

**PERCEIVED TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS,
SELF-ESTEEM AND REFLECTIVE THINKING
SKILLS AMONG TALENTED STUDENTS IN
SAUDI ARABIA**

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SKILLS AMONG TALENTED STUDENTS IN
SAUDI ARABIA**

by

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DEDICATION

To:

My Father

My Mother

My Wife

My Brothers

My Sisters

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Talal Al Shammari

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PTE	Perceived Teachers' expectations
PTEa	Perceived Teachers' expectations academically
PTEd	Perceived Teachers' expectations disciplinary
RTS	Reflective Thinking Skills
SE	Self-Esteem
TS	Talented Student

**JANGKAAN HARAPAN GURU, PENGHARGAAN KENDIRI, DAN
KEMAHIRAN BERFIKIR REFLEKTIF DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR
PINTAR CERDAS DI ARAB SAUDI**

ABSTRAK

Kajian kaedah gabungan bertujuan mengenal pasti peranan pengantaraan harga diri dalam perkaitan antara Jangkaan Anggapan Guru dan Kemahiran Berfikir Reflektif dalam kalangan pelajar pintar di Arab Saudi. Sejumlah 300 murid dari enam buah sekolah yang terletak di sempadan utara Arab Saudi telah dipilih sebagai peserta bagi programme Saudi Mawhibbah. Murid-murid tersebut dipilih kerana mereka dianggap berbakat oleh kerajaan Arab Saudi berdasarkan laporan akademik mereka. Programme Mawhibbah ni telah dijalankan di luar waktu sekolah. Data mengenai Jangkaan Anggapan Guru dikumpul menggunakan skala Jangkaan Anggapan Guru (Prihadi, 2009) manakala skala harga diri Rosenberg yang dibangunkan oleh Rosenberg (1965) digunakan bagi mengumpul data mengenai harga diripeserta. Kemahiran Berfikir Reflektif pelajar diukur menggunakan skala Kemahiran Berfikir Reflektif Eysenck dan Wilson (1976). Skala Kemahiran Berfikir Reflektif telah diterjemahkan ke bahasa Arab dan telah digunakan dalam setting bahasa Arab oleh Barakat (2005). Dua instrumen lain juga telah diterjemahkan sebelum diagihkan kepada responden. Data kualitatif telah dikumpul menerusi temu bual separa berstruktur. Hasil menunjukkan bahawa harga diri pelajar menjadi pengantara di antara pemboleh ubah peramal (Jangkaan Anggapan Guru) dan pemboleh ubah kriteria (Kemahiran Berfikir Reflektif). Ini berlaku apabila peserta menunjukkan harga diri yang tinggi maka Kemahiran Berfikir Reflektif mereka kurang dipengaruhi oleh

Jangkaan Anggapan Guru mereka. Secara kualitatifnya, peserta menunjukkan perspektif yang pelbagai ke atas Jangkaan Anggapan Guru dan memberi reaksi berbeza terhadap persekitaran akademik yang hampir sama. Kebanyakan Kemahiran Berfikir Reflektif peserta meningkat kerana mereka menganggap bahawa guru tidak memberikan sokongan secukupnya meskipun mengharapkan mereka mencapai prestasi tinggi. Oleh itu, Kemahiran Berfikir Reflektif mereka memerlukan mereka mencari jawapan dari pelbagai sumber. Tambahan lagi, mereka menjadi reflektif apabila harga diri mereka dicabar. Dalam konteks kajian terkini, cabaran harga diri berubah-ubah. Walau bagaimanapun, cabaran utama adalah mengubah diri unggul (ideal self) dari menjadi individu yang cermat dan menurut kata kepada individu yang bijak menyelesaikan masalah dan boleh berdiri dengan sendiri. Ini mengubah peserta untuk meningkatkan Kemahiran Berfikir Reflektif mereka melalui kesanggupan untuk belajar, berfikir secara kritis dan pintar apabila menjadi kurang menurut kata dan cermat.

**PERCEIVED TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS, SELF-ESTEEM AND
REFLECTIVE THINKING SKILLS AMONG TALENTED STUDENTS IN
SAUDI ARABIA**

