

# **LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY**

Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of Giftedness and Programs for Gifted Students at  
the Armenian Schools in Lebanon

By

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# Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of Giftedness and Programs for Gifted Students at the Armenian Schools in Lebanon

Lory Markos Sinabian

## ABSTRACT

Despite the importance of programs for gifted students, they are nonexistent in Lebanon. The absence of a definition of the conception of giftedness in the country has contributed to this void. Hence, this research examined principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian Schools in Lebanon. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from seven principals and 80 teachers from nine Armenian schools in Lebanon. Qualitative data was gathered through an interview conducted with the principals, whereas quantitative data was gathered through a survey completed by the teachers. The findings suggest that educators have a positive attitude towards giftedness and gifted programs. Even though none of the participating schools have any established programs for gifted students, enrichment programs are offered in the form of additional classwork, co-curricular activities, extracurricular activities, exhibitions, competitions, and summer programs. However, these special services are preliminary and vary in scope in each of the participating schools. The current study provides insight into the establishment and implementation of gifted programs in schools in Lebanon.

**Keywords:** principal perceptions, teacher perceptions, gifted student, giftedness, gifted programs

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Research Problem Area**

This case study is about principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. Gifted students are those whose abilities significantly outstand from that of the norm for their particular age group (National Association of Gifted Children [NAGC], 2007; Chen, Lo, Porath, Tsai, Wu, & Yu, 2019; Conejeros-Solar, 2016). Giftedness can be apparent in one or more academic and non-academic domains, such as arts, language, creativity, intellectuality, mathematics, or science (NAGC, 2007). In fact, gifted students understand, see, and interpret things differently than the others (Miedijensky, 2018). Even though giftedness exists all around the world, it lacks a unified definition (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Alhusaini & Maker, 2018; Chen et al., 2019; Kuusisto, Laine, & Tirri, 2016; NAGC, 2007; Renzulli, 1978; Sternberg, 2007). It is common to have various conceptions of giftedness in a multicultural society (Vasilevska, 2005). The definition of giftedness differs from one culture to another because it is based on cultural and social beliefs (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Antoun, Kronborg, & Plunkett, 2020; Sternberg, 1995, 1997, 2007). Hence, it is crucial to identify which characteristics are valued and recognized as gifted in the Lebanese culture (Antoun et al., 2020).

In the last decades, programs for gifted students were developed and offered in many countries around the world, such as United States of America (Bore, 2003),

Australia (Vasilevska, 2005), Canada (Clelland & Kanevsky, 2013), Europe (Fisher & Muller, 2014; Lubianka & Sekowski, 2015), Hong Kong (Chan & Yuen, 2015), Ireland (O'Reilly, 2018), Israel (Burg, 1992), Kuwait (Mentzer et al., 2018), Oman (Abu Elwan et al., 2017), Peru (Blumen, 2016), Russia (Grigorenko, 2017), Saudi Arabia (Aljughaiman & Grigorenko, 2013), Switzerland (Mueller-Oppliger, 2014), Thailand (Unuruthwong, 2017), Turkey (Alhusaini & Maker, 2018; Sak & Shaughnessy, 2015), United Arab Emirates (AlGhawi, 2017), and so on.

However, an educational system for students who are gifted is nonexistent in Lebanon (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Antoun et al., 2020; Sarouphim, 2007, 2010, 2015). In fact, programs for gifted students are absent in the public schools of Lebanon (Sarouphim, 2007, 2010, 2015), in the revised version of the Lebanese National Curriculum (NCERD, 1995), and in the Public Law 220 (Sarouphim, 2010, 2015). In the Public Law 220, the Article 59 and the Article 60 of the Law support the education and the inclusion of the students with disabilities (Sarouphim, 2010, 2015). Only one end of the spectrum – students with disabilities – is addressed with regards to students with special needs as referred to in the Lebanese Law and the Lebanese National Curriculum (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Antoun et al., 2020; Sarouphim, 2010, 2015). In contrast, students who are gifted are not even mentioned in the Public Law (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Sarouphim, 2010, 2015). Even though some private schools in Beirut offer enrichment programs for high achieving students, these programs cannot be compared to the programs for gifted students, which are based on theories and are supported by the Ministry of Education in the other countries (Antoun et al., 2020; Sarouphim, 2015). Only 'grade-based acceleration' is provided by the Law in Lebanon: gifted students are

allowed to skip one grade in cycle one and another grade level in cycle two (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018).

The neglect of giftedness and programs for gifted students is highly evident in Lebanon. As a result, this case study will shed light on the future implementation of programs for gifted students in Lebanon, more specifically at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. Decision-making is amongst the major responsibilities of a school principal (Shaked & Schechter, 2019; Summak & Kalman, 2019). This decision-making is also affected by other factors, such as teachers' perceptions, views, and expectations (Shaked & Schechter, 2019; Summak & Kalman, 2019). Principals' and teachers' perceptions have significant impact on gifted education (Antoun et al., 2020; De Villiers & Oswald, 2013). Kuusisto, Laine, and Tirri (2016) argue that teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students help in the identification, support, and nurturing of gifted students in general education. Research regarding educators' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students is very limited in Lebanon. The studies that examined educators' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students in Lebanon are one thesis entitled "Teachers' and Principals' Perceptions of Giftedness and Gifted Programs" (Al Zoubi, 2018), an article entitled "Investigating Lebanese Primary School Teachers' Perceptions of Gifted and Highly Able Students" (Antoun et al., 2020), and a book entitled "Gifted education in Lebanese schools: Integrating theory, research, and practice" (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018). On the other hand, no studies have examined principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. Hence, this case study will fill this gap in literature by examining principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs

for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. It will be an addition to the literature, the Lebanese National Curriculum and the Public Law as it will be a call for understanding giftedness and developing programs for gifted students. Moreover, it will enhance teachers' knowledge about giftedness and programs for gifted students.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

This case study examined principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. Gifted students are often neglected in the classroom because their teachers perceive them to be successful, even without any efforts on their behalf (Antoun et al., 2020; Cooper, 2009; Karantzas, 2019; McGinnis, 2019; Moon, 2009; Winebrenner, 2000). However, students who are gifted require support from their teachers as much as their peers do (Antoun et al., 2020; Gomez-Arizaga, Conejeros-Solar, & Martin, 2016; Kokaridas, Gari, Patsiaouras, Polyzopoulou, 2014). Baudson and Preckel (2016) argue that teachers' perceptions of giftedness impact their behaviors towards students who are gifted. In addition, principals' perceptions of gifted education will facilitate and support the inclusion of gifted students in the general classroom by providing the necessary programs for them (De Villiers & Oswald, 2013; Boyer, Farmer, Shaunessy & Terry, 2010). Yet, no studies have examined principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon; hence, the significance of this case study.

