

The Educational Needs of Gifted Students with Learning Disabilities

Mohammed Abdullah Mohammed BinShomailah¹

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at identifying the educational needs of gifted students with learning disabilities in Aseer region in Saudi Arabia. The study used the descriptive survey approach and developed a questionnaire as a study instrument. The study sample was chosen randomly from the original study community, which included 50 teachers of learning disabilities in public schools in Aseer region. The results of the study showed statistically significant differences in the educational needs of students according to the viewpoint of their teachers which is attributable to the specialization (BA - MA and Ph.D. – others). The results also showed differences in determining the educational needs of gifted students with learning difficulties attributable to experience. There was an absence of differences in determining the educational needs of gifted students with learning difficulties attributable to the training programs. The study recommended conducting more research into the area of the needs of gifted students with LDs.

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Keywords: educational needs, gifted students with LDs, teachers, Saudi Arabia.

INTRODUCTION

Students with learning disabilities, in general, constitute a category of groups that deserve special care, especially if they are gifted. It is necessary to redouble the effort to obtain a distinguished level of creativity in the talent they enjoy. Therefore, these needs are important in terms of the social or academic aspects that help promote the levels of this category. Talented people are the most important human wealth, and they are the pillar of societies striving for progress and advancement. They are the big asset sought by societies that want to have a clear contribution and a prominent role in human civilization. Such category acquires a prominent position among nations, as they are the cornerstone of development and progress, and they are the effective means to modernize and develop any society. This is achieved through flexible educational systems that take into account the individual differences between students and provide a distinct education for each student that fits with his abilities, inclinations, and interests (Metwally and Al-Qahtani, 2016).

Gifted people with learning disabilities possess many characteristics that distinguish them from their peers. They show good auditory comprehension, ability to express themselves, can solve problems and understand abstract reasons, may have a developed sense of humor, and often prefer creative activities and enthusiasm to show their interests and hobbies outside of school (Al-Buainain, 2017). The needs of gifted students with psychological and social learning disabilities differ from those of ordinary students. Al-Share' (2001) indicated that gifted students are a special category that deserves care according to their needs, as is the case for other special groups. Depriving this category of its rights to care might lead to injustice not only to the talents of students but also to the present and future of nations. Therefore, taking care of gifted students and providing for their needs is one of the priorities, whether they are counseling, social or psychological.

The talents of gifted students may be evident in many aspects, yet they face several problems that limit the provision of educational services available to them, in addition to neglecting their special needs, as they are not welcomed by many teachers (Al-Qahtani, 2018). Therefore, this study attempted to identify the educational needs that are provided to this category in public education schools and special education centers. The study attempted to form a predictive vision for those interested in the field of special education to develop their perceptions and intervention programs to improve the level of gifted students with learning disabilities, through what can be interpreted from realistic results in the current study.

The problem of the study comes from the researcher's experience with this category of gifted students with learning disabilities who have the ability and talent in different fields. The researcher noticed that they suffer from developmental and academic problems, but at the same time, they possess talent in different fields. The idea was to link the problem of learning disabilities with their talents, and there would be an opportunity to provide educational needs that help enrich talent and alleviate the problem for students with LDs, especially the gifted among them, as well as developing a clear vision to visualize the views of teachers of learning difficulties about their educational needs.

¹ King Khalid University, mohammedabdullahshomailhm@gmail.com, orcid.org/0000-0002-0426-5992

This is in addition to the recommendations of many previous studies, which called for the importance of paying attention to the category of talented people with LDs (Mallot, 2019; Shabatat, 2016). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in its 2030 vision, called for aspiration, discovery, and reliance on talents and special abilities. All of which were motives for doing objective work as a scientific study and reaching realistic results from an actual study community that stems from the teachers who teach this category.

Therefore, this study aimed at achieving the following objectives: Identifying the educational needs of gifted students with learning disabilities from the point of view of their teachers. Identifying the differences in determining the educational needs of gifted students with LDs from the point of view of their teachers due to the variable of the educational qualification. Identifying the differences in determining the educational needs of gifted students with LDs from the point of view of their teachers due to the variable of experience.

