges, which some of them may consider beyond their capabilities. However, students identified as gifted represent a very diverse group (Carman, 2013), so the competition in these classes should be diverse enough to cater to each student's educational potential.

5.2.3.3 Teachers' images of a Student Identified as gifted

In the interviews, participants were asked to describe their perspective on how teachers perceive them. They believed that teachers expected them to be perfect and not make any mistakes; also, they assumed that students identified as gifted must demonstrate their giftedness by offering unique works or ideas or performing perfectly across all subjects. Moreover, teachers were reported by the students to hold the belief that if a student has low academic achievement, then she should not be labelled as gifted. In addition, most students in this study complained about the extra demands of the gifted programmes. All participants found that there was too much tension and homework, and they felt exhausted by their many school requirements and duties. One of the students responded poorly to the extra demands, which sometimes meant that she would make a mess of her homework or not do it at all. Others were unhappy about the curriculum: some said that the curriculum was not advanced enough, while others were upset by repetitious teaching.

Teachers of the gifted programme declared that one of the drawbacks of labelling is that students identified as gifted might encounter problems in their relationships with their teachers. One of the teachers explained that because students identified as gifted are 'very smart', sometimes they discover errors in the teacher's information. Unfortunately, some teachers do not want to recognise the error. This might create problems and squabbles between teachers and

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students identified as gifted, and angers some teachers, who describe them as 'rude'. This is in line with Gates' (2010) conclusion that the gifted label can be negative if teachers believe that the questioning nature of a student is disruptive or annoying in class.

It seems that, the lack of teacher training in the KSA is one of the reasons for creating many problems between teachers and students identified as gifted. As mentioned in literature chapter, teachers' views of students identified as gifted often relate to the level of teacher training in gifted education or teachers' attitudes towards diversity (Berlin, 2009). Increased training and experience in a particular field has always been assumed to lead to better informed and more skilled practitioners. This study has contributed to existing knowledge and has provided many implications and recommendation, as explained in greater detail below.

5.3   Contributions to Knowledge

In this section, I will explain the areas in which the current study contributes to the existing knowledge. This study contributes both theoretically and methodologically with regards to the literature exploring students' perspectives on their being labelled as gifted. This study contributed to different areas, as outlined below.

The literature review in this study identified the gaps in the field of gifted label. The current research helps address six main gaps in the existing literature as following:

- There is an international and national limitation in exploring gifted label from the perspectives of students identified as gifted. Compared with the issue of labelling students with disabilities, the issue of labelling students identified as gifted has received limited attention (Matthews et al., 2014). Students identified as gifted in the KSA have experiences similar to their international counterparts. There is little interest in studying issues related to gifted education, including the meaning of the gifted label for students identified as gifted, in Saudi Arabia (Alamer, 2010; Al Garni, 2012; Alamer, 2014). To my knowledge, no study has focused on exploring the perspectives of students identified as gifted regarding their being labelled as gifted in schools in the KSA. The current study fills this gap by exploring the meaning of gifted label for students from the perspectives of students themselves. The current study presented a contribution to the body of the Saudi literature in the field of special education regarding gifted label phenomenon in a rarely addressed context.

- There is a lack of research exploring the meaning of gifted label for students in three different areas: socially, educationally and with regards to self-concept. This study provided comprehensive information regarding the students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled as gifted, as well as how these students saw their labelling influencing their social and academic lives and self-concepts.

- Studies that have explored students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled gifted have been rather limited because most have not examined the lived experience of students; instead, adults (e.g. parents, teachers), rather than the students themselves, have described the students' experiences (Coleman et al., 2015). I cannot deny that these data are

valuable, but they simply do not reflect the students' lived experience. This study aims to bypass the meanings adults attribute to students, instead giving students the right to express their own opinions.

- In order to fill the gap in the literature, one of the main objectives of this study was to explore how gifted students saw their labelling influencing their social acceptance. This is particularly important because the studies that have explore the influence of being labelled gifted on students' social acceptance are scarce (Košir et al., 2016).

- There is a significant need for such research, especially as there is still a great disagreement about provision in gifted education, as mentioned in literature chapter. For example, in the KSA and the USA, students identified as gifted are considered to have special educational needs and have been labelled as children with SEN. However, in the UK, these students are not recognised as having special educational needs and not labelled as children with SEN. This study shows that labelling may be an essential practice to provide specific services and programmes to students identified as gifted, which suit their high educational potential. However, to provide quality service to them, the implications of labelling should be considered. Once a student is labelled as belonging to a category with certain characteristics, positive or negative effects on this student may be inevitable. So, it is important that the child should take precedence over the label. Students' social and emotional needs are as important as their educational needs. This study also indicated that labelling in and of itself is not 'bad.' However, what can be bad is the irresponsible use of this label to differentiate between students in school rather than curricula.

- A small number of studies explore students' perceptions at the critical age of 12 to 15 regarding the effects of gifted label. The specific issues for gifted adolescents have not been fully explored in the literature, because most research on giftedness has focused on younger children (Vialle et al, 2007). This study adds to the literature by exploring the students' perspectives on their being labelled as gifted in secondary education.

The findings of this study have contributed to knowledge in other ways as well. This study found some subtle differences in how students perceived their label of being gifted and not reported elsewhere in the literature (e.g. Berlin., 2009; Coleman and Cross., 2014; Coleman et al., 2015; Kerr et al.,1988; Moulton et al.,1998; Morris., 2013; Pereira and Gentry., 2013; Peterson et al., 2009; Rentzsch et al., 2011; & Vialle., 2007). Fear of losing friends was found to be a negative aspect of the gifted label, as students believed that after they were labelled as gifted and placed in special classes, their relationships with their friends outside gifted classes were negatively affected.

Moreover, one of the most distinctive findings of this study is that labelling and stereotyping might influence students' identity as they seek a clearer sense of self and their role in society. These students' identity can be influenced by their label of gifted and social attitudes. In the literature, students identified as gifted were often reported to be confined by the assumptions that accompany the label (Ryan, 2013), which might negatively affect their personality and lead to identity crises.

In addition, the findings show that the participants experienced family harmony, with no reports of siblings expressing negative attitudes or significant family friction after they were identified as gifted. This contradicts some studies,

such as the Lapidot-Berman & Oshrat (2009) study which found that the relations between the gifted children and their non-gifted siblings, as reported by them, were less intimate than those reported by non-gifted children with their non-gifted siblings. The non-gifted children disapproved of their gifted siblings' attitude and they desired having similar intellectual capacity as their gifted siblings.

The current study also found that parents' perceived glorification and sense of pride in their gifted child may be one source of increased pressure on the child; this has not been reported elsewhere in the literature. All the participants reported that they always sought to prove their giftedness because they did not want to lose their family's faith in their abilities. It could be argued that parents' opinions carry great weight with their children in the KSA, as mentioned before. This might be because of the cultural or religious beliefs as in Islam and in the Saudi culture, obedience and parental consent are obligatory. So, students often seek their parents' satisfaction.

5.4 Methodological Contribution

- Internationally, much research regarding gifted label has often used quantitative methods (e.g. questionnaires) but little qualitative research has been carried out (e.g., Cross et al. 1993; Feldhusen and Dai 1997; Kerr et al. 1988; Kunkel et al. 1995; Makel et al. 2015; Manor-Bullock et al. 1995). Nationally, most research on special education in the KSA depends on questionnaires as a data collection method (Al-Wabli, 1996; Hanafi & Alraies 2008). The current study has then contributed methodologically through its design and methods. As far as I know, this study is the first exploratory research based on in depth semi-structured interviews that used Tomlinson's (1989) methodology of hierarchical

focussing, to design and build the interview questions which would enable young participants to express their views with a minimum of researcher impact, as explained in the methodology chapter. This study aimed to allow students to describe in great detail their own experiences regarding being labelled as gifted from their own point of view. Studying individuals' experiences requires research that allows each person's voice to be heard. According to Coleman et al. (2015), studies that use closed responses attempt to ask children to choose between a list of statements that may mirror their thoughts. These choices may reflect the researcher's own notions regarding what the children/ young people might say. By contrast, studies using semi-structured interviews, in which children/ young people are able to express their opinions, might be more appropriate for capturing their perceptions.

- The design and development of the interview questions can also be considered as another methodological contribution. In this study the interview questions were build and discussed with my supervisors. Moreover, they were tested and verified for their credibility and confirmability using pilot interviews. These interview questions might be useful for researchers and educators who are interested in gifted education. Moreover, these interview questions might also help other researchers and educators in the field of special education to explore how labels might affect students with SEN.

5.5 Implications and Recommendations

The present study provides extensive evidence regarding the students' perspectives on their being labelled as gifted. It offered much detail regarding

how their social and academic lives and self-concepts are perceived to be influenced by this label. This section discusses implications and offers recommendations for several stakeholders (e.g. parents, teachers, policymakers and researchers), that may help them become aware of the potential impacts of labelling, and the advantages and disadvantages of labelling on students' life at home and school. Stakeholders might find this study useful in relation to gifted identification and placement practices.

The findings in the current study showed that for many of the students identified as gifted, school well-being was about having peers who understood and accepted them, more than about academic provisions. Students most often desire acceptance and connection to peers at school, so the social context of learning environments needs to be considered. For this reason, it is important that schools with gifted programmes focus on students' social and emotional needs, in addition to their academic educational needs. Educators should focus on removing the stigma associated with giftedness, along with encouraging supportive home environments. Educators need to consider the precedence of the child over the label. It is essential to identify the individual children's needs, wants, challenges and strengths before formulating educational plans or creating a fixed set of expectations for their conduct and achievement.