### **1.3 Rationale of the Study**

The term perception is described as belief or opinion towards something (Kokaridas et al., 2014). Teachers are perceived as an integral part in establishing programs for students (Łubianka & Sekowski, 2015). Braak and Vanderlinde (2011) argue that public laws and educational programs are highly based on teachers' perceptions of any new concept. Moreover, gifted students are often neglected in the classroom because their teachers perceive them to be successful, even without any efforts on their behalf (Antoun et al., 2020; Karantzas, 2019; McGinnis, 2019; Winebrenner, 2000). Hence, teachers often fail to meet the needs of gifted students as they think that gifted students do not encounter challenges and problems as they learn (Moon, 2009). However, students who are gifted require support from their teachers as much as their peers do (Antoun et al., 2020; Gomez-Arizaga et al., 2016; Kokaridas et al., 2014). Consequently, studying the perceptions of the teachers is crucial with regards to educational innovations (Antoun et al., 2020; Braak & Vanderlinde, 2011).

Furthermore, teachers are the primary aspect of gifted education (Kaya, 2015). Kuusisto, Laine, and Tirri (2016) as well as Croft, Godor, and Szymanski (2018) describe teachers' perceptions of giftedness as a key area in the research of giftedness and programs for gifted students. Therefore, exploring teachers' perceptions of giftedness is crucial in gifted education as they guide educators to better understand the types of programs and support that gifted students need (Kaya, 2015). Moreover, teachers' perceptions of giftedness influence their behaviors towards gifted students (Baudson & Preckel, 2016; Kaya, 2015; Kuusisto et al., 2016) and shape their practices or the support they provide to gifted students (Antoun et al., 2020; Chan & Yuen, 2015). On the other

hand, when teachers have negative perceptions of programs for gifted students, the administration of these programs will suffer (Croft, Godor & Szymanski, 2018). When these negative perceptions are communicated to the students – whether nonverbally or verbally – their engagement and motivation are negatively affected (Croft et al., 2018). All these arguments highlight the importance of studying teachers' perceptions of giftedness and gifted programs, even though they have not been explored at the Armenian schools in Lebanon.

Principals also play a significant role in gifted education. In fact, one of the main responsibilities of school principals is decision-making (Shaked & Schechter, 2019; Summak & Kalman, 2019). They are responsible for innovations in their schools' educational programs. They also support their staff and facilitate the implantation of these programs, such as gifted education (Boyer et al., 2013). School principals are also responsible for students' success by providing them better learning opportunities and conditions (Hasani, Terziu & Osmani, 2016). Therefore, it is necessary that they provide gifted programs to gifted students. In fact, gifted students require instructional and curricular modifications that will challenge their gifts and meet their individual needs (Hertberg-Davis, 2009). All these arguments highlight the importance of understanding principals' perceptions of giftedness and gifted programs, even though they have not been explored at the Armenian schools in Lebanon.

In each culture, educators perceive gifted students differently (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Antoun et al., 2020; Sternberg, 1995, 1997, 2007; Vasilevska, 2005). To develop a definition of giftedness, studies should be conducted on what educators of that particular culture consider as characteristics of giftedness (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018;



Antoun et al., 2020; Sarouphim, 2015). There are many Armenian schools in Lebanon; yet, no studies have been conducted on them on this topic. To have a complete understanding and theoretical foundation of giftedness in Lebanon, this study extended the one conducted by Al Zoubi (2018) to the principals and teachers of the Armenian schools in Lebanon. Consequently, this study sheds light on the understanding of giftedness and on establishing programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

Driven by the purpose and the rationale of this study, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

- 1- What are principals' perceptions of giftedness at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?
- 2- What are principals' attitudes towards establishing programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?
- 3- What are teachers' perceptions of giftedness at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?
- 4- What are teachers' attitudes towards establishing programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?

## **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

This case study has both theoretical and practical significance. For the theoretical significance, this case study will provide a theoretical framework that allows educators to understand principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. Programs for the gifted are prevalent in many countries around the world, including in most Arab countries, such as Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (AlGhawi, 2017; Aljughaiman & Grigorenko, 2013; Abu Elwan et al., 2017; Mentzer et al., 2018). Schools in Lebanon lack programs for gifted students (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Antoun et al., 2020; Sarouphim, 2015). Hence, this study will fill an essential gap in the literature. Moreover, even though the findings of a case study cannot be generalized, they can serve as hypotheses for future research that will be conducted in similar settings.

As for the practical significance of this study, the results will guide the future implementation and practice of programs for gifted students in Lebanon, particularly at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. Any practice should be based on solid theoretical foundations. Establishing and providing programs for gifted students are essential as they allow gifted students to develop to their fullest potential (Renzulli, 2012). One of the greatest characteristics of gifted students is that they produce knowledge (Renzulli, 2012). Hence, their contribution to the advancement of societies is essential (Anuruthwong, 2017).

## 1.6 Operational Definitions

- *Perceptions* = belief or opinion towards something (Kokaridas et al., 2014).
- *Giftedness, Gifted* = students who have exceptional abilities in academic and/or non-academic domains (NAGC, 2007).
- *Gifted Programs* = programs designed for gifted students (NAGC, 2007).
- *Student* = a person who is enrolled at a school.
- *Teacher* = a person who teaches the students at a school.
- *Principal* = a person with the executive and leading role at a school

# **Chapter Two**

## **Literature Review**

This chapter provides a literature review of the case study related to the principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. It incorporates the following components: (A) Giftedness, (B) Programs for gifted students, (C) Principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students, and (D) Gifted education in Lebanon.