ABSTRACT

The intention of this study is to investigate Perceived Teachers' Expectation, Self-esteem, and Reflective Thinking Skills among Talented Students in Saudi Arabia. Sample of 300 students from six (6) schools located in the Northern Borders of Saudi Arabia who were assigned to Saudi's Mawhibbah programme were recruited as participants in this study. Data for perceived teachers' expectations was collected through perceived teachers' expectations scale, whereas the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, was used to collect data regarding participants' self-esteem. Students' reflective thinking skills was measured using the reflective thinking skills scale. Qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews. The study results showed that perceived teachers' expectations academically significantly influence the self-esteem and reflective thinking skills of talented students in Saudi Arabia. However, perceived teachers' expectations disciplinary did not have any significantly influence on both self-esteem skills as well as reflective thinking skills of talented students in Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, students' self-esteem mediates the causal relationship between perceived teachers' expectations and reflective thinking skills. Qualitatively, the participants presented varying perspectives on perceived teachers' expectations, and thus, they reacted differently towards similar education system. Number of the participants developed their reflective thinking skills because they perceived that despite expecting them to achieve high performance, their teachers do not usually

provide them with adequate support. Therefore, their reflective thinking skills suggested that they should seek answers from multiple sources. In the context of the current study, self-esteem challenge varies. However, the most dominant challenge is the shift of the ideal self from being a religious and obedient individual into a smart and problem-solving individual who can live independently. This shift drives the participants to improve their reflective thinking skills through willingness to learn, critical thinking and resourcefulness at the cost of being less obedient and religious. The study has made a significant contribution to theory where it relates the reflective thinking skills with the perceived teachers' expectations through the intervention of self-esteem as mediator. Thus, the talented programme of Saudi Arabia must maintain and enhance their students' self-esteem. Subsequently, self-esteem mediates the effect of perceived teachers' expectations on reflective thinking skills among talented students. Therefore, improving students' self-esteem also indirectly increases their reflective thinking skills.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The use of higher order thinking skills is necessary for the education of talented students in order to ensure that these students, who have development potential compared to their peers, use their capacities at maximum level (Genç, 2016). Reflective thinking skills is one of the higher order thinking skills (Genç, 2016). Every individual and society currently make some decisions about their future behaviours based on their previous actions or by considering repeating the very same ones. This situation appears in the field of education as it does in daily life. This behaviour is named reflective thinking skills (Yıldız, 2016).

The education of talented students was launched in Saudi Arabia for the purpose of raising self-awareness of talented students about their individual skills and using their capacities at maximum level (Aljughaiman & Ayoub, 2017). In Saudi Arabia, students with high academic achievements that nominated by teachers and pass IQ and creativity thinking tests are categorised as ‘talented’ students and are provided with special academic programmes (Alqefari, 2010; Faisal & Ghani, 2015; Al-Zoubi, 2018). Specialized center for talented students was created to administer these programmes and to help these students to raise and to become individuals who learn through experience, who produce, who solve problems, and who can think creatively, who can communicate with people, who can do scientific research and invent. However, the Saudi Arabia government understands that academic programmes alone are insufficient to develop the reflective thinking skills that determine the future success of these outstanding young achievers (General Directorate for the Talented,

2008; Aljughaiman & Ayoub, 2017). The social behaviour of students is regarded as equal to, if not more important, than their academic achievement. The latter can be a suitable measure for academic success, but social behaviour is a nationally recognised attribute.

Furthermore, the literature has demonstrated that students will rise to teachers' expectations (Gandarilla, 2016). students who are categorised as talented have to defend their reputation by fulfilling the expectation of their educators(Aljughaiman & Ayoub, 2017). They must simultaneously exhibit excellent academic achievement and behaviour (Alfurayh, 2016). However, being labeled as talented or high achievers may not always have a positive effect on students' psychological well-being (Tang, 2002; Al-Fadhli & Singh, 2006; Hazri, Prihadi, & Hairul, 2010; Prihadi & Chua, 2012; Freeman, 2015). Therefore, factors that simultaneously determine academic achievement and higher reflective thinking skills such as the perceived teachers' expectations must be identified.

In addition, social behaviour is considered a determinant of reflective thinking skills (Mitchell-White, 2010). This belief highlights the importance of self-esteem (Mruk, 2006; Ferkany, 2008; Kammeyer-Mueller, Judge, & Piccolo, 2008; Alyami et al., 2017; Topçu & Leana-Taşçılar, 2018) in explaining reflective thinking skills (Asakereh & Yousofi, 2018). Accordingly, self-esteem plays a significant role in the context of students with high academic achievements. It motivates students to remain or become successful in school (Lawrence, 2006; Cigman, 2008; Ferkany, 2008; Alyami et al., 2017).

Self-esteem is a good predictor of behaviour (Topçu & Leana-Taşçılar, 2018). Low self-esteem leads to offensive and delinquent behaviour (Baumeister, Campbell,

Krueger, & Vohs, 2003; Rean, 2018), whereas high but unstable self-esteem leads to hostile and antisocial behaviour (Baumeister et al., 2003; Rean, 2018). Self-esteem plays an important role in determining the current and future success behaviour of students (Von der Haar, 2005; Martin, Oliver, & McCaughy, 2007; Ferkany, 2008; Alyami et al., 2017; Topçu & Leana-Taşçılar, 2018). In the context of talented students in Saudi Arabia, self-esteem is one of the most significant influencing factor in education (Alyami et al., 2017).