Although all students' experiences are undoubtedly unique, this study spotlighted some possible implications for meeting students' needs in state and private schools. The school's environment seems to have a great impact on students' perception of feeling accepted and their level of academic satisfaction. When these students go to school, they might encounter an institution that is not directed toward them as persons who are identified as gifted. Children identified

as gifted may face situations in which biological age, rather than competency, determines educational opportunities, and the group, not the person, is the focus (Coleman et al., 2015). The findings of this study showed that the lived experiences of students identified as gifted vary greatly, depending on the context in which the students learn and how others treat them. The type of school the students attend might influence students' experience with giftedness. The lack of clear strategies to support these students may negatively impact many of the young students. However, careful planning can ensure that students will be able to improve academically and at the same time have less psychological and social problems. If educational psychologists develop strategies at a national or local level that meet students' social and educational needs and ensure that students identified as gifted are effectively identified and sufficiently challenged, this might allow these students to get the most out of their education.

Moreover, this study has indicated that competition was perceived to affect students' self-concept most negatively when they study in self-contained classrooms. This competition becomes more difficult because students in gifted classrooms may all be exposed to the same intellectual challenges, which some of them may consider beyond their capabilities. However, students identified as gifted represent a very diverse group (Carman, 2013), so provision in these classes should be diverse enough to cater to each student's educational potential. Thus, the educator's task is to provide differentiated curricula for this diverse group and to help these students understand how they can maintain appropriate levels of both competition and high self-expectations, using both strategies to improve and develop their abilities without harming their self-conception.

The findings of this study showed that students believed that parents and teachers expected them to be perfect and not make any mistakes; also, assumed that students identified as gifted must demonstrate their giftedness by producing work or ideas of unique quality or performing perfectly across all subjects. Parents and teachers may do a disservice to these students if they only focus on their strengths. These students might be gifted in some areas but struggle in others. However, the expectation is that a pupil who is gifted must master difficult tasks and have a high performance in all subjects (Gates, 2010). Instead, students identified as gifted need their parents and teachers to tell them how to deal with problems they may face and help them improve and develop their abilities. This might relieve some of the emotional stress that these students feel about themselves and their performance at school.

This study suggests that, teachers in schools that offer gifted programmes should be trained about how to deal with students identified as gifted. As mentioned in the literature review, teachers' views of students labelled gifted often relate to the level of teacher training in gifted education or teachers' attitudes towards diversity (Berlin, 2009). Increased training and experience in a particular field has always been assumed to lead to better informed and more skilled practitioners. For example, teacher training may increase the number of teachers who are understanding of the characteristics and needs of students identified as gifted and this might reduce the negative effects of labelling.

5.6 Further Research

This study might set the foundation for further research about the gifted label and how students social and academic lives and self-concept are influenced by this label internationally and in the Saudi context in particular. The findings of this study suggest the need for more research to explore and understand the advantages and disadvantages of the gifted label. Some directions for further research are discussed below:

- This study only involved students identified as gifted in Riyadh city. It is recommended that further research consider a sample of students in other Saudi cities. Such study might yield interesting findings regarding different or similar students' perspectives and experiences about the gifted label.

- This study was conducted on state and private schools to explore students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled as gifted. As this study found that the gifted programme differs between state schools and private schools, further research could compare gifted programme provisions in state and private schools.

- This study focused on the perspectives of students identified as gifted regarding being labelled as gifted. Exploring one side (students identified as gifted) of such experiences may not be sufficient. Therefore, further study could explore parents and teachers' perspectives, experiences, and beliefs regarding gifted label in the KSA.

- This study focused only on the perspectives of female students identified as gifted. Further study is recommended to conduct comparative study between male and female students identified as gifted in secondary

schools in the KSA, as some studies in the literature emphasised that students' gender may influence their perceptions.

5.7 Conclusions

This study explored students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled gifted, as well as how these students saw their labelling influencing their social and academic lives and self-concepts. The arguments that favour labelling are as convincing as those against it. Indeed, labelling may be a positive practice because it provides a means of identification, diagnosis and differentiated treatment for individual students, laying a foundation for future research and establishing a starting point for acquiring support and resources (Boyle, 2013). In this light, labelling in and of itself is not 'bad.' However, what can be bad is the irresponsible use of this label to differentiate between students in school rather than curricula.

The findings of this study are mixed: While some students had positive experiences associated with the label, such as feeling happy, proud or lucky, there were also emotional, psychological and social prices to pay for the gifted label. Students may feel forced to choose between academic endeavours and social acceptance, which can result in emotional complications (Greenspon, 2000). Although most students in this study believed that they were performing well, both personally and academically, their social self-concept related to interactions with peers was reported to be most negative. As pointed out in some studies (Cross, Coleman, & Stewart, 1993; Neihart, 1999, 2002; Rimm, 2002), some particular subgroups of students identified as gifted may be at risk in social adjustment. The findings of this study showed that girls identified as gifted might be one such vulnerable group. This study found that these girls were sensitive to

peer pressure, valued peer acceptance highly and believed that being comfortable in school meant having peers who understood and accepted them.

Moreover, the school's environment seems to have a great impact on students' perception of feeling accepted and their level of academic satisfaction. The type of school the students identified as gifted attend might influence their experience with giftedness. The students in this study, in both state and private schools, expressed a need for a school that can prepare them to meet their needs both socially and academically. They also needed the label as long as it can help them confront social, emotional and academic challenges and encourage them to learn and develop in healthy surroundings.

Finally, the gifted education field needs to re-consider its use of labelling of students identified as gifted. Some researchers have argued that the label should be completely abandoned, yet a replacement that provides the same advantages for classification purposes and the provision of services remains elusive.

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Appendix 1A: Ethical Form

UNIVERSITY OF
EXETER

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

When completing this form please remember that the purpose of the document is to clearly explain the ethical considerations of the research being undertaken. As a generic form it has been constructed to cover a wide-range of different projects so some sections may not seem relevant to you. Please include the information which addresses any ethical considerations for your particular project which will be needed by the SSIS Ethics Committee to approve your proposal. In completing this form please make full use of the guidance and resources available at **http://intranet.exeter.ac.uk/socialsciences/ethics/**

All staff and students within SSIS should use this form to apply for ethical approval and then send it to one of the following email addresses:

ssis-ethics@exeter.ac.uk   This email should be used by staff and students in Egenis, the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, Law, Politics, the Strategy & Security Institute, and Sociology, Philosophy, Anthropology.

ssis-gseethics@exeter.ac.uk   This email should be used by staff and students in the Graduate School of Education.

Applicant details	
Name	Amal Alnawaiser
Department	Graduate School of Education
UoE email address	aa634@exeter.ac.uk

Duration for which permission is required		
You should request approval for the entire period of your research activity. The start date should be at least one month from the date that you submit this form. Students should use the anticipated date of completion of their course as the end date of their work. Please note that retrospective ethical approval will never be given.		
Start date:01/04/2018	**End date:31/12/2018**	**Date submitted:26/03/2018**

Students only	
All students must discuss their research intentions with their supervisor/tutor prior to submitting an application for ethical approval. The discussion may be face to face or via email. Prior to submitting your application in its final form to the SSIS Ethics Committee it should be approved by your first and second supervisor / dissertation supervisor/tutor. You should submit evidence of their approval with your application, e.g. a copy of their email approval.	
Student number	640062817
Programme of study	Doctor of Education (EdD) module
Name of Supervisor(s)/tutors or Dissertation Tutor	Prof. Brahm Norwich Dr. George Koutsouris
Have you attended any ethics training that is available to students?	Select from this dropdown list For example: i) the Research Integrity Ethics and Governance workshop: http://as.exeter.ac.uk/rdp/postgraduateresearchers ii) Ethics training received on Masters courses

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	If yes, please specify and give the date of the training:
	Click here to specify training
	Click here to enter a date.

Certification for all submissions

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given in this application and that I undertake in my research to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research. I confirm that if my research plans change I will contact the Committee before research takes place and submit a request for amendment or, if necessary, complete a further ethics proposal form. I confirm that any that document translations have been done by a competent person with no significant changes to the original meaning.

Amal Alnawaiser

Double click this box to confirm certification ☐

Submission of this ethics proposal form confirms your acceptance of the above.

TITLE OF YOUR PROJECT

The Phenomenon of Gifted Labelling: Students' Perspectives on Their Being Labelled as Gifted by Secondary Schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

ETHICAL REVIEW BY AN EXTERNAL COMMITTEE

No, my research is not funded by, or doesn't use data from, either the NHS or Ministry of Defence.

MENTAL CAPACITY ACT 2005

No, my project does not involve participants aged 16 or over who are unable to give informed consent (e.g. people with learning disabilities

SYNOPSIS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Maximum of 750 words.

The gifted label can have complex implications for students than most people realise. Generally, we consider giftedness to be a positive label; these are the most distinguished academic students and the ones to whom we look as the standard of excellence in student work.

Such assumptions however are naïve to the realities of labelling and stereotype (Steele, 2010; Rist, 2011). As with all other academic labels, the gifted label carries with it an entirely new set of burdens and dilemmas that students without that label do not wrestle with in their academic endeavours or classrooms. Not all the effects of this label are positive, and indeed, for many students, the costs may outweigh the benefits.

The gifted label is new to Saudi Arabia and schools are debating whether to identify and potentially segregate this special population of advanced learners. According to Alamer (2010), the giftedness field is still new in Saudi Arabia, and most theories have been adapted from Western culture.

To my knowledge, no study has focused on exploring the perspectives of gifted students regarding their being labelled as gifted in schools in Saudi Arabia.

Hence, this gap needs to be explored. In this light, this study aims to offer an in-depth exploration of students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled gifted by secondary schools in Riyadh, as well as how students' social and academic lives and self-concepts are influenced by this labelling.

In this study, I will use an exploratory design to examine students' experiences by asking them for their opinions, feeling and experience about being labelled gifted, including the potential social and educational implications of this label. This design will seek to answer the following research questions:

Part 1

  1. How did the school come to be selected to have gifted programmes?
  2. How were students identified as gifted students?
  3. Is there a system of reviewing this identification?
  4. What kinds of gifted programmes are organised?
  5. What is the teachers' view about the benefits and disadvantages of identifying students as gifted in the school?

Part 2

  1. What are the current beliefs and feelings of gifted students regarding being labelled as gifted?
  2. How did the gifted students perceive themselves when they were labelled as gifted?
  3. What are gifted students' views about how the gifted label influenced their social acceptance and their relationships with family, teachers and peers?
  4. What are gifted students' views about the educational effects of being labelled as gifted?
  5. To what extent do the perceptions of gifted students toward labelling differ between students with different levels and kinds of giftedness?