### **2.1 Giftedness**

There exist various and numerous definitions of giftedness around the World (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Alhusaini & Maker, 2018; Antoun et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2019; Kuusisto et al., 2016; NAGC, 2007; Renzulli, 2011; Sternberg, 2007). Universally, excellent performance in creative, artistic, leadership, or academic domains is recognized as characteristics of giftedness (Renzulli, 2012). Binet and Terman defined giftedness in terms of intelligence and high IQ (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Beauvais, 2016). However, Marland (1971) defined the concept in terms of high achievement in various domains, such as academic, creativity, art, and so on. It is common to have various conceptions of giftedness in a multicultural society (Vasilevska, 2005). The understanding of giftedness differs in each culture (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Antoun et al., 2020; Sternberg, 1995, 1997, 2002). These differences in cultural beliefs lead to differences in the conceptions of giftedness; hence, variations exist in the definition of

giftedness (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018). For this reason, this section reviews the different perceptions of the conception of giftedness.

A major issue in the definition of giftedness is whether giftedness is limited to the intellectual and cognitive domains of development or it also incorporates other domains such as art, creativity, sports, music, social skills, and so on (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Renzulli, 2012). In 1905, Alfred-Binet developed the first Intelligence Quotient [IQ] test to predict school success; many researchers and educators considered IQ test results as the determining factors of giftedness (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018). Lewis Terman is acknowledged to be the ‘father of gifted education’ (Warne, 2019). Terman described gifted students as being highly intelligent; they are identified as gifted because they scored high on IQ tests (140 and above), such as the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales (Beauvais, 2016; Renzulli, 2011). On the other hand, Renzulli (2011) argued that giftedness extends beyond a score on a IQ test. In fact, an ideal measurement tool of intelligence does not exist (Miedijensky, 2018; Renzulli, 1998). Terman’s theory and the overemphasis on the Intelligence Quotient test are controversial (Warne, 2019). IQ tests have been criticized because they target only the verbal-linguistic and logico-mathematical domains of intelligence while ignoring all the other domains, such as art, creativity, motivation, music, and sports (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Christodoulou et al., 2011).

In recent years, this traditional definition of giftedness was challenged and re-conceptualized; the view shifted to conceiving giftedness as ‘multiple talent’ (Christodoulou et al., 2011; Renzulli, 2011). Marland (1971) defined giftedness as high performance in one or more of the following domains: general or specific academic

ability, creativity, leadership skills, artistic ability, and psychomotor ability. Similarly, supporting the ‘multiple talent’ perspective, Howard Gardner developed his theory of “Multiple Intelligences” between the 1970s and 1980s (Gardner, 1993; Christodoulou et al., 2011). He stipulated that a person has eight or more types of intelligences, they are: linguistic intelligence (i.e., the ability to express oneself, read, comprehend, write, and communicate by using language), logical-mathematical intelligence (i.e., the ability to reason, analyze, think logically, and understand mathematical and scientific concepts), spatial intelligence (i.e., the ability to understand and interpret two-dimensional as well as three-dimensional objects and visual images), musical intelligence (i.e., the ability to create rhythm, play a musical instrument, and express oneself by using music), bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (i.e., the ability to excel in sports and to express oneself by using one’s body), naturalistic intelligence (i.e., the ability to understand ecology and nature), interpersonal intelligence (i.e., the ability to understand others and the dynamics of a social situation), and intrapersonal intelligence (i.e., the ability to understand one’s self) (Gardner 1993; Christodoulou et al., 2011).

In addition to these theories, in 1977, Renzulli proposed the ‘Three-Ring Conception’ of giftedness. He acknowledged that there are three important dimensions to determine giftedness: above-average ability (i.e., general and specific abilities), task commitment (i.e., motivation, confidence, and endurance), and creativity (i.e., originality, flexibility, openness, and fluency) (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Landis & Reschly, 2013; Miedijensky, 2018; Renzulli, 2005, 2011, 2012). When these three clusters are combined and interact together in a student, he or she is identified as gifted (Renzulli, 2005, 2011, 2012). Renzulli (2012) reexamined gifted education and stipulated that, in

comparison to their peers, gifted learners perform highly in academic, artistic, leadership, or creative domains. Similarly, Sternberg (1995, 1997, 2019) developed his ‘Triarchic Theory of Intelligence’ in which he argued that intelligence is more than Intelligence Quotient test results. This theory describes intelligence as composed of three aspects: creative giftedness (i.e., insights, creativity, and adapting to novelty), analytical giftedness (i.e., reasoning, evaluating, and understanding), and practical giftedness (i.e., dealing with daily tasks) (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Sternberg 1995, 1997).

Sternberg (1995) also developed the ‘Pentagonal Implicit Theory’ of giftedness through which he described a gifted person as someone who meets the following five criteria: excellence criterion (i.e., the person is superior in some aspects when compared to his or her peers), rarity criterion (i.e., the person excels at an attribute that is relatively rare when compared to his or her peers), productivity criterion (i.e., the attributes possessed by the person make him or her productive), demonstrability criterion (i.e., the superior abilities that make the person gifted must be demonstrated through valid tests), and value criterion (i.e., the attributes that the person excels at must be valued by the person’s society). Finally, in his “Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT), Gagné (1999) differentiated between giftedness and talent. He defined ‘giftedness’ as the possession of natural, or untrained, abilities; whereas ‘talent’ as the mastery of skills (Gagné, 1999). Gagné (1999) conceived giftedness in terms of five domains: creative, intellectual, motor/perceptual, socioaffective, and ‘others’; he also emphasized that these are the natural, or innate, abilities of a student. Nurturing these abilities throughout the development process transforms them into productive talents. The reconceptualization of giftedness is more favorable as it takes into consideration the

various talents and gifts of all students. Many students are gifted in domains that are different from the cognitive domains; their gifts should be valued as much as those with high IQ scores.