Therefore, talented students in Saudi Arabia may have a certain perception about how they are expected to be because they are categorised as ‘talented’. This perception may affect the development of their reflective thinking skills (the way they analyse and assess situations) and self-esteem (the way they assess themselves). Their self-esteem may also mediate the effect of their perceived teachers’ expectations on their reflective thinking skills. The present study intends to further investigate the interrelationship among the perceived teachers’ expectations, reflective thinking skills and self-esteem of talented students in Saudi Arabia.

1.2 Background of the Study

Having professional and qualified teachers for students with special needs such as talented students is a known and dominant problem in Arab countries (Koura & Al-Hebaishi, 2014). In response to this, the government of Saudi Arabia specifically has focused the fourth term of its five-year plan on developing national human resources, headed by those who will manage talented students. Similarly, in early 2000, the government has established institutions to take care of the talented students, such as the King Abdulaziz Institution. However, in corresponding to this, the report issued in the end of 2006 by the general management of the talented of the Ministry of Education

presented no developmental indicators of the system for preparing and training teachers of talented students in Saudi Arabia that conformed to international directives (Alzahrani, 2015).

Providing talented students with adequate facilities has been a perpetual problem not only in Saudi Arabia but also in other countries that focus on the development of talented students (Wood, Portman, Cigrand, & Colangelo, 2010). The government of Saudi Arabia, represented by King Abdul Aziz, has established institutions to provide the needs of talented students (Forlin, 2012). Nevertheless, the lack of attention to the educational trends of modern training, such as training teachers on educational psychology and the practices of instructional design based on modern educational theories and their indicators, has been added to the equation of the problem that should be solved (Rogers, 2007). That is, the government of Saudi Arabia is dealing with the potential problem of having a group of high-achieving, extremely talented and highly educated future generation that lacks reflective thinking skills.

From analysis of a review from Chin and Lim, (2011) when students are labeled as talented, educators, particularly teachers, tend to develop certain expectations towards this group. Educators typically expect such students to be academically excellent and not problematic (Good, 1981; Oakes, 1985; Tang, 2002; Gandarilla, 2016). Subsequently, the expectations of teachers may influence the perception of students (Rosenthal, 2002; Tang, 2002; Al-Fadhli & Singh, 2006; Gandarilla, 2016).

In addition, the behaviour of teachers can play an important role in forming perceptions among students. The formation of perception is closely related to the actions of teachers (i.e. behaviours). These behaviours may be in the form of what

teachers say or do every day (Cooley, 1912; Mead, 1934; Stryker, 2003; Myers, 2008; Prihadi & Chua, 2012; Gandarilla, 2016). Therefore, students rely on their perceived teachers' expectations to assess themselves. The assessment of self has two dimensions: competencies and worthiness. The measure of worthiness reflects self-esteem (Mruk, 2006; Topçu & Leana-Taşçılar, 2018).

Perceived teachers' expectations has another influence on students. With regard to the relationship between self-esteem and perceived teachers' expectations, sufficient argument is found in the literature to indicate that self-esteem can be identified in terms of self-worthiness and self-competence (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001; Mruk, 2006; Larsen, Buss, Wismeijer, Song, & van den Berg, 2017). For students to gain confidence, they must excel in both dimensions. A high self-esteem will be a function of self-competence and self-worthiness. Self-competence can be measured and supported by the past academic history of students. Self-worthiness can be stressed through positive words of well-done tasks. In the context of Saudi Arabia, self-competence and self-worth among talented students can be affected by calling them 'talented'. Self-esteem among students correlates with many attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. For example, high self-esteem in certain aspects of a student's academic life affects other aspects of his/her academic life (Larsen et al., 2017).

The impact of self-esteem is significant and determines a course of action. Self-esteem directly affects an individual's behaviour, and it explains attitudinal and behavioural outcomes (Coopersmith, 1967; Mruk, 2006; Ferkany, 2008; Topçu & Leana-Taşçılar, 2018). In general, self-esteem generates the feeling of coping with challenges because confidence is high among students with a high self-esteem. Furthermore, self-esteem provides a sense of worthiness and happiness (Branden, 1995; Mruk, 2018). Thus, students with unstable self-esteem may find socially coping

with different problems difficult. Unstable self-esteem can result in disciplinary problems and unpredictable behaviour. By contrast, students with adequate self-esteem are likely to exhibit appropriate behaviour. They can also better evaluate their self-worthiness because they are confident. Therefore, self-esteem development is an important attribute in the learning and teaching process. It can make students gain soft skills and become resilient with competitiveness.

Nevertheless, self-esteem is not a single variable that will determine whether behaviour will lead to a student's success or failure. Reflective thinking is another significant factor because reflective thinking skills helps students develop high-order thinking skills by relating new knowledge to prior understanding, thinking in abstract and conceptual terms, applying specific strategies to novel tasks and understanding their own thinking and learning strategies (Dewey, 1933; Horton-Deutsch & Sherwood, 2017). Thus, individuals with reflective thinking skills improve not only their achievements but also their goals and strategies. These features make reflective thinking skills a significant variable that should be considered in education.