Based on the research problem and the main question, a set of sub-questions can emerge, which are as follows: What are the differences in determining the educational needs of gifted students with LDs from the point of view of teachers due to the teacher's academic qualification?

What are the differences in determining the educational needs of gifted students with LDs from the viewpoint of teachers due to the teachers' experience?

What are the differences in determining the educational needs of gifted students with LDs from the point of view of teachers due to the variable (training programs)?

The results of this study help provide a clear vision of how to meet the educational needs of gifted students with learning disabilities. The study contributes to conducting workshops to meet the educational needs of gifted students with learning disabilities. This study screened the theoretical literature by reviewing the theoretical concepts of the gifted with learning difficulties and the educational needs of students.

Delimitations of the Study

There are several limitations to the generalization of the results of this study, which can be summarized as follows:

Thematic limits: The subject of the study will deal only with the topic of the educational needs of gifted students with learning disabilities from the point of view of teachers.

Spatial limits: The study will be applied to some public primary schools in Aseer region, Saudi Arabia.

Time limits: the application will take place in the second semester of the current year 2021.

Human limits: the study sample will consist of teachers of learning disabilities in public education schools in Aseer region.

Literature Review

Needs, in general, are defined as "the lack of something that if it exists, achieves fulfillment and satisfaction for the living organism. The need is something necessary either for the stability of life itself or for a better life, and it directs behavior to satisfy it" (Abdul-Rahman, 2018, pg. 146). The educational needs of a gifted student fall into two categories: academic needs and emotional and social needs. The academic needs fall into two categories: differentiation and challenge, both of which mean focusing on accelerating content when students have a strong understanding of how to do so by answering the different types of questions that are asked, and how to deal with learning activities problems solving, enabling self-regulation and advocating social and emotional needs. Satisfying the academic and social needs of the gifted leads students to enjoy learning, and when there is the enjoyment of learning, there is more mastery and understanding of academic content (Kitsantas, et al, 2017). Meeting the needs of each student is critical to the teacher, and there are many strategies for differentiation including flexibility and grouping, independent projects or investigations, diverse instructional strategies, and diverse questions. This could be achieved by allowing students to undertake independent, interest-based work that increases student learning, reinforces student self-motivation, learner self-direction, and the development of creative producers (Westburg & Leppien, 2017).

Gifted students with LDs

This category of students include students who have talent and extraordinary mental capabilities that enable them to achieve high levels of performance, but they suffer from learning disabilities that make the manifestations of achievement or academic achievement low for them as a result of their poor self-concept and lack of motivation (Zayed, 2020). Metwally (2016) defines them as "those who possess the outstanding talent or intelligence and are capable of high performance, but at the same time they face learning difficulties that make achieving some aspects of academic achievement difficult."

Al-Arabi (2015) and Al-Qahtani (2018) divided gifted people with learning disabilities into three main categories. First, gifted students with mild learning disabilities. These students are often identified as gifted due to their high IQ, often draw the attention of their parents and teachers with high verbal abilities, do well in primary school, and participate in programs for the gifted. However, they are in the range of students with unexpected learning disabilities due to their reduced abilities in spelling, reading, writing, and poor handwriting, and are rarely recognized as having a learning disability.

Second, gifted students with severe learning disabilities. They are students who have severe learning disabilities that it is easy to classify them as suffering from those disabilities. This makes it difficult to identify their superior mental abilities and direct attention to their weaknesses without realizing their strengths, which may lead to the lack of interest in these abilities and talents, so that they can be developed, which also leads to frequent failure in school. These students are rarely classified or recognized as gifted.

Third, gifted students with unidentified learning disabilities. They are a difficult group to identify and recognize, neither as gifted nor as having learning disabilities. They often use their intelligence in hiding their disabilities, as they do not have the opportunity to express their feelings. These students have difficulties that hide their talents (Salem et al, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all teachers of students with learning disabilities in public education schools in Aseer region (Abha - Khamis Mushait - Ahad Rafaida), and their number was (70) teachers during the academic year 2020.