Kaufman and Sternberg (2007) argue that giftedness is a label that has no absolute criteria; it depends on opinions. The understanding of giftedness can change with time and setting (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2007). Kaufman and Sternberg (2007) described giftedness with regards to four waves: Domain-General Models, Domain-Specific Models, Systems Models, and Environmental Models. In the first wave – Domain-General Models – giftedness is perceived as an exceptional innate ability. It was also believed to be hereditary. Those who possessed such abilities were referred to as ‘gifted’, ‘genius’, and ‘talented.’ Moreover, the identification of gifted students was through intelligence tests as this wave considers outstanding cognitive abilities as characteristics of giftedness.

In the second wave – Domain-Specific Models – giftedness is perceived as exceptional abilities in specific domains, not only general intelligence. That is, a person may be gifted in various ways. Louis Thurstone (1938) described seven mental abilities: verbal fluency, number, verbal comprehension, perceptual speed, spatial visualization, inductive reasoning, and memory. In addition, Horn and Cattell (1966) suggested that general intelligence is categorized into two: crystallized intelligence (based on cultural context and prior experiences) and fluid intelligence (based on the central nervous system). The most recent one is Carroll’s three-stratum theory (1993) that incorporates the previous two. Stratum I refers to specialized skills that are based on Louis Thurstone’s seven mental abilities, Stratum II refers to specialized abilities that are based



on Horn and Cattell's fluid and crystallized intelligences, and Stratum III refers to general intelligence. This idea was elaborated on Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences. His theory perceived giftedness in terms of eight abilities – linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, naturalistic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and intrapersonal intelligence – as elaborated previously in this section.

In the third wave – Systems Models – the psychological aspects of giftedness are highlighted. Giftedness is perceived as a system in which the psychological processes function together. Joseph Renzulli's (1978, 2005, 2011, 2012) 'Three-Ring Definition' theory perceives giftedness as the functioning of three aspects: well-above-average ability (i.e., general ability in all or specific domains; being in the top 15-20 percentile), creativity, and task commitment. Renzulli (2012) also divided giftedness into two categories: schoolhouse giftedness (tests, lessons, and school related) and creative-productive giftedness (artists, inventors, and producers of knowledge). Similarly, Sternberg's WICS model of giftedness categorized giftedness into three: creativity (i.e., producing new/original idea), academic intelligence (i.e., analytical abilities), and practical intelligence (i.e. execution).

In the fourth wave – Developmental Models – external factors of giftedness are highlighted. This is because of the changing nature of the gifts. Monks (1992) extended on Renzulli's 'Three-Ring' model of giftedness by adding environmental aspects to it (i.e., peers, school, and family). Alongside to Monk's theory, Gagné (2005) presented the Differentiated Model of Gifted and Talented theory of giftedness in which he proposed the factors that turn 'gifts' into 'talents'. He highlighted three factors: environmental

factors (e.g., parents, home, school, activities), non-intellective variables (e.g., temperament and motivation), and learning/practicing (i.e., turning the gifts into talents through learning, practicing, and training).

## **2.2 Programs for Gifted Students**

This section highlights the necessity for gifted programs and describes the existing various programs for gifted students. One purpose of offering gifted programs is to provide gifted students with opportunities to fulfill their potential and to foster their skills (Renzulli, 2012). Gifted students require programs that maximize their abilities; otherwise, they are at risk of being bored or having problems at school (Grob, Haggmann-von, & Meyer, 2008). Another purpose is to enhance society's future as gifted individuals have proved themselves to be beneficial for their country's welfare; gifted students are producers of knowledge (Renzulli, 2012). The U.S. News and World Report (1983) reported that 18% of high school dropouts were gifted students who possessed the necessary capabilities to graduate from high school and to pursue higher levels of education (Park & Renzulli, 2000). One of the reasons that lead to the dropout of gifted students is the failure to meet their needs and the failure to address their learning styles (Landis & Reschly, 2013; Park & Renzulli, 2000). Unfortunately, gifted students are often neglected in the classroom because their teachers perceive them to be successful, even without any efforts or assistance on their behalf (Karantzas, 2019; McGinnis, 2019; Winebrenner, 2000). Contrary to this myth, students who are gifted require support from

their teachers as much as their peers do (Gomez-Arizaga, Conejeros-Solar, & Martin, 2016; Kokaridas et al., 2014). Hence, programs for gifted students are essential.

The National Association for Gifted Children proposed three types of programs for gifted students: differentiated instruction, acceleration, and/or enrichment programs (NAGC, 2007). Differentiated instruction refers to differentiating the academic program to fulfill the needs of gifted students (NAGC, 2007). Acceleration is defined as the progress and completion of an academic program at a faster pace and/or at a younger age (Assouline et al., 2010; Grob et al., 2008; Hoogeveen, Van Hell, & Verhoeven, 2005; Little et al., 2013). Acceleration can happen in several forms: early school entrance, grade skipping, subject acceleration, and early college entrance (Croft et al., 2018; Grob et al., 2008; Hoogeveen et al., 2005; Kokaridas et al., 2014; Little et al., 2013). Little, Siegle, and Wilson (2013) argued that acceleration has positive effects on student outcomes, students' attitudes towards schools, and pursuance of further education by gifted students. As for enrichment programs, they are also crucial for meeting the needs and fostering the skills of gifted children (Aljughaiman & Ayoub, 2012, 2017; Grigorenko, 2017). Miedijensky (2018) suggested that the participation in enrichment programs is beneficial to the socioemotional and academic development of gifted learners. Enrichment programs can take several forms, such as after-school programs, boarding schools, summer enrichment programs, and pull-out and resource classroom programs (Aljughaiman & Ayoub, 2012).