Furthermore, self-esteem also predicts how individuals view their competence and worthiness and how they strategies their methods to develop a good combination of both traits. Adequate self-esteem is required to develop good reflective thinking skills (Moon, 1999, 2013; Tutticci, 2017). That is, adequate self-esteem predicts acceptable behaviour (Flouri, 2006; Swinson, 2008; Mruk, 2018), and yet, self-esteem may contribute to reflective thinking skills. In the context of the current study, teachers' expectations are initially perceived (and perceived teachers' expectations is developed), and then it predicts reflective thinking skills and self-esteem. Simultaneously, the adequacy level of self-esteem can mediate the effect of perceived teachers' expectations on reflective thinking skills.

The term ‘mediate’ refers to the effect of a mediating variable that alters the causal relationship between two variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986; MacKinnon, 2015). A mediating variable differs from a moderating variable because a mediating variable is also affected by the independent variable (IV). In the present study, the perceived teachers’ expectations of students are hypothesised to influence their reflective thinking skills. The more they perceive that their teachers expect them to be academically successful, the more they develop their reflective thinking skills. However, their self-esteem (as a mediating factor) may alter the influence of perceived teachers’ expectations on reflective thinking skills. When their self-esteem is lower, the influence of perceived teachers’ expectations may be less significant.

Notably, students’ perceived teachers’ expectations may significantly influence their reflective thinking skills and self-esteem. A mediation relationship occurs when the existence of self-esteem alters the influence of reflective thinking skills on self-esteem. Several studies have suggested that self-esteem is under the influence of perceived teachers’ expectations (Al-Fadhli & Singh, 2006; Ferkany, 2008; Prihadi & Hairul, 2010; Ismail & Majeed, 2011; Asakereh & Yousofi, 2018). Therefore, self-esteem cannot be a moderating variable because a moderating variable is not under the influence of the perceived teachers’ expectations.

On the basis of the literature, being ‘labeled’ as talented students drive students to develop a certain perceived teachers’ expectations that may affect their reflective thinking skills. Nevertheless, the effect may be mediated by their self-esteem. Theories and previous studies regarding the interrelationship among variables are briefly discussed in the next subsection (Problem Statement) and thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2.

1.3 Problem Statement

The identification process of the talented students in Saudi Arabia employs several methods, which are teachers' nomination, high academic achievement, high achievement in science and mathematics, IQ tests, and Tolerance test for creative thinking (Alqefari, 2010). Identifying students into a talented group based on their teachers' nomination and IQ test and providing them with special additional classes indicate that the government focuses more on the academic improvement of talented students. However, the identification process did not consider the social behaviour and the psychological well-being of the talented students. Social behaviour is as important as academic achievement (Ferkany, 2008). Important factors such as the perceived teachers' expectations and self-esteem that are considered as contributors to the reflective thinking skills and the success of the talented students are not considered in the identification process.

Being labeled as talented means being segregated. Previous studies in different contexts worldwide have reported that segregating students based on talented labeling may positively affect the talented students' academic achievements (Kulik, 1992, 2004; Hendricks & Wehman, 2009). However, other studies have reported a negative impact on the psychological well-being of students (Saleh et al., 2005; Slavin & Davis, 2006; Hazri et al., 2010). Moreover, evidence has proved that being labeled as 'good' (high achiever, talented and high-performing) may negatively affect the psychological well-being and behaviour of students (Hairul & Prihadi, 2015). Therefore, the importance of psychological factors such as students' self-esteem and perceived teachers' expectations should not be neglected.

Perceived teachers' expectations are of two types: academically and disciplinary. Reports on the influences of both types of perceived teachers' expectations vary. Some studies indicated that perceived academic teachers' expectations improves self-esteem, whereas perceived disciplinary teachers' expectations decreases it (Prihadi & Hairul, 2010; Ismail & Majeed, 2011; Prihadi & Chin, 2011). Other findings show that perceived academic teachers' expectations and perceived disciplinary teachers' expectations negatively affect self-esteem (Slavin & Davis, 2006; Hairul & Prihadi, 2015). Most of these studies carried out were in developed countries with few in developing countries. However, no study was reported from Saudi Arabia that examine how both dimensions of perceived teachers expectation affect students' psychological trait such as self-esteem. Therefore, by given attention to academic achievement as done by the government of Saudi Arabia may induce positive improvements in the academic achievements of talented students, but may also negatively affect their behaviour as self-esteem is closely related to behaviour (Ferkany, 2008). Hence, examining the influence of teachers expectation academically as well as disciplinary among gifted students in Saudi Arabia become necessary as it will unveil the impact of government policy on gifted student in Saudi Arabia and will enrich the literature empirically from Arabian population.