For part 1, I will interview 3-4 teachers who teach gifted programmes for gifted students (the same students l will interview for part 2), and ask them about the gifted programmes and their procedures and how gifted students are being identified. This will be a descriptive interview about the context of gifted students at their schools.

 For part 2, I will interview 6-12 gifted students in order to gain an insight into their perspectives of being labelled as gifted.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

This study will be conducted in Saudi Arabia, specifically in secondary state and private schools in Riyadh which implement the gifted programme at school. In order to conduct the study, I will be submitting a request to Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. Once their approval to carry out the study is received, I will approach the principals of these schools informing them about the approval and asking them to facilitate the study. Moreover, I will send the approval to the parents of gifted students to request their permission about the participation of their daughters in the study.

The following sections require an assessment of possible ethical consideration in your research project. If particular sections do not seem relevant to your project please indicate this and clarify why.

RESEARCH METHODS

Part 1: **Semi-structured interviews** with gifted teachers. I will interview gifted teachers and ask them about the gifted programmes and their procedures and how gifted students were identified. This will be a descriptive interview about the context of gifted students at school.

Part 2**: Semi-structured interviews** with gifted students. I will use in depth semi-structured exploratory interviews using Tomlinson's (1989) methodology of hierarchical focussing. This involved designing a concept map as a basis for the hierarchical focussing method to map out the areas that I would like to explore. These areas are: How gifted students were identified as gifted, students' beliefs and feelings about being labelled, students' self-perception after being labelled, and students' views about social and educational effects of being labelled as gifted.

Students and teachers will be interviewed face-to-face. The interviews will be audio recorded. They will be conducted in the Arabic language at a first stage and will be translated to English before the data analysis stage.

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PARTICIPANTS

The study will select 4 secondary schools which are currently offering gifted programmes in Riyadh. I will be looking for schools in different areas which represent diverse social and economic backgrounds. Moreover, I will select 6-12 female gifted students from the ages of 12-15 in these schools who are currently enrolled in gifted education programmes to interview them.

I will choose 3-4 gifted students in each school; these students should represent different abilities within the gifted range (e.g. one of them will be gifted with a very high IQ score within the gifted range, another will be gifted but will represent a more borderline case, and another will be gifted but will have an additional talent e.g. in art or music).

From these schools, I will also interview the teachers who are teaching in the gifted programmes that the gifted students above attend.

THE VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

Once the approval to carry out the study is received from the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, I will approach schools' principals, inform them about the approval and ask them to facilitate the study. The approval of the Saudi Ministry is sufficient to conduct the study in the schools. Principals will be handed a copy of information sheet which informs them about all aspects of the study.

The participants (students and teachers) will be informed clearly that their participation is voluntary.

Before the interviews take place, gifted students, their parents and teachers will be asked for their consent, using the attached consents form (which they will be asked to sign).

Confidentiality and anonymity will be applied and participants will have the right to withdraw at any stage without giving any reason.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

There is no need for any special arrangement in this study.

THE INFORMED NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

First, state and private schools' principals will inform gifted students, their parents and gifted teachers regarding this study via the information sheet stating the purpose of research and what participants are asked to do in this study. This sheet will also explain the data collection methods and inform them clearly about their rights such as voluntary participation, refusing to answer to any question, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any stage from the study. It will clarify the importance of students' participation and indicate that the interviews will be an opportunity to express their opinions regarding their being labelled as gifted students.

The information sheet will be translated into Arabic before given to participants.

ASSESSMENT OF POSSIBLE HARM

It is not anticipated that there will be harm or stress caused by participation for the participants or the researcher.

DATA PROTECTION AND STORAGE

The data will not be shared with any outside parties. The data collected will only be used for the purpose of this study. I will apply full confidentiality and anonymity. The interviews will be recorded digitally, then immediately transferred to the researcher's password-protected laptop, and deleted from the recorder. Only the researcher (and her supervisor) will have access to the recording

Data will be recorded on a password protected digital audio recorded. The recording will be transferred to a password protected computer as soon as possible and then the data delete from the recorder. No unsecured devices will be used to save data from this study.
The interview participants' names and all participants' information will be kept completely confidential. Interview participants will be given pseudonyms.

All the information and data collected from the participants such as interview transcripts, audio recordings and all computer files will be kept on the university U drive and deleted 12 months after the completion of my thesis. Also, all interview transcripts, audio recordings and all computer files will be kept in a password protected flash memory which will be kept in my locked office at the University.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There is no conflict of interest to declare. This is an independent doctoral study with no funding from any specific parties.

USER ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK

Interview participants will be informed about the findings of the study after the analysis stage.

INFORMATION SHEET

The information sheet will be translated into Arabic, which is the participants' first language. This information sheet is for principals, teachers and parents. This sheet informs them about all aspects of the study as follows:

(1)
Dear principals
My name is Amal Alnawaiser. I am a doctoral student at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom. I am conducting this study as part of my doctoral studies. The purpose of the study is to explore students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled gifted by secondary schools in Riyadh, as well as how students' social and academic lives and self-concepts are influenced by this labelling. Gifted students and their teachers are asked to voluntarily participate by taking part in interviews. The data will be kept confidential and all results will be anonymised. The participants' name will not appear in any publications.

I am also would like to inform you that this interview will be recorded. The data will be deleted upon completion of this study. The approximate time needed for the interviews will be 45 minutes. Interviews will be held in one of the private rooms at your school.

I very much appreciate your cooperation in this study. If you have any concerns about the study that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The researcher
Amal Alnawaiser
Phone number: UK 00447473072778 … Saudi 00966555598802
Email address: amal-98802@hotmail.com or aa634@exete.ac.uk

Alternative contacts:
First supervisor: Prof. Brahm Norwich
Email address: B.Norwich@exeter.ac.uk

Second supervisor: Dr. George Koutsouris
Email address: G.Koutsouris@exeter.ac.uk

(2)
Dear parents

My name is Amal Alnawaiser. I am a doctoral student at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom. I am conducting this study as part of my doctoral studies. The purpose of the study is to explore students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled gifted by secondary schools in Riyadh, as well as how students' social and academic lives and self-concepts are influenced by this labelling. Gifted students and their teachers are asked to voluntarily participate by taking part in interviews. Your child name and data will be kept confidential and all results will be anonymised. Your child name will not appear in any publications.

I am also asking for your permission to record the interview. The data will be deleted upon completion this study. The approximate time needed for the interviews will be 45 minutes. Interviews will be held in one of the private rooms at school.

I very much appreciate your daughter's participation in this study. If you have any concerns about the study that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The researcher
Amal Alnawaiser
Phone number: UK 00447473072778 … Saudi 00966555598802
Email address: amal-98802@hotmail.com or aa634@exete.ac.uk

Alternative contacts:
First supervisor: Prof. Brahm Norwich
Email address: B.Norwich@exeter.ac.uk

Second supervisor: Dr. George Koutsouris
Email address: G.Koutsouris@exeter.ac.uk

(3)
Dear teachers
My name is Amal Alnawaiser. I am a doctoral student at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom. I am conducting this study as part of my doctoral studies. The purpose of the study is to explore students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled gifted by secondary schools in Riyadh, as well as how students' social and academic lives and self-concepts are influenced by this labelling. Gifted students and their teachers are asked to voluntarily participate by taking part in interviews. I will ask you about the gifted programmes and its procedures and how identified gifted students. This is as a descriptive interview about the context of gifted students at school.
Your name and data will be kept confidential and all results will be anonymised. Your name will not appear in any publications.

I am also asking for your permission to record the interview. The data will be deleted upon completion this study. The approximate time needed for the interviews will be 45 minutes. Interviews will be held in one of the private rooms at your school.

I very much appreciate your participation in this study. If you have any concerns about the study that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The researcher
Amal Alnawaiser

Phone number: UK 00447473072778 … Saudi 00966555598802
Email address: amal-98802@hotmail.com or aa634@exete.ac.uk

Alternative contacts:
First supervisor: Prof. Brahm Norwich
Email address: B.Norwich@exeter.ac.uk

Second supervisor: Dr. George Koutsouris
Email address: G.Koutsouris@exeter.ac.uk

(4)
Dear students
My name is Amal Alnawaiser. I am a doctoral student at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom.
I am conducting this study as part of my doctoral studies. The purpose of the study is to explore your
perceptions of the effects of being labelled gifted by secondary schools in Riyadh, as well as how your
social and academic lives and self-concepts are influenced by this labelling. Gifted students and their
teachers are asked to voluntarily participate by taking part in interviews. Your name and data will be kept
confidential and all results will be anonymised. Your name will not appear in any publications.

I am also asking for your permission to record the interview. The data will be deleted upon completion
this study. The approximate time needed for the interviews will be 45 minutes. Interviews will be held in
one of the private rooms at your school.

 I very much appreciate your participation in this study. If you have any concerns about the study that you
 would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The researcher
Amal Alnawaiser
Phone number: UK 00447473072778 … Saudi 00966555598802
Email address: amal-98802@hotmail.com or aa634@exete.ac.uk

Alternative contacts:
First supervisor: Prof. Brahm Norwich
Email address: B.Norwich@exeter.ac.uk

Second supervisor: Dr. George Koutsouris
Email address: G.Koutsouris@exeter.ac.uk

CONSENT FORM

Consent for the interviews will be obtained from the participants using the forms attached.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Staff and students should follow the procedure below.

Post Graduate Taught Students (Graduate School of Education): Please submit your completed application
to your first supervisor. Please see the submission flowchart for further information on the process.

All other students should discuss their application with their supervisor(s) / dissertation tutor / tutor and
gain their approval prior to submission. Students should submit evidence of approval with their application,
e.g. a copy of the supervisors email approval.

All staff should submit their application to the appropriate email address below.