Examples of effective enrichment programs for the gifted are Renzulli's 'Enrichment Triad Model' [ETM] and the 'Schoolwide Enrichment Model' [SEM] (Landis & Reschly, 2013; Reis & Renzulli, 2003; Renzulli, 2012). The ETM was

developed for students with superior abilities; whereas SEM aims to develop the skills of all learners and to provide enrichment programs for all learners by using the ETM as a basis (Reis & Renzulli, 2003; Renzulli, 2012). The ETM exposes gifted students three types of activities: Type I refers to general exploratory activities in one's area of giftedness (e.g., guest speakers and field knowledge beyond the general curriculum), Type II refers to group training activities (e.g., research, thinking, methodology, and communication), and Type III refers to individual and small group investigations of real problems; it is the most advanced type (Reis & Renzulli, 2003). The SEM includes components, such as Total Talent Portfolio (i.e., a method of documentation of students' work and information), Curriculum-Method Techniques (i.e., techniques for assessing students' mastery of subjects or tasks; acceleration as well as enrichment programs for the fast learning students, adjustment of the level and pace according to each student's level), and enrichment active learning strategies (i.e., enrichment techniques that consider each student's uniqueness and interest) (Reis & Renzulli, 2003; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2007). In SEM, students are identified as gifted if they belong to the 15-20% of the above-average potentials, which are identified by teacher nomination, assessment of task commitment and creativity, achievement test, and high IQ score (Reis & Renzulli, 2003). Both of these enrichment programs – 'Enrichment Triad Model' and 'Schoolwide Enrichment Model' – have been effectively implemented in various school districts (Reis & Renzulli, 2003).

## **2.3 Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of Giftedness and Programs for the Gifted Students**

This section presents literature on principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students. In their book, Al Hroub and El Khoury (2018) presented the different perceptions of giftedness in different parts of the world. For example, in the Middle East, students are identified as gifted based on their excellence in the following abilities: intelligence, creativity, and task commitment. The characteristic of giftedness that is highly valued in the Middle East is the excellence in one or more academic domains. Iran and Lebanon do not have an official definition of giftedness (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018). On the other hand, in Europe, excellence in academic and other domains or criteria – such as arts, sports, creativity, uniqueness, and problem-solving – characterizes giftedness (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018). Miedijensky's (2018) study resulted in four indicators of giftedness in students: high-cognitive skills, unique personality, extraordinary abilities, and extraordinary areas of varied interest. Furthermore, Kuusisto, Laine, and Tirri's (2016) study results displayed giftedness as domain-specific, more than domain-general. This perception of giftedness was also agreed upon in many theories of giftedness (Christodoulou et al., 2011; Coleman & Cross, 2014; Gagné, 1999, 2005; Gardner, 1993; Kuusisto et al., 2016; Van Tassel-Baska, 2005).

The effectiveness of gifted programs is influenced by the principals' perceptions and knowledge of gifted programs (De Villiers & Oswald, 2013; Gaines, 2018). Indeed, principals have a major impact on implementing innovations and changes in gifted education (Gaines, 2018) and are responsible for students' success, alongside to meeting

their individual needs (Hasani, Terziu & Osmani, 2016; Hertberg-Davis, 2009).

Providing gifted students with an appropriate education increases their chances of pursuing higher degrees (Gaines, 2018). In fact, Renzulli argued that many gifted students drop out or underachieve at school because quality education that meets their needs is not provided to them (Gaines, 2018).

Similarly, decision-making, innovations in education (e.g., gifted education), and their successes are rooted on teachers' perceptions (Braak & Vanderlinde, 2011; De Villiers & Oswald, 2013; Kaya, 2015; Łubianka & Sekowski, 2015; Shaked & Schechter, 2019; Summak & Kalman, 2019). Their perceptions also influence their behavior towards gifted students and their support of programs for gifted students (Antoun et al., 2020; Baudson & Preckel, 2016; Chan & Yuen, 2015; Croft et al., 2018; Kaya, 2015; Kuusisto et al., 2016). In fact, some teachers assume that gifted students succeed without their support. This results in the neglect of gifted students, which causes them to face challenges and obstacles (Antoun et al., 2020; Karantzas, 2019; McGinnis, 2019; Moon, 2009; Winebrenner, 2000). Hence, examining teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students is crucial (Croft et al., 2018; Kaya, 2015; Kuusisto et al., 2016).

Perceptions of gifted programs were predicted through the attitude scale towards gifted education questionnaire developed by Gagné and Nadeau's (1985). Several studies have adopted it (Al Zoubi, 2018; Antoun et al., 2020; Begin & Gagné, 1994; Kokaridas et al., 2014; McCoach & Siegle, 2007). In the literature review of their study, McCoach and Siegle (2007) argued that teachers' perceptions of gifted programs were found to be mixed. In fact, a study conducted by Gagné (1983) determined that teachers had positive

perceptions, whereas a study conducted by Cramond and Martin (1987) found that teachers had negative perceptions, and yet again, another study by Copenhaver and McIntyre (1992) determined that teachers had heterogeneous perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students (McCoach & Siegle, 2007). Along the same line, Little, Siegle, and Wilson (2013) found that educators had positive perceptions of acceleration and acknowledged its benefit for gifted students. However, these perceptions did not always translate in their behaviors. On the other hand, the results of McCoach and Siegle's (2007) study revealed that teachers have positive perceptions of gifted education. They had supportive attitudes towards the 'support' scale, mixed opinions regarding the 'acceleration' subscale (with majority being indecisive about it), uncertain regarding the 'elitism' subscale, and heterogeneous perceptions of 'Self-Perception' subscale. The last subscale was created by McCoach and Siegle (2007). Interestingly, 'Self-Perception' was unrelated to the other three subscales; whether or not teachers perceived themselves as gifted did not affect their support of gifted programs.