Apart from the possibility of risking students' self-esteem, the special programme for talented students in Saudi Arabia may also expose these students to the risk of developing low-level reflective thinking skills. Reflective thinking skills should drive individuals to utilise whatever they have learned previously and enable them to improve their knowledge continuously to solve imminent problems (Ibrahim, 2005; Moon, 2013). When these students are labeled as 'talented', perceived teachers' expectations may make them feel that their teachers are using them to improve their

reputation and that of the school by showing off their excellent academic achievements. This situation has been reported among Malaysian high achievers who are segregated from their peers by school management (Hairul & Prihadi, 2015). Therefore, the policy of the Saudi Arabia government to push high achievers through their talented students programme may also decrease the capability of these students to think reflectively due to their 'talented' label. What has not been thoroughly discussed in the literature is how this important psychological factor (self-esteem) can mediate the relationship between perceived teachers' expectations and reflective thinking skills for the success of the talented students in Saudi Arabia. This present study therefore intends to fill this gap by examining the influence of perceived teachers' expectations on self-esteem and reflective thinking skills among talented students in Saudi Arabia.

On the basis of theory of correspondence bias (Ross, 1977), the label 'talented students' attracts the society, including educators and teachers, who expect the talented students to exhibit outstanding achievement and behaviour. Furthermore, on the basis of theory of self-fulfilling prophecy (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Spitz, 1999), this expectation may lead teachers to behave in a certain manner because they want their expectations to be fulfilled. They show academic support and tolerance towards students with positive labels (Jussim & Harber, 2005). Eventually, students develop their own perception of what their teachers expect from them after observing their teachers' behaviour based on theory of symbolic interaction (Blumer, 1962; Stryker & Vryan, 2003).

However, perceived teachers' expectations has been reported to predict certain psychological traits of students, such as self-esteem (Prihadi & Hairul, 2010; Ismail & Majeed, 2011), attitude towards the science subject (Prihadi & Chin, 2011; Prihadi,

Chin, & Lim, 2012a) and locus of control (Prihadi, Hairul, & Hazri, 2012b). Most studies have reported that academically perceived teachers' expectation does not always yield a positive influence on the aforementioned psychological traits. It can also negatively predict academic achievements if not mediated by other variables (Prihadi et al., 2012b). Hence, the need for examining the mediating role of self-esteem on the relationship between perceived teachers' expectations and reflective thinking skills among talented students in Saudi Arabia.

Similarly, the practice of providing talented students with special treatment may have been conceived to help these students achieve future success; however, such policy may have an impact on their socio-emotional development. Students may perceive stigmatization if they are assigned to a talented classroom. This feeling affects their academic performance, and probably, their social life as well (Saleh, Lazonder, & De Jong, 2005; Alyami et al., 2017). Several studies have reported the negative effects of being labeled as 'special' on students without special needs. Thus, talented students in Saudi Arabia may become trapped in the pitfall of labelling: inadequate self-esteem and low reflective thinking skills level. self-esteem consists of two elements, namely, self-worth and self-competence (Mruk, 2006), i.e. a belief that one is valued by one's worthiness and competence. Being labeled as 'talented' may improve students' self-competence but reduce their self-worth by making them think that other people only value them for their competence (intelligence, academic performance) instead of their worthiness (being nice, kind and mature). Furthermore, being labeled as talented and having inadequate self-esteem may lead to low reflective thinking skills level (Ferkany, 2008). Either way, students become used to being regarded as capable and they do not feel the need to learn further. Moreover, they may be unable to utilise what they have learned before to solve current problems.

Nevertheless, a comprehensive literature review has suggested that examining this phenomenon in a culturally-inclined environment such as Saudi Arabia may revealed much needed information about the behaviours of talented students in such environment.

The special facility provided by the Saudi Arabia government to their talented students may lead students to develop different perceptions towards their teachers. The government of Saudi Arabia has established a special programme to boost the academic achievement of high-performing students. Nevertheless, the programme does not focus on psychological traits, such as self-esteem and reflective thinking skills. Moreover, students who are included in the programme may develop different expectations towards educators compared with normal students. This situation may negatively affect the students and lead them to unwanted situations. Therefore, the present study investigates the interrelationship among perceived teachers' expectations, self-esteem and reflective thinking skills among students who are labeled as 'talented' in Saudi Arabia.

Previous studies have indicated that students are likely to develop academically perceived teachers' expectations instead of disciplinary perceived teachers' expectations. Studies have also reported that perceived teachers' expectations, whether *academically* or *disciplinary*, affects the reflective thinking skills and self-esteem of students. However, many of the reported contributions are negative. Other studies have mentioned that self-esteem contributes to reflective thinking skills. These ambiguities in the findings lead to the need of performing a similar study in Saudi Arabian environment to examine the influence of the perceived teachers' expectations and self-esteem in the reflective thinking skills of the talented students.