The study sample consisted of (50) teachers of students with LDs, who were randomly selected from the original study population, and their percentage was (71.42%). Table (1) shows the characteristics of the study sample.

Table 1. Distribution of the sample according to demographic variables

Variable	Category	No.	Percentage
Academic qualification	Bachelor	38	٪76
	Master or Ph.D	10	٪20
	Others	2	٪4
Years of experience	less than five years	8	٪16
	From 5 to 10 years	17	٪34
	From 10 to 15 years	11	٪22
	More than 15 years	14	٪28
Training programs in the field of learning disabilities	Two programs	13	٪26
	From 3-4	13	٪26
	From 5-6	6	٪12
	More than seven programs	18	٪36
Total		50	٪100

Instruments of the study

The questionnaire consisted of (17) statements including the focus of the educational needs of gifted students with learning disabilities. It was formulated to measure all the educational needs of students to reach the answer to the study's questions.

The validity of the questionnaire means making sure that it will measure what it was prepared to measure. The researcher made sure of the validity of the questionnaire through the following:

Validity of judges: After completing the construction of the questionnaire, it was presented to several judges for their opinions. Based on the amendments and suggestions made by the judges, the researcher made the necessary amendments on the questionnaire, in which the percentage of the agreement reached more than (80%), from amending some of the phrases, until the questionnaire became in its final form.

The validity of the internal consistency: After confirming the apparent validity of the study instrument, the researcher applied it to the study sample, then the researcher calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient to find out the internal validity of the questionnaire. The following table presents the results.

Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficients for the items of the questionnaire with the total score

Item No.	Total degree	Item No.	Total degree
1	** 0,411	10	**0 ,743
2	** 0,757	11	**0 ,742
3	**0 ,590	12	**0 ,565
4	**0 ,803	13	**0 ,782
5	**0 ,841	14	**0 ,730
6	**0 ,807	15	**0 ,633
7	**0 ,464	16	**0 ,621
8	**0 ,799	17	**0 ,667
9	**0 ,770		

**Statistically significant at 0, 01

It is clear from the previous table that the values of the correlation coefficient of each of the items with the dimension it measures are positive and statistically significant at (0, 01), which indicates the validity of its consistency with the total score of the dimension.

Reliability of the instrument

The researcher calculated the reliability of the instrument using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the questionnaire as a whole, and the results are presented in the following table:

Table 3. Results of the reliability of the educational needs questionnaire by Cronbach's alpha method

No. of items	Mean score	Standard deviation	Variation of degrees	of general stability coefficient
17	35,4200	11,082	122,820	0,926

The value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale as a whole was (0.926), which means that the questionnaire has a good degree of reliability.

The researcher divided the statements of the questionnaire into two parts, odd items versus even items. The Pearson's coefficient was used to calculate the extent of the correlation between the scores of the first and second parts. The length was corrected using the "Spearman-Brown" equation, and the value of the stability coefficient in this way was (0.924), which is a value that confirms that the questionnaire scale has a high degree of reliability that can be used as an instrument for data collection in the current study.

Results

Results of the main question

To answer the main question of the study, the researcher calculated the mean scores and standard deviations of the answers of the study sample towards revealing the "educational needs of gifted people with learning disabilities from the viewpoint of teachers of learning difficulties." These expressions were also arranged according to the mean scores as follows.

Table 4. Frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations of the answers of the study sample to the first question