In the literature review of a second study that used the instrument by Gagné and Nadeau (1985), Kokaridas, Gari, Patsiaouras, and Polyzopoulou (2014) revealed that teachers have positive attitudes towards the 'support' subscale and negative attitudes towards the 'acceleration' subscale (Allodi & Rydelius, 2008). Teachers are concerned that acceleration causes social difficulties in gifted students (Lassig, 2003). In fact, teachers support co-education of all students while they modify the curriculum according to students' abilities (Stambaugh & Van Tessel, 2005). On the other hand, the results of their article (Kokaridas et al., 2014) the teachers have negative attitudes towards the 'acceleration' scale and support the notion that programs for gifted students are a

drawback for creating elitism (Kokaridas et al., 2014). In a third study (Antoun et al., 2020) that used the instrument by Gagné and Nadeau (1985), the teachers had positive attitudes towards the ‘support’ subscale, but disagreed to the idea of the acceleration of gifted students.

Acceleration and enrichment are the root of many gifted programs (Little et al., 2013). Yet, acceleration is a controversial strategy (Little et al., 2013; NAGC, 2009). Many studies are in favor of acceleration by arguing that it enhances gifted students’ academic achievement (Assouline, Colangelo, & Gross, 2004; Assouline et al., 2010; Little et al., 2013; Lohman, Marron, & Wells, 2009), does not cause a gap in students’ knowledge, and encourages them to pursue higher education (Little et al., 2013). Studies also revealed that gifted students exhibited no social-emotional problems because of the acceleration (Benhow & Richardson, 1990; Gagné & Gagneir, 2004; Little et al., 2013). The peer relations were believed to be related to personality rather than acceleration (Little et al., 2013). Nevertheless, others studies are unsupportive of acceleration (Baker, Massey, & McCluskey, 1997; McCoach & Rambo, 2012).

Studies advocate that gifted programs should be developed and implemented by educators with expertise in the field; this has been a constant issue and barrier to gifted education (Anuruthwong, 2017; Croft, 2003; Hansen and Feldhusen, 1994; Miedijensky, 2018; Mills, 2003; Renzulli, 1985; Quigley and Vialle, 2002). Anuruthwong (2017) the other barriers to gifted education: policies and support by the Ministry of Education, teacher training, guidelines to evaluate gifted programs, and lack of budgeting, facilities, handbooks, teaching materials.



Principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students have not been explored thoroughly in Lebanon. There are three studies that have been conducted on this topic in Lebanon; they will be discussed in the next section. However, no studies were conducted at the Armenian schools in Lebanon regarding principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students. Consequently, understanding principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students is essential at the Armenian schools in Lebanon as it will add to the literature and shed light on the future implementation of programs for gifted students.

## **2.4 Giftedness and Gifted Education in Lebanon**

Gifted education is an emerging field in Lebanon (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Antoun et al., 2020; Sarouphim 2015). The Ministry of Education and Higher Education targets only one end of the special education spectrum – people with disabilities – in its laws and policies (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Antoun et al., 2020; Sarouphim, 2007, 2015). Al Hroub and El Khoury (2018) conducted a study in six private schools in Beirut to examine teachers' perceptions of giftedness in Lebanon. They distributed surveys and conducted focus group discussions to collect data about teachers' perceptions of giftedness. Based on their results, Al Hroub and El Khoury (2018) defined giftedness in Lebanon as being a construct with three elements: high intellectual ability (i.e., excellence in logical thinking), high social intelligence (i.e., excellence in leadership skills), and high academic performance (i.e., excellence in school subjects). Also, in the

Lebanese culture, students with the highest achievement in class were likely to be identified as gifted (Al Hroub and El Khoury, 2018). In addition, Lebanese teachers perceived persistence and motivation as other indicators of giftedness (Al Hroub and El Khoury, 2018). Many teachers referred to giftedness as ‘God-given intelligence’ in the sense that giftedness was an innate natural ability. However, in the same study, other teachers stated that nurturing these gifts was important (Al Hroub and El Khoury, 2018).

In an article, Antoun, Kronborg, and Plunkett (2020) investigated Lebanese Primary School Teachers’ perceptions of highly able and gifted students. The target was to explore the cultural understanding of giftedness in Lebanon and to compare it to that of the Western culture. The participants were 281 teachers from three governorates in Lebanon. All of them participated in a survey and 12 of them also participated in an interview. The findings of the interview indicated that the teachers of the primary schools in Lebanon emphasized high intellectual abilities and academic performance as characteristics of giftedness (Antoun et al., 2020). Learning fast and possessing abilities that were not shared by peers of similar age were other noted characteristics of giftedness (Antoun et al., 2020). Half of the teachers noted curiosity and a third noted analytical abilities as indicators of giftedness (Antoun et al., 2020). Social and emotional abilities were overlooked by the teachers (Antoun et al., 2020). Non-academic abilities, such as music, sport, arts, or design, were considered as talents, not gifts, by the teacher interviewees (Antoun et al., 2020).

The findings of this study indicated that the teachers of the primary schools in Lebanon had a positive perception of gifted students and for providing special programs to them; however, they also viewed these programs as a privilege (Antoun et al., 2020).

The teachers also perceived gifted students as valuable resources and the future leaders of the society; in fact, they considered gifted students as a threat to their authority in the classroom (Antoun et al., 2020). The teachers were uncertain about high ability grouping in terms of separating students who are gifted from their peers, as this would make others feel labeled or devalued (Antoun et al., 2020). Even though the teachers agreed that gifted student may waste their time in the general classroom, they did not support the idea of acceleration because students may miss out on important knowledge when they skip grades (Antoun et al., 2020). The findings of the survey also indicated that the teachers of the primary schools in Lebanon valued intellectual characteristics of giftedness more than non-cognitive ones (Antoun et al., 2020).

In a Master's thesis, Al Zoubi (2018) explored Lebanese principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and gifted programs. The participants were principals and elementary teachers in private schools in Lebanon. The findings of her interview indicated that principals in Lebanon described gifted students in terms of (1) academic features and (2) personality and creativity features. Two principals thought that giftedness was limited to academic features, whereas six principals extended the concept to include the academic domain, physical skills, personality traits, creativity, social skills, and art. As for gifted programs, Al Zoubi found that some schools differentiated instructions for gifted learners, whereas some introduced newly special programs (e.g., Universal Design for Learning and Introduction of the Gifted and Talented), and others provided gifted learners leadership roles and academic awards.