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of the current study is to investigate the influence of perceived teachers' expectations (academically and disciplinary) on self-esteem and reflective thinking skills among talented students in Saudi Arabia. To achieve this objective, the research has the following sub-objectives:

1. To examine the influence of perceived teachers' expectations academically on the self-esteem of talented students in Saudi Arabia
2. To examine the influence of perceived teachers' expectations disciplinary on the self-esteem skills of talented students in Saudi Arabia
3. To examine the influence of perceived teachers' expectations academically on the reflective thinking skills of talented students in Saudi Arabia
4. To examine the influence of perceived teachers' expectations disciplinary on the reflective thinking skills of talented students in Saudi Arabia
5. To examine the influence of self-esteem on the reflective thinking skills of talented students in Saudi Arabia
6. To examine the mediating effect of self-esteem on the causal relationship between perceived teachers' expectations academically and reflective thinking skills among talented students in Saudi Arabia.
7. To examine the mediating effect of self-esteem on the causal relationship between perceived teachers' expectations disciplinary and reflective thinking skills among talented students in Saudi Arabia.

8. To examine the talented students' views on the concept of perceived teachers' expectations in Saudi Arabia.
9. To examine talented students' views on the concept of self-esteem in Saudi Arabia.
10. To examine talented students' views on the concept of reflective thinking skills in Saudi Arabia.

1.5 Research Questions

The following questions have been set based on the research objectives mentioned above:

1. Does perceived teachers' expectations academically have any significant influence on the self-esteem of talented students in Saudi Arabia?
2. Does perceived teachers' expectations disciplinary have any significant influence on the self-esteem of talented students in Saudi Arabia?
3. Does perceived teachers' expectations academically have a significant influence on the reflective thinking skills of talented students in Saudi Arabia?
4. Does perceived teachers' expectations disciplinary have a significant influence on the reflective thinking skills of talented students in Saudi Arabia?
5. Does self-esteem have a significant influence on the reflective thinking skills of talented students in Saudi Arabia?

6. Does self-esteem mediate the relationship between perceived teachers' expectations academically and reflective thinking skills among talented students in Saudi Arabia?
7. Does self-esteem mediate the relationship between perceived teachers' expectations disciplinary and reflective thinking skills among talented students in Saudi Arabia?
8. How the talented students' views on the concept of perceived teachers' expectations in Saudi Arabia?
9. How the talented students' views on the concept of self-esteem in Saudi Arabia?
10. How the talented students' views on the concept of reflective thinking skills in Saudi Arabia?

1.6 Null Hypotheses

In accordance with the procedure of this research, the null hypotheses can be stated as following:

- Ho1 There is no significant influence of perceived teachers' expectation academically on the self-esteem of talented students in Saudi Arabia.
- Ho2 There is no significant influence of perceived teachers' expectations disciplinary on the self-esteem of talented students in Saudi Arabia.
- Ho3 There is no significant influence of perceived teachers' expectations academically on the reflective thinking skills of talented students in Saudi Arabia.

- Ho4 There is no significant influence of perceived teachers' expectations disciplinary on the reflective thinking skills of talented students in Saudi Arabia.
- Ho5 There is no significant influence of self-esteem on the reflective thinking skills of talented students in Saudi Arabia.
- Ho6 There is no significant mediation effect of self-esteem on causal relationship between perceived teachers' expectations academically and reflective thinking skills of talented students in Saudi Arabia..
- Ho7 There is no significant mediation effect of the causal relationship between perceived teachers' expectations disciplinary and reflective thinking skills among talented students in Saudi Arabia.

1.7 Rationale of the Study

The present study contributes to knowledge in this field by providing an improved understanding of the nature of the relationship among the variables under study. The academic achievement of students is an important outcome of education. Therefore, understanding the roles of students' reflective thinking skills and self-esteem in determining social behaviour is important (Ferkany, 2008). Providing special academic support to talented students is the right of every government; however, changing such practice is hardly possible within a short period. Understanding how students' reflective thinking skills should be improved in such environment is important.

In the context of this research, studying the perceived teachers' expectations variable is important because of the following reasons: (1) perceived teachers' expectations is the 'window' through which students perceive who they are and how

they appear before the eyes of society, and (2) perceived teachers' expectations is an effect of the labelling system created by the government. Therefore, when the current perceived teachers' expectations of students produces an overall negative result for the society, the government can take necessary steps to re-shape students' perceived teachers' expectations, such as cancelling or altering the programme for talented students.