This application form and examples of your consent form, information sheet and translations of any documents which are not written in English should be submitted by email to the SSIS Ethics Secretary via one of the following email addresses:

ssis-ethics@exeter.ac.uk   This email should be used by staff and students in Egenis, the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, Law, Politics, the Strategy & Security Institute, and Sociology, Philosophy, Anthropology.

ssis-gseethics@exeter.ac.uk   This email should be used by staff and students in the Graduate School of Education.

Please note that applicants will be required to submit a new application if ethics approval has not been granted within 1 year of first submission.

Appendix 1B: Certificate of Ethical Approval

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

St Luke's Campus
Heavitree Road
Exeter UK EX1 2LU

http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

<u>Title of Project:</u>   The Phenomenon of Gifted Labelling: Students' Perspectives on Their Being Labelled as Gifted by Secondary Schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

<u>Researcher(s) name:</u> Amal Alnaswaiser

<u>Supervisor(s):</u>   Prof. Brahm Norwich
Dr. George Koutsouris

<u>This project has been approved for the period</u>

From: 01/04/2018
To: 31/12/2018

<u>Ethics Committee approval reference:</u>

D/17/18/33

Signature: Date: 29/03/18
(Dr Christopher Boyle, Graduate School of Education Ethics Officer)

Appendix 2A: Directors' and Teachers' Information Sheet

Dear directors, teachers of gifted programme

My name is Amal Alnawaiser. I am a doctoral student at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom. I am conducting this study as part of my doctoral studies. The purpose of the study is to explore students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled gifted by secondary schools in Riyadh, as well as how students' social and academic lives and self-concepts are influenced by this labelling. Gifted students and their teachers are asked to voluntarily participate by taking part in interviews. I will ask you about the gifted programmes and its procedures and how identified gifted students. This is as a descriptive interview about the context of gifted students at school.

Your name and data will be kept confidential and all results will be anonymised. Your name will not appear in any publications.

I am also asking for your permission to record the interview. The data will be deleted upon completion this study. The approximate time needed for the interviews will be 45 minutes. Interviews will be held in one of the private rooms at your school.

I very much appreciate your participation in this study. If you have any concerns about the study that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The researcher: Amal Alnawaiser
Phone number: UK 00447473072778 ... Saudi 00966555598802 Email address: amal-98802@hotmail.com or aa634@exete.ac.uk

Alternative contacts:

First supervisor: Prof. Brahm Norwich Email address: B.Norwich@exeter.ac.uk

Second supervisor: Dr. George Koutsouris Email address: G.Koutsouris@exeter.ac.uk

Directors' and Teachers' Consent Form

Title of Research Project: **The Phenomenon of Gifted Labelling: Students'
Perspectives on Their Being Labelled as Gifted by Secondary Schools in Riyadh,
Saudi Arabia**

<u>CONSENT FORM</u>

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project. I understand
that:

1- There is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project.
2- If I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation and
may also request that my data be destroyed.
3- I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about
me.
4- Any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this
research project, which may include publications or academic conference or
seminar presentations.
5- All information I give will be treated as confidential.
6- The researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

(Name of participant)

…………………………………..

(Signature of participant)
(Date)
.............................………………….   ....

If you have any concerns about the study that you would like to discuss, please do not
hesitate to contact me.

The researcher
Amal Alnawaiser
Phone number: UK 00447473072778 … Saudi 00966555598802
Email address: amal-98802@hotmail.com or aa634@exete.ac.uk

Alternative contacts:
First supervisor: Prof. Brahm Norwich
Email address: B.Norwich@exeter.ac.uk
Second supervisor: Dr. George Koutsouris
Email address: G.Koutsouris@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 2B: Parents' Information Sheet

Dear parents

My name is Amal Alnawaiser. I am a doctoral student at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom. I am conducting this study as part of my doctoral studies. The purpose of the study is to explore students' perceptions of the effects of being labelled gifted by secondary schools in Riyadh, as well as how students' social and academic lives and self-concepts are influenced by this labelling. Gifted students and their teachers are asked to voluntarily participate by taking part in interviews. Your child name and data will be kept confidential and all results will be anonymised. Your child name will not appear in any publications.

I am also asking for your permission to record the interview. The data will be deleted upon completion this study. The approximate time needed for the interviews will be 45 minutes. Interviews will be held in one of the private rooms at school.

I very much appreciate your daughter's participation in this study. If you have any concerns about the study that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The researcher
Amal Alnawaiser
Phone number: UK 00447473072778 ... Saudi 00966555598802 Email address: amal-98802@hotmail.com or aa634@exete.ac.uk

Alternative contacts:
First supervisor: Prof. Brahm Norwich Email address: B.Norwich@exeter.ac.uk

Second supervisor: Dr. George Koutsouris Email address: G.Koutsouris@exeter.ac.uk

Parents' Consent Form

Title of Research Project: **The Phenomenon of Gifted Labelling: Students' Perspectives on Their Being Labelled as Gifted by Secondary Schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

CONSENT FORM

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project. I understand that:

7- There is no compulsion for my daughter to participate in this research project.

8- If I do choose my daughter to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my daughter and may also request that my daughter's data be destroyed.

9- I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about my daughter.

10- Any information which my daughter gives will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications or academic conferences or seminar presentations.

5- All information my daughter gives will be treated as confidential.

6- The researcher will make every effort to preserve my daughter's anonymity.

(Signature of parent)   (Date)

.................……………….   ....

If you have any concerns about the study that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The researcher
Amal Alnawaiser
Phone number: UK 00447473072778 … Saudi 00966555598802
Email address: amal-98802@hotmail.com or aa634@exete.ac.uk

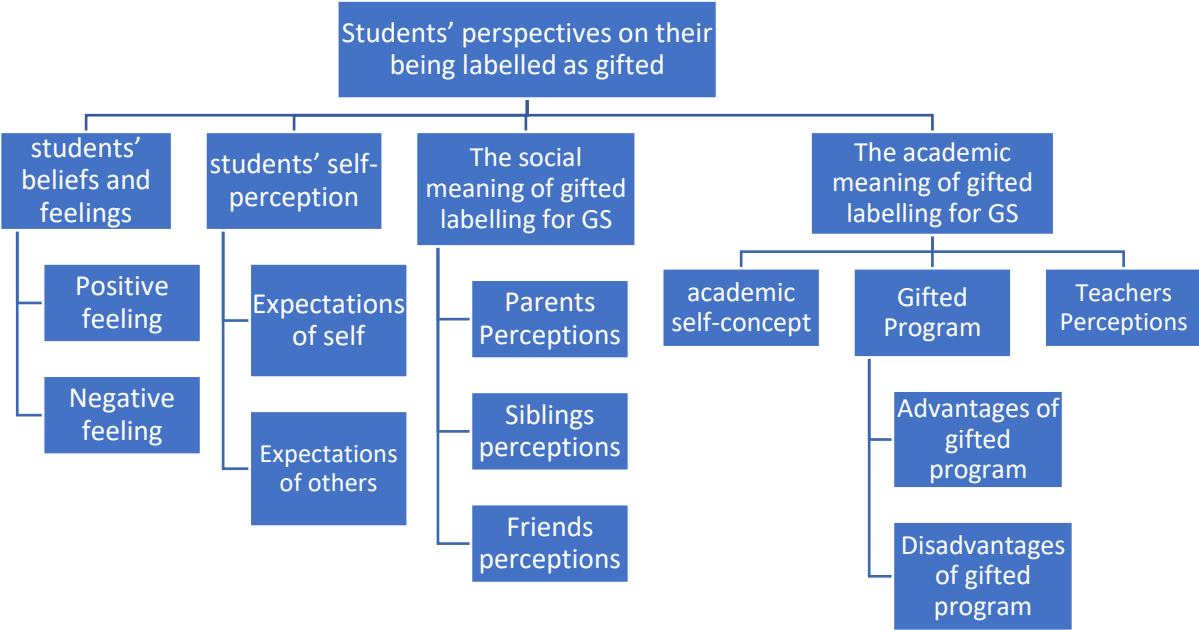Alternative contacts:
First supervisor: Prof. Brahm Norwich
Email address: B.Norwich@exeter.ac.uk

Second supervisor: Dr. George Koutsouris
Email address: G.Koutsouris@exeter.ac.uk

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

Appendix 2C: Students' Information Sheet

Dear students

My name is Amal Alnawaiser. I am a doctoral student at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom. I am conducting this study as part of my doctoral studies. The purpose of the study is to explore your perceptions of the effects of being labelled gifted by secondary schools in Riyadh, as well as how your social and academic lives and self-concepts are influenced by this labelling. Gifted students and their teachers are asked to voluntarily participate by taking part in interviews. Your name and data will be kept confidential and all results will be anonymised. Your name will not appear in any publications.

I am also asking for your permission to record the interview. The data will be deleted upon completion this study. The approximate time needed for the interviews will be 45 minutes. Interviews will be held in one of the private rooms at your school.

I very much appreciate your participation in this study. If you have any concerns about the study that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The researcher: Amal Alnawaiser
Phone number: UK 00447473072778 ... Saudi 00966555598802 Email address: amal-98802@hotmail.com or aa634@exete.ac.uk

Alternative contacts:
First supervisor: Prof. Brahm Norwich Email address: B.Norwich@exeter.ac.uk

Second supervisor: Dr. George Koutsouris Email address: G.Koutsouris@exeter.ac.uk

Students' Consent Form

Title of Research Project: **The Phenomenon of Gifted Labelling: Students' Perspectives on Their Being Labelled as Gifted by Secondary Schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

<u>CONSENT FORM</u>

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project. I understand that:

1- There is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project.

2- If I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation and may also request that my data be destroyed.

3- I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me.

4- Any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications or academic conference or seminar presentations.

5- All information I give will be treated as confidential.

6- The researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

(Name of student)

…………………………………..

(Signature of student)   (Date)
.....................…..………………..   ....