In addition, the findings of Al Zoubi's study indicated that teachers in Lebanon perceived gifted students as those who are creative and/or excel in specific, but not

necessarily in all, domains. In regards to multiple intelligences, the teachers highly valued the logico-mathematical, linguistic, naturalistic, and spatial intelligences as indicators of giftedness (Al Zoubi, 2018). However, the other types of intelligences – musical, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and kinesthetic – were not perceived as indicators of giftedness (Al Zoubi, 2018).

All three studies conducted in Lebanon (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Al Zoubi, 2018; Antoun et al., 2020) suggest that the principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and gifted programs should be further studied in larger samples and on a larger scale. The conception of giftedness is still unclear and confusing to many educators, especially in Lebanon (Antoun et al., 2020). In order to have a solid definition of giftedness, principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness should be studied nationwide. Once a solid theoretical foundation of the concept of giftedness is established, programs for gifted students can be developed accordingly. Sarouphim (2007, 2009, 2010, 2015) claimed that programs for gifted students do not exist in the country's educational system. It is true that some schools offer enrichment programs to high achievers; however, these programs are not based on solid theoretical foundations (Sarouphim 2007, 2009, 2015). It is each educator's responsibility to cater for the special needs of gifted students in their classrooms; however, relying on misconceptions on giftedness may affect negatively (Antoun et al., 2020). As for the Armenian schools in Lebanon, no studies have been conducted to examine teachers' perceptions of giftedness and their views on programs for gifted students.

In sum, the absence of gifted education is evident at schools in Lebanon. Some educators have positive perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students,

whereas others do not see it a necessity. However, gifted programs are important for the education and development of gifted students. Hence, the significance of this study in shedding the light on the principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Methodology**

This chapter presents the methodology of the case study that was conducted to assess principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. This chapter includes the research design, participants, procedure, instruments, validity and reliability issues, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations.

### **3.1 Research Design**

This is a case study on principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. To avoid sampling problems, this study incorporated all the Armenian schools in Lebanon. A case study is rooted in natural and real contexts; hence, it is practicable and high on reality (Cohen, Manion & Morrison., 2018). A case study permits application and generalization on situations that are similar (Cohen et al., 2018).

This case study adopted a mixed-method approach through the use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, that is, an interview and a survey. A survey is an instrument that involves gathering data from a sample that is representative of the wider target population (Carlos, Davenport, Maturen, Shankar, & Woolen, 2018). Sills and Song (2002) argued that an ideal survey can control the percentage of error as it provides every member of the population with equal chances of being part of the

representative sample. Surveys are administered in various forms, such as paper surveys, post/mail surveys, internet-based surveys, or telephone surveys (Sills & Song, 2002). In this case study, a questionnaire-based online survey was used to gather quantitative data about the teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for the gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. In addition, demographic data on the teachers were also collected in the survey.

However, surveys alone are insufficient to capture accurately the perceptions. In fact, Lee (2006) and McLafferty (2004) argued that qualitative data gathered through interviews provide the researcher with a better understanding of perceptions. Hence, this study also conducted online interviews to gather qualitative data on principals' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. Interviews are described as purposeful interaction for the aim of gathering data (McLafferty, 2004). In sum, in this case study an interview was used to gather qualitative data, whereas a survey was used to gather quantitative data.

### **3.2Participants**

Participants were recruited from a population of 15 Armenian schools in Lebanon. There was a total of 17 Armenian schools in Lebanon when the study was initiated and all schools were invited to participate. However, one school declined to take part in the study from the start and one school closed down during the data collection phase. The sample was chosen based on voluntary participation of the remaining 15 schools. Nine schools, located in various areas in Lebanon, volunteered to participate. However, in two

of the schools, only the teachers participated while the principals declined to be interviewed. Therefore, the sample consisted of 7 principals and 80 teachers (K-12 male and female teachers).

### **3.3 Instruments**

As this case study is also an extension of the thesis “Teachers’ and Principals’ Perceptions of Giftedness and Gifted Programs” (Al Zoubi, 2018), the same instruments were used in both studies. These instruments consisted of a survey administered to the teachers (See Appendix A) and an interview conducted with the school principals (See Appendix B). Both instruments were comprehensive and targeted all aspects of this case study. The interview questions provided the participants with the opportunity to express their perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students. As for the survey, both the traditional (i.e., defining giftedness based on IQ and intelligence) as well as the modern approaches (i.e., defining giftedness based on multiple intelligences, creativity, and motivation) to gifted education were investigated. Both instruments were derived from the literature.

The first instrument – the interview – consisted of seven questions (See Appendix B). The questions aimed to investigate the principals’ perceptions of giftedness and their view of the characteristics of gifted students. The questions also probed into the principals’ attitudes towards programs for gifted students and their implementation. The interview was conducted online. Its duration was approximately 10 minutes.



The second instrument – the survey – was divided into three parts. The first part was based on ‘the four waves’ conception of giftedness as described by Kaufman and Sternberg (2007): domain-general models, domain-specific models, systems models, and developmental models. “Domain-general models” refers to the general intelligence of the student in terms of high cognitive abilities (e.g., “High IQ”). “Domain-specific models” refers to excellence in a specific domain; students can be gifted in varied domains (e.g., “high linguistic ability”). Finally, “Systems models” refers to the psychological factors of giftedness (e.g., “High creativity”). The survey originally has a fourth wave (i.e., developmental models) in the first section; however, this study did not target this wave. Table 1 represents the attributes of the ‘Grand Wave’.