In addition, the current study is expected to bridge the gap in previous studies and literature reviews. Moreover, studies on this topic are lacking. A psychological study of talented students in Saudi Arabia has not been substantiated in the literature. The education field has also not elicited the attention of researchers. The findings of the present study are expected to enrich existing theories. The analysis will improve the understanding of the practicality of these theories among students in Saudi Arabia. These findings will contribute to our understanding of how talented students can obtain sufficient support.

Understanding the mediation effect of self-esteem between perceived teachers' expectations and reflective thinking skills can provide details on how self-esteem changes and improves reflective thinking skills among talented students in Saudi Arabia. The findings of the present study will contribute to the field of socio psychology from the perspective of the educational setting.

Regulations and policies related to special facilities and education for talented students in Saudi Arabia may also be improved based on the findings of the present study. The availability of adequate knowledge in this field is expected to reduce the negative influence of perceived teachers' expectations on reflective thinking skills,

which in turn, will help improve the likelihood of talented students becoming good citizens in organisations.

1.8 Limitations and Delimitations

The present study focuses on students' reflective thinking skills as an indirect result of the special treatment afforded to talented students. Nevertheless, the present study is limited to investigating the mediation effect of self-esteem between perceived teachers' expectations and reflective thinking skills. It does not identify the best techniques or instructional methods for enhancing students' reflective thinking skills. This research is not an experiential research design. Thus, it does not aim to alter the current practices related to talented students. Furthermore, policies are kept the same. The present study adopts a non-experimental research design and investigates a hypothetical relationship.

The study focuses on talented students in Saudi Arabia with particular emphasis on the following variables:

- Perceived teachers' expectations of students
- Reflective thinking skills of students
- Self-esteem

The present study does not control for any external variables, which may have an influence on the proposed hypotheses. Gender, race, socioeconomic status and parenting style are external factors that can influence the relationship investigated in the present study. Such influence can be derived from the differences among these external variables.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Several key terms are defined in this section. These key terms are talented students, perceived teachers' expectations, self-esteem, and reflective thinking skills.

1.9.1(a) Talented Students

Al-Surour (2000), define talented students as *"excellent students who exhibit distinctive performance compared with the age group which they belong to in terms of mental abilities, intelligence, creativity and other abilities in different walks of life"*. Again, A gifted students refers to a student who has high capabilities in intellectual, creative, specific academic or leadership aspects, or aptitude in the performing or visual arts, and need services or activities that are not being provided in the mainstream schools (Idaho Department of Education, 2001) .

Talented Students is operationally define in the current study as students who receive special treatment in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia due to their above-average academic achievements and scores in intelligence tests.

1.9.1(b) Perceived Teachers' Expectations

Perceived Teachers' expectation is defined as *"the perceptions of students that arise due to their teachers' expectations on how they should behave and perform"*. Prihadi and Hairul, (2010) defined students' perceived teachers' expectations as how students think about what their teachers expect from them by observing their teachers' classroom behaviour.

Perceived teachers' expectations is operationally defined as the assumption of talented students on whether their teachers expect them to be academically excellent or prone to disciplinary problems.

1.9.2(c) Self-Esteem

Mruk (2006), define self-esteem as "*how individuals perceive themselves in terms of self-competence and self-worth*". A high self-esteem indicates that students are confident about themselves and have a sense of worthiness. Self-esteem requires respect and special care from peers and teachers (self-worth). Self-competence is a sense of confidence to meet current and future struggles.

In this study, self-esteem refers to as a discrepancy between the ideal self and the actual self, and the sum of a person's self-worth and self-competence.

1.9.2(d) Reflective Thinking

Reflective thinking is conceptually *defined "as a mental process based on analysing a problematic situation into a set of elements, and then studying, evaluating and checking the correctness of all possible solutions or finding the right solution for a problem"*(Ibrahim, 2005). Moon (2013), defined reflective thinking as the base of high-order thinking skills.

Reflective Thinking Skills is conceptually define as a skill that helps talented students develop high-order thinking skills by prompting them to relate new knowledge to prior understanding, think in abstract and conceptual terms, apply specific strategies to novel tasks and understand their own thinking and learning strategies.

1.10 Summary of this Chapter

The background of the study is elaborated in this chapter. Then, the research problem is developed. The research objectives and questions are also discussed. The hypotheses are proposed for further analysis and validation. Moreover, several limitations and delimitations of the study are presented. Furthermore, this chapter provides the operational definitions of terms and concepts used in the present study. Chapter 2 discusses the conceptual framework and the theoretical underpinning, with emphasis on previous studies, to bridge the research gap.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses theories, perspectives and previous studies that are relevant to the subject matter. A short introduction of the education history of Saudi Arabia is also provided. How the country treats its talented students, reflective thinking skills, self-esteem and perceived teachers' expectations are discussed thoroughly before summarizing them into a theoretical framework. The chapter includes the conceptualization of the theoretical framework and a conclusion subsection.