If you have any concerns about the study that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The researcher
Amal Alnawaiser
Phone number: UK 00447473072778 … Saudi 00966555598802
Email address: amal-98802@hotmail.com or aa634@exete.ac.uk

Alternative contacts:
First supervisor: Prof. Brahm Norwich
Email address: B.Norwich@exeter.ac.uk

Second supervisor: Dr. George Koutsouris
Email address: G.Koutsouris@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 3: Concept Map

Appendix 4: Sample of Questions Before the Actual Interview Schedule

AREAS TO COVER			QUESTIONS RELATED TO AREAS		
Beliefs and feelings about being identified	Your life now		What do you feel about being identified as gifted?		
				Did it make your life happier or less happy than before?	
					Why
				Did it make you feel proud or ashamed?	
					Why
				How did you try to deal with it?	
	Halo effect		What are people views about students who are labelled as gifted?		
				Do you think a gifted label means that the person is seen as good at other things beyond school attainment, e.g sports or social skills?	
					Does this apply to you or others you know who are gifted? more details

Appendix 5: Students' Interview Schedule

Before I begin, I would like to thank you for participating in this interview, which will explore students' perspectives on their being labelling as gifted in Saudi Arabia. I would like to discuss your experiences regarding being labelled as gifted in school in Riyadh. Your interview will be recorded and used only for the purpose of the study. It will be deleted as soon as it will be transcribed.

Students' beliefs and feelings about being identified		
What do you feel about being identified as gifted?		
	Did it make your life happier or less happy than before?	
		Why
	Did it make you feel proud or ashamed?	
		Why
	How did you try to deal with it?	
What are peoples' views about students who are labelled as gifted?		
	Do you think a gifted label means that the person is seen as being good in other things beyond school attainment, e.g. sports or social skills?	
		Does this apply to you or others you know who are gifted? more details?
	Do you think a gifted label means that the person is seen as being good in school and less good in social relationships?	
	How would you feel if someone described you as a genius?	
		Why

	Do you think that if someone is identified as gifted that some others might seek to find some weaknesses to keep a balance?	
		What would they say and why?
	Do you think that if someone is identified as gifted that some others might seek to find some weaknesses because they might feel jealous of her?	
		What would they say and why?
		Does this apply to you or others you know who are gifted?
		Why or give me more details
Students' self-perception		
If you were to describe yourself fully in at least 6 ways, what would you say?		
	What are your strengths?	
	What are your weakness?	
	Do you consider yourself lucky or unlucky?	
		Why
	To what extent does a gifted label really describe you or not?	
		Why / why not?
what do you wish to do in the future and to become?		
	Do you feel any struggle over your future between yourself and others (e.g. parents, teachers)?	
		Please give more details
		How would you resolve any conflict (between your way or others' way)?

How do you see yourself compared to others of your age in school?		
	Who do you often compare yourself with?	
		In what ways and why?
Do you know any others of your age who have been identified as gifted?		
	What is the same and what different between you and them?	
	Why have you and have they been identified whereas others have not?	
What are the advantages of being identified as gifted?		
What are the disadvantages of being identified as gifted?		
Social relationships		
How did your parents think about you now?		
	Has being identified as gifted changed your relationship with your parents?	
		Please give me an example AND / OR Tell me more
How do your siblings think about you now?		
	Has being identified as gifted changed your relationship with your siblings?	
		Please give me an example AND / OR Tell me more
	Do parents differentiate between you and your siblings?	
		If yes in what ways what is the impact of this?
How do your teachers think about you now?		

	Has being identified as gifted changed your relationship with your teachers?	
		Please give me an example AND / OR Tell me more
How do your friends think about you now?		
	Has being identified as gifted changed your relationship with your friends?	
		Please give me an example AND / OR Tell me more
	Do you feel that your friends are jealous of you or not?	
		Why
	Do teachers differentiate between you and your friends?	
		In what ways? why do you think this happens?
What kind of relationship do you have with other gifted students?		
	How does being gifted influence your relationship with them?	
		Positively?
		Negatively?

What have you learned in the gifted programme that you did not learn in the regular class?			
	What is your opinion about the work you are required to do (both at school and as homework) after being identified as gifted?		
	What school support have you received after being identified as a gifted student?		
	What extra-curricular or recreational activities have you received after being identified as a gifted student?		
	What is the impact of the gifted programme on your academic progress now?		
		In which subjects do you believe you have progressed more?	
		Are you satisfied with your progress?	
		If no why	
		What do you think is the reason behind this progress?	
			Is it because you have joined the gifted programme or because of

		your cognitive abilities?
		What is the role of the teachers of the gifted programme in this progress?
		What is the role of your parents in this progress?
	what are your thoughts or feelings about the gifted programme?	
		Positive, unsure or negative
		Please explain why

Appendix 6: Teachers' Interview Schedule

Research Questions	Actual Questions
1-How did the school come to be selected to have gifted programmes?	a. What does gifted mean in the school? b. What are differences between your school and other gifted schools in terms of gifted programmes offered? c. Why the school was selected to have a gifted programme?
2-How are students identified as gifted students?	a. When are the students identified as gifted? b. Describe the process of identifying gifted students. c. What kind of assessment is used? d. What are the criteria for a student to be identified as gifted? e. Who does the assessment? f. What issues if any are there in identifying students as gifted?
3- Is there a system of reviewing this identification?	a. Can parents or students ask for a student to be assessed to enter programme? b. Are there students who apply for the gifted programme by themselves or their parents but they are not selected? c. If Yes, why and how do you handle it?
4- What is the nature of the gifted programmes and how is it organised?	a. What are the goals of these programmes? b. Who teaches the programmes? c. Where do/does the programme/s take place? d. When do students in gifted programmes have their lessons/programmes? e. Do they miss other lessons and if so what are they? f. What is the difference between the regular activities and the gifted activities? g. What teaching and learning activities are used in the programme? h. Are there any links between goals and activities of gifted programme and the ordinary lessons these pupils go to? Explain more please.

	i. If there are two or more gifted programmes, what are the similarities and differences? j. What issues are there in running the programme/s? k. How many hours does the student spend in the gifted programme during the day? l. How many days does the student spend in the gifted programme during the week?
5- What is the teachers' view about the benefits and disadvantages of identifying students as gifted in the school?	a. Has any evaluation been done in the school about the benefits or disadvantages of having programmes for gifted students? b. Have the students identified as gifted been asked about their views about the gifted programme? c. From your view, what are the advantages of identifying students as gifted in the school? d. From your view, what are the disadvantages of identifying students as gifted in the school? e. What, if any, outside support or advice have gifted students received since the time they were identified by the school as gifted? f. Have the gifted students encountered any problems with: g. Friendships h. Relationship with adults i. their learning in usual lessons. j. their learning in gifted room k. Are there any positive outcomes for the gifted students in relation to: l. Friendships m. Relationship with adults n. their learning in usual lessons o. their learning in gifted room
Further comments/suggestions	

Appendix 7: Directors' Interview Schedule

I will ask the directors of the King Abdul Aziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (Mawhiba), and the General Administration for Gifted Students in the Ministry of Education, questions about:

1- Why did the schools come to be selected to have gifted programmes?

   a. When did this start?

   b. Can schools apply to have such a programme?

   c. How many state schools and private schools in Riyadh have a gifted programme?

   d. In which areas of Riyadh are gifted schools located?

2- How many programmes do you organise in Riyadh?

   a. Do all gifted schools use the same programmes?

   b. If No, Why

3- How did you categorise differences between these schools in term of quality of school?

   a. Do you select school based on student attainment, efficiency of teachers or other indication of quality of teaching?

   b. Do you select school based on sociodemographic characteristics (e.g. family income, school located in developing area)?

4- What is the plan of the Gifted Department in Ministry of Education for vision 2030?

   a. Do the school get teacher training for gifted programme?

   b. Is there extra funding?

   c. Do the schools get advice about running the programmes?

Appendix 8: Form for the Teacher to Name Students with Different Characteristics

Please name a student for each of the following categories:	
A gifted student with a high IQ score:	name here
A gifted student who is just above the cut-off level:	name here
A gifted student with an additional talent e.g. in art or music:	name here and explain what is the talent
If there is not a student meeting this criterion, select another gifted student	name here and explain characteristics

Appendix 9: Demographic Information for Each Student

Student name	
Grade and school of student	grade_____ school _____
Student' age	
How many children in the student family?	
What is the student birth order in her family?	
Type of programme	
When was the student identified as gifted?	
How many hours does the student spend in the gifted programme during the day?	
How many days does the student spend in the gifted programme during the week?	
Student's identification characteristics in relation to gifted label	Moderately gifted ‰ Gifted with a high IQ score ‰ Exceptionally Gifted ‰
For this student please give a brief description in your own words in terms of the areas below.	
Any additional talents e.g. in art, music, visual and performing arts and psychomotor ability	
Specific high academic abilities, e.g. in mathematics	
Low academic achievement	
Leadership	

Appendix 10: Sample of Coded Transcript Using MAXQDA 12

(Screenshot)

Appendix 11: Sample of MaxQDA Screenshot of Grouped Categories (Themes)

/Users/exeter/Desktop/amal's interviews 5.mx12 - MAXQDA 12 (Release 12.3.5)

Code System | 1413
- Code System — 1413
  - Identification — 0
    - nomination by parents — 2
    - nomination by teacher — 7
    - National measurement test — 16
    - Mental abilitied test — 1
    - got a scholarship — 3
    - score — 8
    - i have no idea about the program — 5
  - Students' beliefs and feeling — 0
    - feel responsibility — 1
    - feel happy — 23
    - feel unhappy — 2
    - feel proud — 25
    - feel distinguished — 15
    - felt vanity الغرور — 1
    - Dont care of people views — 10
    - feel angry when people describe me as a genius — 9
  - peoples' views of students who are labelled as gifted — 0
    - people think GS is sublime and great — 7
    - people think gifted people are angels and supernatural — 6
    - people think Gifted Students (GS) perfect — 22
    - people are focused more on GS (on the downside) — 23
    - people think gited student is diffrent (Genius) — 22
    - people think GS unsociablel — 24
    - people associate gifted with higher academic achieve... — 16
    - people link gifted to talent — 7
    - people associate gifted with some personal traits (inte... — 7
  - Students' self-perception — 0
    - Gifted students' high expectation of theirself — 9
    - GS' low expectation of herself — 1
    - feel different from girls of my age — 32
    - feeling no difference of other people — 25
    - feel better than others — 20
    - compare myself with successful people — 13
    - i Like and don't like to be gifted in the same time — 4
    - advantages of gifted label (like label) — 31
    - disadvantages of gifted label (don't like label) — 23
    - identity crises — 11
    - self-dependent — 2
    - self confidence — 3