No.	Statement	F & %	Agreement level					Mean score	Standard deviation	Rank	Agreement level
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree				
9	Presenting the scientific material in a variety of ways stimulates most of t	F	7	7	12	10	14	2,660	1,394	1	Strongly agree
		%	14	14	24	20	28				
3	Focus on developing creative abilities, thinking skills, and problem-solving.	F	2	2	10	23	13	2,140	0,989	2	Agree
		%	4	4	20	46	26				
14	Providing intensive enrichment programs for gifted students with LDs.	F	1	2	6	19	22	1,820	0,940	3	Strongly agree
		%	2	4	12	38	44				
5	Organizational skills training such as time management strategies.	F	4	0	5	13	28	1,780	1,165	4	Strongly agree
		%	8	0	10	26	56				
7	Allocating special classes for gifted students with LDs.	F	2	1	1	26	20	1,780	0,910	5	Agree
		%	4	2	2	52	40				
6	Diversifying the methods of detecting the needs of gifted people with LDs.	F	1	3	2	20	24	1,740	0,943	6	Strongly agree
		%	2	6	4	40	48				
10	Giving the student the appropriate opportunity to utilize his knowledge and Encouragement and	F	2	2	2	17	27	1,700	1,015	7	Strongly agree
		%	4	4	4	34	54				
16	continuous parental participation for their	F	1	1	6	16	26	1,700	0,909	8	Strongly agree
		%	2	2	12	32	52				
1	Assigning gifted students with LDs to write the scientific material	F	2	2	1	15	30	1,620	1,007	9	Strongly agree
		%	4	4	2	30	60				
17	Motivating gifted students with LDs and encouraging them to self-learn.	F	0	1	4	19	26	1,600	0,728	10	Strongly agree
		%	0	2	8	38	52				
8	Using and adapting modern teaching strategies and techniques for gifted students with LDs.	F	10	0	5	15	29	1,580	0,835	11	Strongly agree
		%	2	0	10	30	58				
15	Encourage students to use the summer interaction strategy.	F	1	1	3	16	29	1,580	0,859	12	Strongly agree
		%	2	2	6	32	58				
2		F	1	1	4	3	31	1,560	0,884	13	Strongly

	Encourage the student to talk about	%	2	2	8	26	62				agree
13	Training gifted students with LDs to use modern	F	0	2	3	10	35	1,440	0,786	14	Strongly agree
		%	0	4	6	20	70				
12	The student sits in a place close to the teacher to follow him	F	1	1	1	13	34	1,440	0,812	15	Strongly agree
		%	2	2	2	26	68				
11	Introducing modern alternatives such as computers to enhance learning	F	1	0	2	11	36	1,42	0,859	16	Strongly agree
		%	2	0	4	22	72				
4	Focus on collaborative	F	1	0	1	13	35	1,380	0,725	17	Strongly agree
		%	2	0	2	26	70				
The overall mean score for the first question								35,420	11,082		Strongly agree

It is clear from Table (4) that statement No. (9) ranked first (presenting the scientific material in a variety of ways that stimulate most of the visual and auditory senses) with a mean score of (2,660) and a standard deviation of (1,394). Statement No. came in the last rank From the point of view of the study sample, the statement came in the last rank, with a mean score of (1,380) and a standard deviation of (0.725).

Results of the sub-questions:

Sub-question one:

To find out whether there are statistically significant differences between the views of the study sample in determining the educational needs of students according to the difference in the educational qualification variable, the Kruskal Wallis test was used instead of the One Way Anova test, due to the inequality between the categories of the students variable, as shown in the following table.

Table 5. The results of the Kruskal Wallis test for the academic qualification variable

Dimension	Academic qualification	No.	Mean score	Sig.	
Educational needs of gifted students with learning disabilities	Bachelor	38	25,39	0,04	Significant
	Master or P.hD	10	21,10		
	Others	2	49,50		

It is clear from the previous table that gifted students with LDs have statistically significant differences between them in the educational needs according to the point of view of their teachers that are attributed to the academic qualification. The mean score for teachers with bachelor's degrees was (25,39) while the number of teachers with master's and doctorate degrees was (10) with a mean score of 21.10.

Sub-question two:

To find out whether there are statistically significant differences between the views of the study sample in determining the educational needs of students according to the difference in the experience variable, the Kruskal Wallis test was used as shown in the following table.

Table 6. The results of the Kruskal Wallis test for the experience variable

Dimension	Experience	No.	Mean score	Sig.	
Educational needs of gifted students with learning disabilities	less than five years	8	11,25	0,010	Significant
	From 5 to 10 years	17	27,68		
	From 10 to 15 years	11	33,45		
	More than 15 years	14	24,75		

It is clear from the previous table that the educational needs of gifted students with LDs differed according to the variable of experience. The teachers with less than five years experience, whose number was (8), got a mean score of 11.25. The mean score of teachers with 5-10 years of experience, whose number was (17), was

27.68. Teachers with experience from 10 years to less than 15 years, whose number was (11), got a mean score of 33.45. Finally, teachers with more than 15 years of experience got 24.75.