2.2 Talented Students and Gifted Students

In Webster dictionary, 'talented' refers to 'whoever has the potential (or ability) or the natural aptitude', whereas the term 'gifted' has the same definition. Therefore, the two terms can be used interchangeably as synonyms (Webster, 1979).

Arabic dictionaries define 'gifted and talented' as 'a characteristic that describes individuals who have an unusual high potential (or ability)'. To date, scholars have not specified the average IQ that describes such students, although 120 or higher is commonly used. The mental level is typically related to the innovation or is used as a criterion, including other characteristics of individuals (Al-Surour, 2000).

In general, Arabic and English dictionaries agree that 'talent' is the ability or natural aptitude inherent in an individual. With regard to the educational and idiomatic

aspects, identifying and defining terms related to the concept of ‘talent’ is difficult because of the multiplicity of its components.

One of the most common definitions of ‘talent’ is provided by the Bureau of Education. This definition was adopted by the federal legislation of gifted and talented students in the United States in 1971 and later became known as the definition of Maryland. It states that ‘talented and gifted students’ are those identified by professionals and specialists. Such students have clear proficiencies and the ability for high achievement. They also require special education programmes and services that are beyond those provided to normal students in normal programmes in schools to make contributions that can benefit their parents and the society. Apart from having high scores in their academic achievement, talented students stand out in one or more of the following capabilities: general mental ability, specific academic readiness or aptitude, productive or creative thinking, leadership ability, art or optical achievement and mechanical ability (Al-Surour, 2000).

Talent is a complex phenomenon. It is not limited to the cognitive aspect, which is the power of memory and high achievement in the learning and thinking processes, but instead, is extended to personality traits and emotional motivations. This broad direction of the concept of ‘talent’ can be observed in leadership areas. Several modern discussions have focused on the need for talented students to utilise their talents and abilities in a distinctly moral and desirable manner, such as solving social problems, including poverty, environmental pollution and unemployment, and not to maximise themselves and earn personal wealth (Buhairi, 2002).

Talented students exhibit outstanding performance in one or more of the following dimensions as personal and mental attributes, which distinguishes them

from other students: (a) high mental ability (IQ increases with one or two standard deviations); (b) high creative ability; (c) ability to achieve a high academic level; (d) ability to perform distinct skills (such as technical, mathematical, physical or linguistic) and (e) ability to demonstrate perseverance, commitment, high motivation, flexibility and independence in thinking (Rousan, 1998).

2.2.1 Characteristics of Talented Students

This section elaborate more in definition and related characteristics of the talented students. Talented students have been characterised by many attributes. They are reported to exhibit a certain evidence of giftedness. Advanced understanding, striving for knowledge, curiosity, a capital pool for capacity and an extraordinary value of information are the well-known characteristics of talented students. Thus, these students may have better academic abilities than their peers (Catron & Wingenbach, 1986; Tannenbaum, 1997; Clark, 2002; Davis & Rimm, 2004; Gagné, 2004; Gardner, 2004; Al Garni, 2012; Al-Zoubi, Rahman, & Sultan, 2015).

Teachers and school administrators should provide an adequate set of learning and teaching processes to talented students. Teachers must capitalise on these characteristics to further improve these students and maximise their potentials (Thomson, 2010).

The characteristics that distinguish talented students from ordinary students are their cognitive abilities, personality traits and independence. Moreover, they are efficient, perform highly compared with other students and display considerable emotional control, which make them assertive and exhibit unique learning styles (Renzulli, 2012). Accordingly, prospect teachers should adequately acknowledge their

characteristics. Understanding their characteristics helps talented students excel in different aspects, improves their learning outcomes and meets their specific needs (Davis & Rimm, 2004; Al Garni, 2012).

Winebrenner (2000) found that talented students have a wide range of positive characteristics. They basically differ from other students in many ways. The learning and absorbing capabilities of talented students are high. Talented students learn in five different ways. Firstly, they learn new concepts faster than other students. Secondly, they get bored if teachers repeat the same information because they can promptly recall past lectures. Thirdly, they have a critical mind-set and can understand the nature of complex matter more easily than other students. Fourthly, talented students can get confused and frustrated when they deviate from the main topic. They see such deviation as destructive to their mind-set and to the learning process. Lastly, these students have a strong concentration level. Understanding such characteristics is important to guide teachers in forming good attitudes and beliefs for shaping talented students (Ozcan, 2016). Moreover, such characteristics must be understood by future teachers to provide talented students with adequate education.

2.2.2 Problems of Talented Students

The problems of talented students can be attributed to the following sources that interact with them and form their characters (Faisal & Ghani, 2015).

2.2.2(a) Personal problems related to talented individuals

Talented individuals may suffer from psychological problems that lead to poor psychological and social adjustment. Such individuals are characterized by high motivation towards learning, and they search and explore knowledge. They consider