Document Browser: الهنوف الشقيري م التربية

2 أول شيء عرفيني عن نفسك؟
الهنوف الشقيري ثالث متوسط مدارس التربية
3 كيف تم تصنيفك؟
4 أول شيء كنت في خامس ابتدائي هذه أول مرة اسمع عن موهبة كانت عندي أستاذة الرياضيات في الصف الخامس الابتدائي
كانت جدا محبوبة لي كانت قريبه مني كانت تشوف درجاتي دائما مرتفعة كانت تقول هنوف انتي شاطرة بعدين المعلمة قالت
لأمي و كلمتها عن برنامج موهبة وهي اللي رشحتني أول يعني اول ما بديت موهبة ما كان ترشيح ذاتي أو ترشيح ولي امر
كان ترشيح معلمة عندما ترشحت في سادس ابتدائي تقدمت لاختبار قياس الوطني اخترت في سادس ابتدائي وبديت البرنامج
في أولى متوسط
5 كم حصلت على درجة؟
6 لا أعرف ولكن حصلت علم نحت دراسيةمن مدارس التربية
7 هل اخترتي لان اختبار الصف الثالث متوسط عشان تكملين في برنامج موهبة للمرحلة الثانوية؟
8 نعم اخترت
9 هل طلعت النتائج؟
10 طلعت لكن لا اعلم هل ترشحت للبرنامج أو لا حصلت على 760
11 هل تتوقعين تترشحين؟
12 إن شاء الله
13 هل تتمنين؟
14 أي والله أكيد هي فرصة أكيد أتمنى مين ما يتمنى
15 ايش شعورك في سادس لما قالوا لك أنك موهوبة وتم ترشيحك؟
16 كنت مرة جديدة على موهبة وما كنت أعرف كيف أدخل على البرنامج علشان اشوف درجتي بس احد من منسقي موهبة
اتصل على أمي وقالوا لها مبروك بنتك ترشحت أمي, مدرسة في نفس المدرسة اللي ادرس فيها بعدين جاتني من القسم اللي
تدرس فيه الفصلي نادتني وقالت هنوف مبروك تمت ترشيحك كنت مره فرحانة كان أبوي مسافر اتصلت عليه و علمته كنت جدا
سعيدة كان شيء غير متوقعأبدا
17 هل جعل ذلك حياتك أكثر أم أقل سعادة من ذي قبل؟
18 لا هذا ولا هذا هو خلاني اتعلم كيف أتعامل مع المسؤولية بشكل اكبر كيف اتحملها هي طبعا مسؤولية أكبر.
19 عطاني سعادةخصوصا ان موهبة جدا جدا ممتعة وكل ما جات حصة موهبة مو بس أنا كل الفصل كلنا نفرح هي احساس جدا
ممتع
20 هل تشعرين انه خلى حياتك أكثر سعادة أو لا؟
21 كدر اسه شوي ضغط زيادة طبعا لكن هذا الضغط جميل لانه في النهاية شعور جدا جميل لما تخلصين كل شيء تشوفين
إنجازاتك
22 هل جعلك ذلك تشعرين بالفخر أم بالخزي؟
23 لا أبدا بالعكس افتخر أنا أبدا ما أميز نفسي عن باقي البنات, أنا وبنات فصلي تقريبا نفس الشيء عمري ما استحي أو اخجل
إني, اكون ز ى كذا اساسا كثير يجي, نقد من كثير بنات أننا فصل دوافير وكذا أبدا موشي, يز عل بالعكس شي, يفز ح شيء صدق

Simple Coding Query (OR combination of codes)

Appendix 12: Organise and Arrange the Data by Using the Hierarchical Strategy

1- Students Emotional and Reaction to others OR Emotional Consideration		
Feeling		
	Positive feeling	
	Negative feeling	
Gifted Students (GS) under pressure		
People views of gifted students		
	People's assumptions	
		People's positive and negative views of GS
		People hold high expectations of GS
		People think GS is different
	Other people's influences	
		Positive influences
		Negative influences
		Not paying attention to other people's views
2- Students' Self-Perception		
Self-motivation and expectation		
	High	
	Low	
Self-evaluation		
	Different from others	
	No different from others	
	Positive and negative personal characteristics	
Advantages and disadvantages of gifted label		
	Advantages of gifted label.	
	Disadvantages of gifted label	
The dilemma of gifted label		
	Conflict	
		Want and don't want to be gifted

Identity crises		
Academic self-concept		
	low academic achievement.	
	self-blame	-self-blame if she makes mistakes -if her friends' achievement better than her
	Looking for perfection	
	Satisfied with academic progress	
	Dissatisfied with academic progress	

3- Social Consideration

Parents		
	Pressure from parents	
	Parents' high expectations.	
	Parents' comparisons.	
Siblings		
	Siblings' encouragement	
	Siblings' mocking	
Teachers		
	Teachers' high expectation and challenges	
	Pressure from teachers	
	Teachers are lack of awareness of the needs and nature of GS	
Friends relationship (from outside gifted class)		
Peers relationship (friends from gifted class)		

4- Academic Consideration

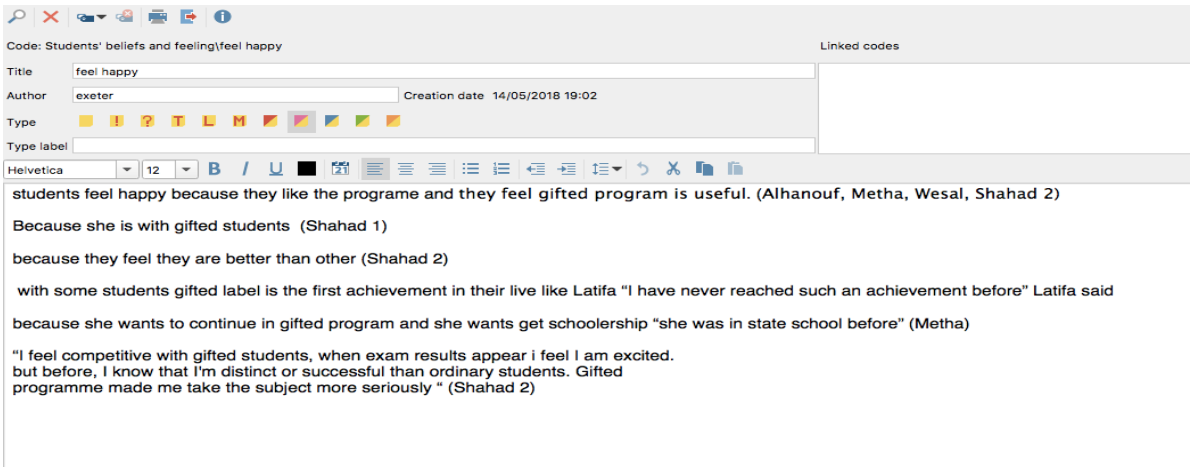|		
Gifted program (GP)		
	Advantages of GP	
	disadvantages of GP	
	The program in private and state schools	
	Advantages of Mawhiba Program. (in private schools)	
	Disadvantages of Mawhiba Program.	

|		
Gifted class		
	Advantages.	
	Disadvantages	
Teachers' actions		

Appendix 13: Interview Analysis Process Table

| Stage name	Description of what I did	Sample of initial codes, memos, and mind maps used in the analysis process
First stage: Transcriptions + Familiarisation with data	1. All Arabic interviews were transcribed in Arabic. Transcripts were essential to informing the early stages of analysis and developing a more thorough understanding of the data. 2. In the attached screenshot, the left side indicates all the participants' transcripts that were imported into the MAXQDA program. Each participant was given a pseudonym name. The right side of the screenshot presents a transcript.	
	3. The transcripts were read several times to gain a deeper understanding of the entire dataset, becoming "immersed" in the data and getting consumed within the content (Riley, 1990; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This step was crucial before coding, as it helped shape initial ideas and identify provisional patterns. 4. While reading, I listened several times to all the recordings in order to ensure the transcripts' accuracy; this exercise in the data. . 5. During this stage, as shown was extremely useful to immerse myself even more in the attached screenshot, key notes were taken for each of the interview transcripts, which were drawn upon during data analysis. Using notes was beneficial for describing codes and considering the key themes and patterns that were highlighted in the analysis.	