Sub-question three:

To find out whether there are statistically significant differences between the views of the study sample in determining the educational needs of students according to the difference in the training program variable, the Kruskal Wallis test was used as shown in the following table.

Table 7. The results of the Kruskal Wallis test for the training programs variable

Dimension	Training programs	No.	Mean score	Sig.	
Educational needs of gifted students with learning disabilities	Two programs	13	24.08	0,451	Not significant
	From 3-4	13	23,85		
	From 5-6	6	34,50		
	More than seven programs	18	24,72		

It is clear from the previous table that the educational needs of gifted students with LDs do not differ according to the variable of the training programs the teachers obtained. Teachers who obtained two courses (n=13) had a mean score of 24.08. The teachers who obtained three to four courses (n=13) had a mean score of 23.85. The teachers who took five to six courses and their number was (6) had a mean score of 34.50. The teachers who got seven courses or more (n=18) had a mean score of 24.72. All the mean scores were not statistically significant. This means that the educational needs of students do not differ from the teachers' point of view according to the number of courses of their teachers.

Discussion

Baneen (2019) explored the category of gifted students with learning disabilities among secondary school students in general, and specifically aimed at revealing the ranks of their distinctive identity. The study included (3) cases selected from among 60 regular students in the second division of the secondary school. The study used the clinical approach and using Torrance's innovative thinking scale, Raven's scale for successive matrices, the objective scale for identity ranks of Al-Ghamdi, and the mathematics learning difficulties scale for the secondary stage. The results found the existence of investigation status among the cases and these results were discussed based on the theoretical framework and previous studies.

Alexopoulou & Drigas (2019) investigated the special personality traits of gifted and resilient students, and targeted the development of strategic approaches to prevention and intervention, to enhance the resilience of those at risk of academic achievement. The study conducted a systematic review on enhancing the resilience of gifted students. The results found that enhancing the resilience of gifted students is of great importance to help them overcome difficulties in family, school, and social environments, leading to the establishment of good physical and mental health.

Karaduman (2019) revealed Bloom's classification of action verbs to analyze class questions used in general science textbooks approved in the general middle grades in Texas to determine whether these questions assess the level of thinking of gifted students. The study used content analysis to collect quantitative data and to analyze the content of class questions for each of the general science textbooks. In general science textbooks by applying for the AntConc program, action verbs were measured from classification against words used in the content of the post-class questions to determine the number of action verbs present in the post-class questions that can be used to assess the cognitive understanding of gifted students. The study found that the general science textbooks did not use a statistically significant number. Several action verbs from Bloom's Taxonomy in subsequent chapter questions for grades 6, 7, and 8.

Molot (2019) explored the classroom experiences of teachers regarding the use of differentiated teaching with high-ability learners and how teachers effectively characterize the teaching of gifted learners in the classroom. Participants discussed professional development opportunities and resources that they felt they could take advantage of to improve the quality of differentiation among gifted learners. In this qualitative phenomenological study, individual interviews were conducted with (17) teachers in grades three through five. The results of this study reached suggestions for ways to distinguish successfully in classroom instruction for gifted learners, as well as areas for improvement that could occur in the area to better meet the needs of these students. Zayed (2020) revealed the existence of differences between the average grades of ordinary,

gifted, and learning disabled students of primary school students in mental motivation, cognitive representation efficiency, and reading comprehension. The study consisted of (210) fifth-grade male and female students from some primary schools in Kafr El-Sheikh. The results showed statistically significant correlations between the scores of fifth-grade students on the scales of mental motivation, cognitive efficiency, and reading comprehension test. The results also revealed the absence of differences attributed to the variable of cognitive representation and the reading comprehension test, and also resulted in the absence of differences due to gender (male/female) in the three research variables. Adams (2020) examined the impact of using a framework within state guidelines for talented students to identify gifted fourth- and fifth-grade learners, and implement gifted service options through a tiered framework to meet the academic needs of gifted learners identified in the areas of English/Language Arts and Mathematics. The results of the study indicated that it could help identify gifted learners in English/Language Arts and Mathematics to include identifying gifted students in the intellectual fields, sciences, social studies, creativity, leadership, art, dance, drama, and music. The study provided an alternative to assessment in the ability group, monitoring progress, and making data-driven decisions to appropriately nurture gifted learners in other areas of giftedness.