Second stage: Generating initial codes

1. As shown in the screenshot, during this stage generating initial codes, which consisted in dividing the transcripts into meaningful smaller segments; this involved highlighting the relevant fragments to the research questions . To achieve this, I used a qualitative data analysis software, MAXQDA 12.   I wrote the codes as they were stated exactly by students without putting any further or deep interpretations.
2. The total number of initial codes at this stage was 1414.
3. The list of initial codes was printed as a hardcopy, as shown in the screenshot. This step helped me visualise all initial codes from all participants. Using the hard copy helped me to go back and forth between pages as I thought and wrote. I added comments beside each initial code (e.g., this is repetitive, this is might be because…).
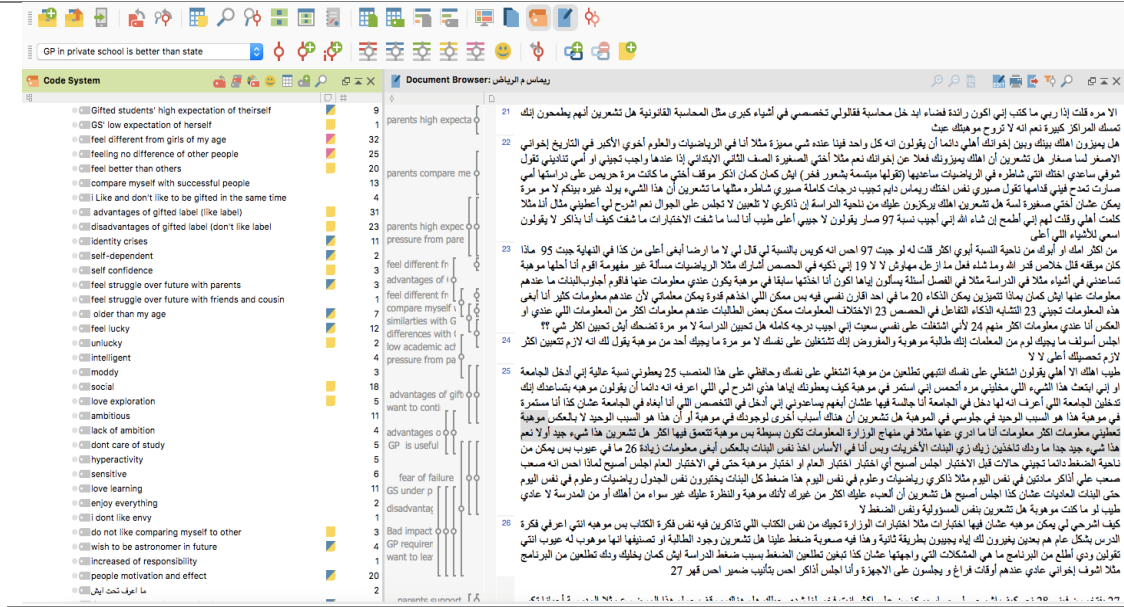
MAXQDA 12   04/06/2018

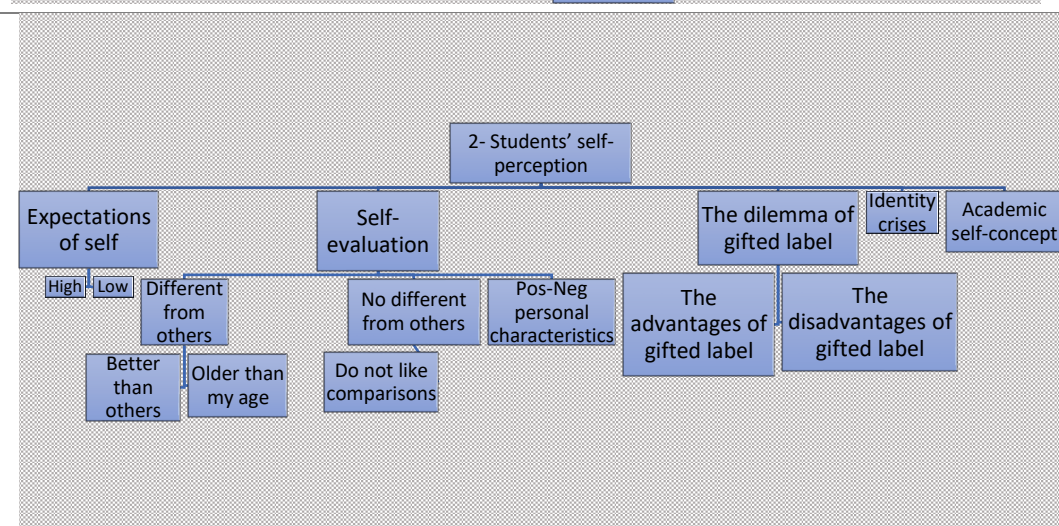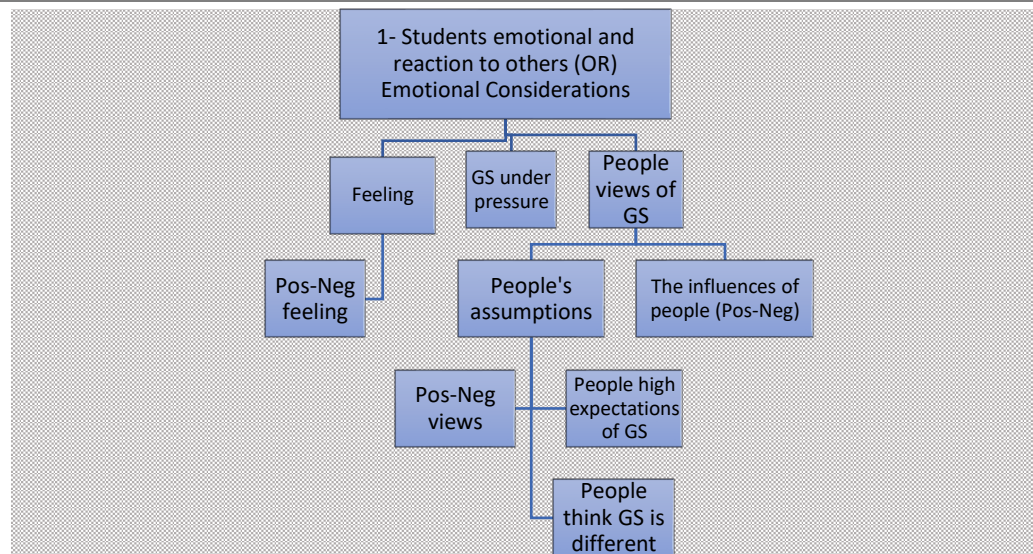|	
people think GS is sublime and great	7
people think gifted people are angels and supernatural	6
people think Gifted Students (GS) perfect	22
people are focused more on GS (on the downside)	23
people think gited student is diffrent (Genius)	22
people think GS unsociablel	24
people associate gifted with higher academic achievement	16
people link gifted to talent	7
people associate gifted with some personal traits (integrality)	7
Students' self-perception	0
Gifted students' high expectation of theirself	9
GS' low expectation of herself	1
feel different from girls of my age	32
feeling no difference of other people	25
feel better than others	20
compare myself with successful people	13
i Like and don't like to be gifted in the same time	4
advantages of gifted label (like label)	31
disadvantages of gifted label (don't like label	23

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1. A new project was created within the MAXQDA program, including the revised versions of the initial codes.

2. As shown in the screenshot, I began identifying themes; in other words, I grouped the categories I deemed suitable for consideration as themes. Categories and subcategories were generated from the coded data. Labels were given to describe the coded segments extracted from the data. I coded interesting and relevant extracts which could form the foundation for potential categories. The names of the themes at this stage were not the same as those I used at the end.

3. In forming the categories, internal consistency was carefully considered. This was achieved by making sure that all the codes were interrelated, meaningful and were located under suitable categories. In this step all categories were given different colour, as shown in the screenshot, so that I can distinguish them more easily.

4. At the end of this stage, many themes and subthemes were organised as shown in the screenshot. However, these were only initial themes and subthemes that could be changed, joined, or separated. To prepare for the refinement of the next stage, I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) advice: "do not abandon anything at this stage, as without looking at all the extracts in detail (the next phase) it is uncertain whether the themes hold as they are, or whether some need to be combined, refined and separated, or discarded"(pp. 90–91).
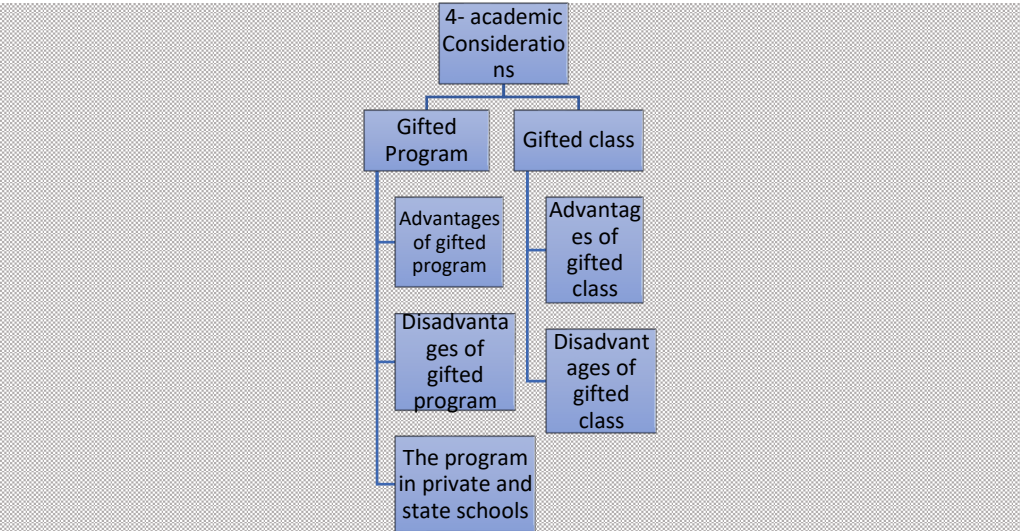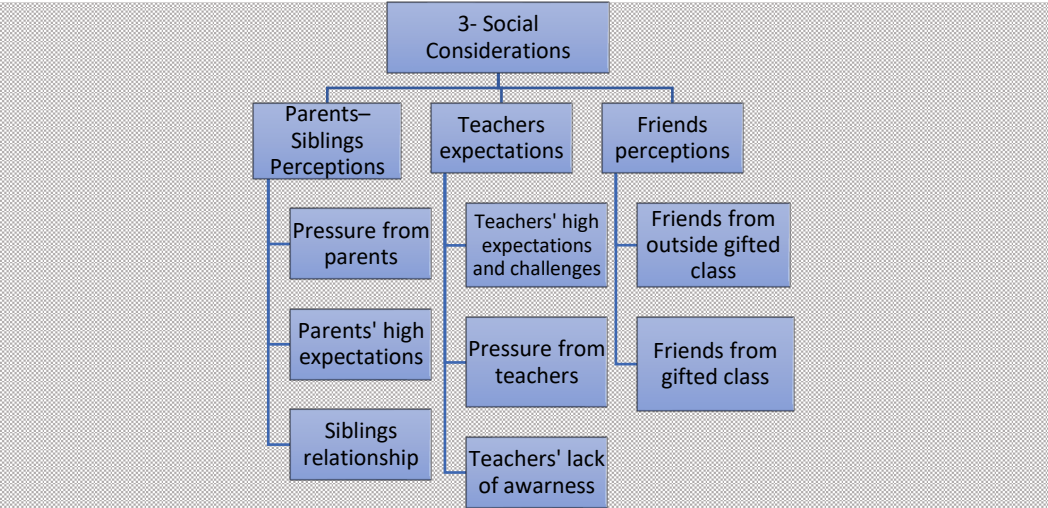

273
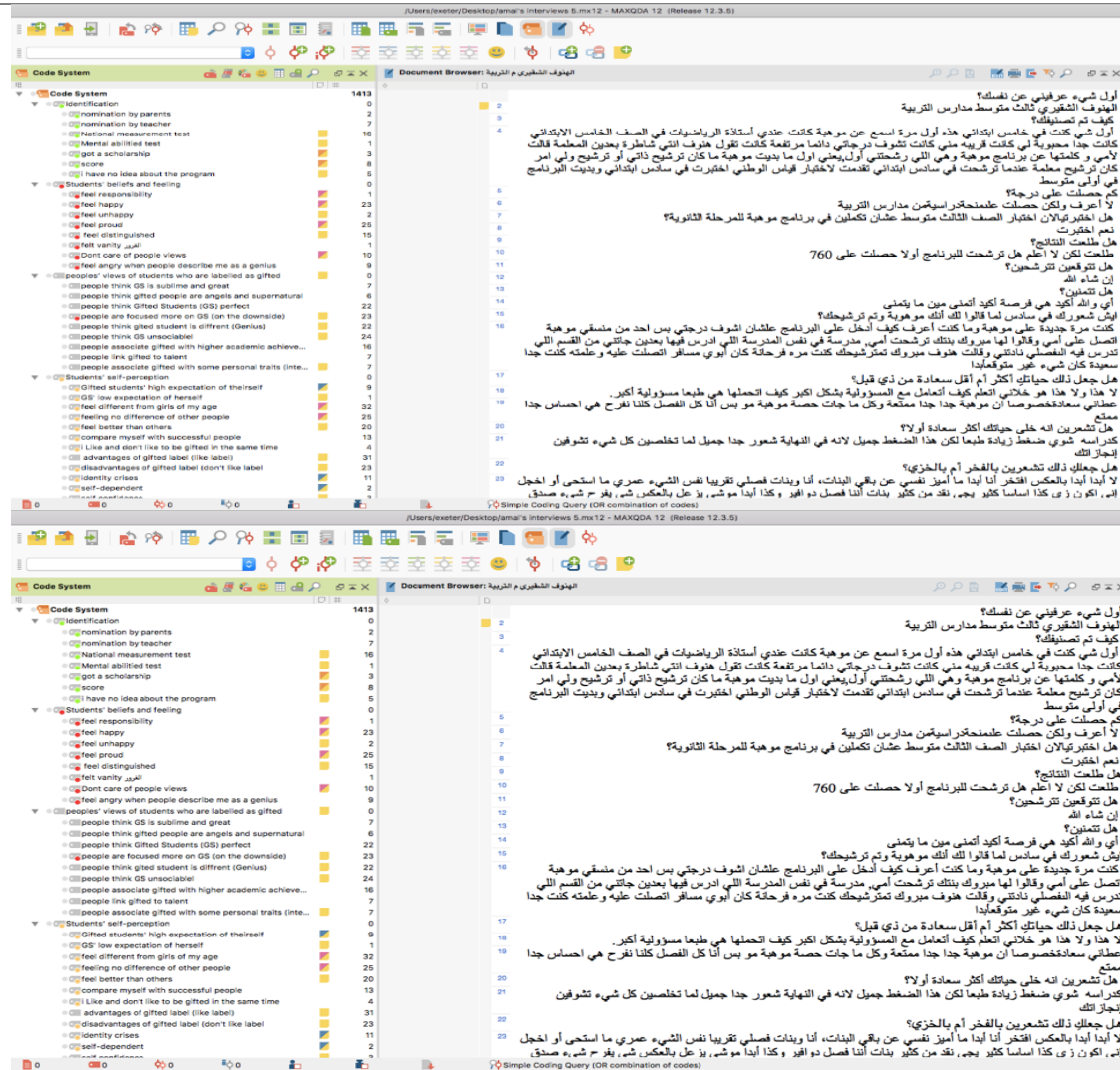
1. At this stage, I re-read all identified themes, subthemes, and codes . I also re-read extracts for each code to ensure they were related. Braun and Clarke (2006) stated, "This phase involves two levels of reviewing and refining your themes. Level one involves reviewing at the level of the coded data extracts. This means you need to read all the collated extracts for each theme, and consider whether they appear to form a coherent pattern" (p. 91). Additionally, I re-read each theme individually to assure that individual themes was related to the whole data set. Braun and Clarke (2006) explained that "at this level, you consider the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set" (p. 91).

2. At this stage, MAXQDA mind maps were used to visualise each code, with its extracts as shown in the screenshot.

One-Case Model
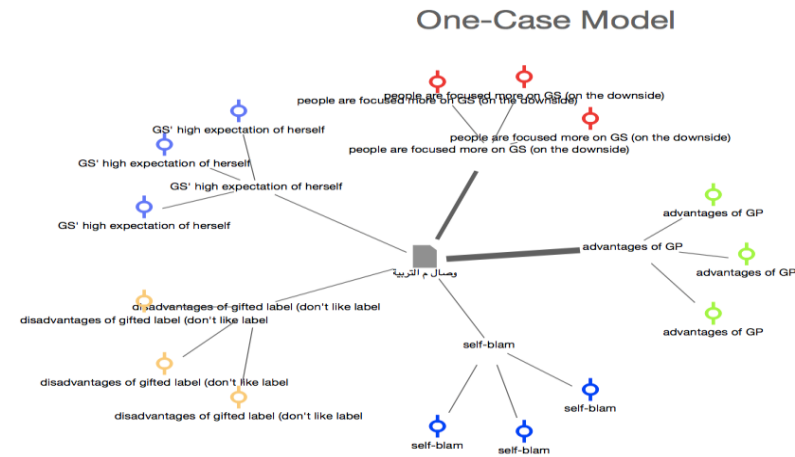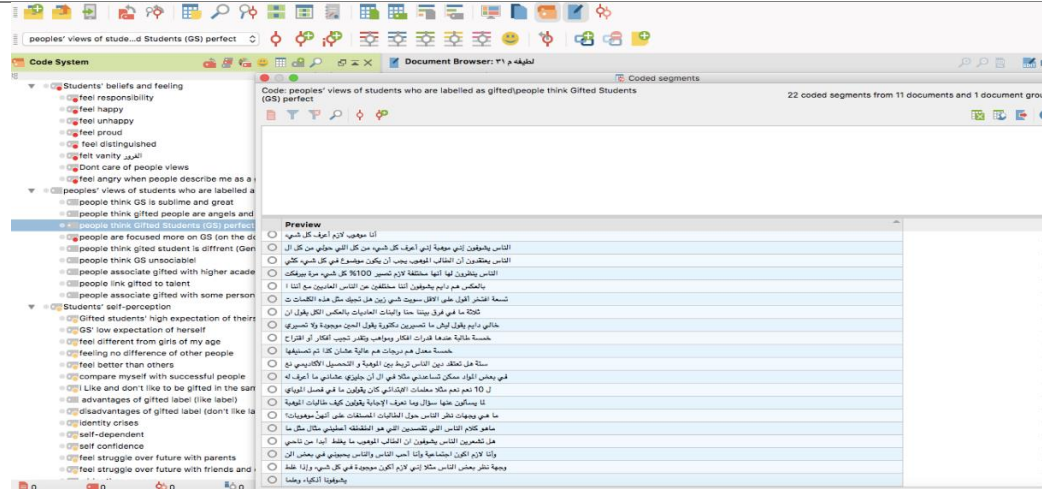
3. While reviewing themes and subthemes, mind maps were used to visualise each theme with its sub-themes to ensure they were relevant, as shown in the screenshot.

1- Students emotional and reaction to others (OR) Emotional Considerations
- Feeling
  - Pos-Neg feeling
- GS under pressure
- People views of GS
  - People's assumptions
    - Pos-Neg views
    - People high expectations of GS
    - People think GS is different
  - The influences of people (Pos-Neg)

2- Students' self-perception
- Expectations of self
  - High / Low
  - Different from others
    - Better than others
    - Older than my age
- Self-evaluation
  - No different from others
    - Do not like comparisons
  - Pos-Neg personal characteristics
- The dilemma of gifted label
  - The advantages of gifted label
  - The disadvantages of gifted label
- Identity crises
- Academic self-concept

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1. At this stage, names of each theme were identified. I ensured that the meaning of each theme was clear. Braun and Clarke (2006) indicated that by "'define and refine', we mean identifying the 'essence' of what each theme is about (as well as the themes overall), and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures" (p. 92).

2. It was also helpful at this point to use visual representations to sort the different categories into themes, so I organised and summarized the contents of each category in a table using a few words. I used the hierarchical strategy to analyse the data, where I started with themes at the highest level of generality in the agenda hierarchy and then sought further expansion through sub-themes.

Students' self-perception			
Expectation of self			
	High	19	
	Low	1	
Self-evaluation			
	Different of others	32	
			Older than my age. 7
	No different of others.	25	
	Better	20	
	Positive personal characteristics		
			Responsible 1
			Self-dependent 2
			Self-confident 3
			Intelligent 4
			love exploration. 5
			Social 18
			love learning 11
	Negative personal characteristics		
			Moody 3
			Hyperactivity 5
			Sensitive 6
			time pressure bothers me 1
The dilemma of gifted label			
	Advantages of gifted label.	31	
	Disadvantages of gifted label	23	

1. The final step involved a review of all the themes generated, which was carried out in three stages. Initially, I reviewed all the themes to ensure that the appropriate quotations were chosen, that they revealed the content of the themes and that they were accurate representations of the key themes. Second, I sought to ensure that the presented themes had enough data to support them and that there was not a lot of diversity in the data, which is in keeping with Braun and Clark (2006). The third level was related to ensuring that all the themes were interconnected and that they truthfully conveyed the participants' story.