Freed (2020) identified the attitude of parents and teachers toward the most form of reading support that enhances the emotional development of young gifted readers. Participants in this study were parents and teachers of gifted readers, parents had at least one gifted child who was identified in reading, teachers were teachers of gifted students in a school district, working directly with gifted readers. Both parents and teachers were interviewed to learn about the way they perceive the support and barriers that young gifted readers face in their emotional development. The findings showed that teamwork, compassionate allies, and extraordinary reactions were among the important skills needed for these students.

Salem et al. (2021) presented a proposed integrative model for developing emotional creativity among gifted students with learning difficulties. The study used the descriptive-analytical approach. The model depended on the following sub-procedures according to the main criteria specific to diagnosing gifted students with learning difficulties, which are the criterion of qualitative excellence, the criterion of spacing, and the criterion of exclusion. Through those steps, the identification, and diagnosis of gifted students with learning difficulties occurred. These studies provided input into the formulation of the objectives and study's problem of the current study. The theoretical literature of studies related to the concept of this study was reviewed, as well as the research methods used in it. This study is the first in the Arab, to the best knowledge of the researcher, in revealing the educational needs of the gifted, especially those with learning disabilities.

The statement "presenting scientific material in a variety of ways that stimulate the senses visually, auditory and tactile" came in the first rank. This shows that gifted students with LDs need to overcome visual, auditory, and tactile problems, These are the things that make the student have the ability to overcome the difficulty of learning or being able to maintain talent of any kind. Therefore, developmental difficulties have a large part in developing talent and maintaining the required level. The second phrase "focusing on developing creative abilities, thinking skills and problem solving" came in second place. This phrase focused on revealing the type of talent in the gifted student and trying to enrich it to preserve it, then provide the appropriate programs for the student to benefit from and overcome problems.

The phrase "providing intensive enrichment programs for gifted students with learning difficulties" came in the third rank. By paying attention to the educational aspect that is related to the sensory, tactile, and perceptual aspect, there is the ability to have a good understanding through programs that support the discovered talent and then use time management to be able to accomplish all the tasks required at the time, maintain, and reach a required level of talent for gifted students with learning disabilities.

As for the second question, we find that the results of the study showed a level of significance among students with learning disabilities in educational needs according to the qualification variable. All workers that gifted students with learning difficulties, regardless of their academic qualification, do not affect the educational needs of gifted people with learning difficulties. This shows that students have needs, whether related to the psychological aspect or the social aspect. For the results of the third question, we find that the needs differed according to experience and did not differ according to qualification. This means that the experience factor has a significant part in changing the level of the student in terms of the level of experience, and this indicates that experience is an important factor in changing the course of educational needs due to the teacher's enjoyment and his acquisition of many experiences in training and courses, both inside and outside work.

There were no statistically significant differences according to the training programs the teacher has. This is because the majority of the courses that the teacher receives may not be courses closely related to the level of educational needs. The teacher resorts to attending the courses, not out of his desire to attend, but rather as an obligation to keep the professional work. Therefore, the courses are not of interest in determining the educational needs of gifted students with learning disabilities. Based on the results, the study concluded several recommendations, which are: Paying attention to presenting the scientific material in a variety of ways to provoke students visually, auditory and tactile senses. Developing creative abilities, thinking skills, and problem-solving for gifted students with learning disabilities. Providing intensive enrichment programs for gifted students with learning disabilities to preserve talent. Providing organizational skills training as time management strategies for gifted students. Not focusing on cooperative learning as a major goal in developing talent for gifted students with learning disabilities.

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