**TABLE 1. THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE GRAND WAVE**

<b>Wave</b>	<b>Attribute</b>
<b>Domain-General Models</b>	High IQ
	High ability in performing tasks
	Top 3-5 percentile score in a standardized test
<b>Domain-Specific Models</b>	High linguistic ability
	High logical-mathematical ability
	High spatial ability
	High musical ability
	High bodily-kinesthetic ability
	High interpersonal ability
	High intrapersonal ability
	High naturalist ability
<b>Systems Models</b>	Above average ability in different domains
	Above average ability in a specific domain
	High creativity

The second part of the survey was taken from a study by McCoach and Siegle (2007), in which they examined teachers' perceptions of giftedness and gifted programs with regards to four dimensions: support, elitism, acceleration, and self-perception (McCoach & Siegle, 2007). This survey is a modified version of the 'Attitudes toward Giftedness Survey' developed by Gagné and Nadeau. The first subscale – support – examines the participants' belief in gifted students' needs and their support for gifted programs (e.g. "The gifted need special attention to fully develop their talents"). It has five items. A high score on this subscale indicates positive perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students. The second subscale – elitism – examines participants' objections regarding the favoritism of gifted students and gifted programs by their teachers (e.g. "Special educational services for the gifted children are a mark of privilege"). It includes six items. A high score on this subscale indicates negative perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students. The third subscale – acceleration – examines participants' perceptions of academic acceleration of gifted students (e.g., "Children who skip a grade are usually pressured to do so by their parents"). It includes five items. A high score on this subscale indicates negative perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students. Finally, the fourth subscale – Self-perceptions – examines whether the participants perceive themselves as gifted (e.g. "Most of my family and friends consider me gifted"). It has five items. Scoring high on this subscale indicates that the participants perceive themselves as gifted. The last subscale was developed by McCoach & Siegle 2007). Table 2 lists the items of each of the four subscales.

The third part of the survey consists of demographic information about the teachers: years of experience, educational level, age range, and gender.

**TABLE 2. THE SUBSCALES OF GIFTEDNESS AND GIFTED PROGRAMS**

<b>The subscales of giftedness and gifted programs</b>	
<b>Subscale 1. Support (from Gagné &amp; Nadeau, 1991, 5 questions)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our schools should offer special education services for the gifted.</li> <li>• The gifted need special attention to fully develop their talents.</li> <li>• Tax payers should not have to pay for special education for the minority of children who are gifted. (Reverse scored)</li> <li>• Since we invest supplementary funds for funds for children with difficulties, we should do the same for the gifted.</li> <li>• All special programs for the gifted should be abolished. (Reverse scored)</li> </ul>	
<b>Subscale 2. Elitism (from Gagné &amp; Nadeau, 1991, 6 questions)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special programs for gifted children have the drawback of creating elitism.</li> <li>• Special educational services for the gifted children are a mark of privilege.</li> <li>• When the gifted are put in special classes, the other children feel devalued.</li> <li>• By separating students into gifted and other groups, we increase the labeling of children as strong-weak, good-less good, etc.</li> <li>• The gifted are already favored in our schools.</li> <li>• Gifted children might become vain or egotistical if they are given special attention.</li> </ul>	
<b>Subscale 3. Acceleration (from Gagné &amp; Nadeau, 1991, 4 questions)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most gifted children who skip a grade have difficulties in their social adjustment to a group of older students.</li> <li>• Children who skip a grade are usually pressured to do so by their parents.</li> <li>• When skipping a grade, gifted students miss important ideas. (They have holes in their knowledge.)</li> <li>• A greater number of gifted children should be allowed to skip a grade. (Reverse scored)</li> </ul>	
<b>Subscale 4. Self-perceptions (researcher created, 5 questions)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I was or could have been in a gifted program in school.</li> <li>• Most of my family and friends consider me gifted.</li> <li>• I am gifted.</li> <li>• Most of my family and friends are gifted.</li> <li>• People consider me gifted.</li> </ul>	

For the first and second parts of the survey, the items were answered on a Likert-type Scale. In research, the Likert-Scale is a highly common scale of measurement to assess perceptions (Dodou & De Winter, 2010; Keown & Hakstian, 1973). The participants completed the questionnaire by indicating the degree of agreement to each question (Keown & Hakstian, 1973). In this questionnaire, the items were rated on a 5-point scale as follows: 1 (i.e., strongly disagree), 2 (i.e., somewhat disagree), 3 (i.e., neutral), 4 (i.e., somewhat agree), and 5 (i.e., strongly agree). As for the third part of the survey, the participants answered by choosing the category that best represents them best.

### **3.4 Procedure**

Before conducting this case study, I secured the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Lebanese American University (LAU) (see Appendix C). Next, I sent emails to the school principals of all the Armenian schools in Lebanon (see Appendix D). The emails provided the principals with information about this case study: the aim, design, instruments, procedure, data collection, and data analysis. Moreover, the email included an invitation to participate in the study, the instruments (see Appendix A and Appendix B), the consent form for the survey (see Appendix F), and the consent form for the interview (see Appendix G). Upon request, a customized letter to the school was also sent (see Appendix H). All the letters and documents sent to the school principals carried the seal of approval from IRB. The principals who did not reply to the email, were contacted through a phone call and provided with the above mentioned

information. Upon their approval to participate in the study, they were sent all the documents again.

In the consent forms, the participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they can withdraw from the study at any time they wished. They were also assured that participation is anonymous, and that data is confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research study.

Once I received the approval from the school principals to take part in this study, I sent the principals or their secretaries (depending on the agreement with each school principal) the links to the surveys through an email (see Appendix E), so that they can be forwarded to the teachers. Both the survey and the interview were administered in two languages: English and Armenian. The Armenian version was the translation of the English version. Each teacher had the opportunity to select the survey in the language of his or her choice, but all participating teachers ( $n = 80$ ) chose to take the survey in English. Data were entered and analyzed in SPSS.

As for the interviews, once I received the approval of the principals willing to participate, I sent them the interview questions in the form of a Word Document (see Appendix E). Each principal was given the choice between typing their responses to the interview questions or answering the questions through an online interview in the language of their choice (English or Armenian). Four interviews were conducted in English, whereas three interviews were conducted in Armenian. The interviews that were conducted or answered in Armenian were translated to English and transcribed. Five principals chose to answer the interview questions by typing their answers, one principal chose to conduct the interview through Zoom, and one principal chose to conduct the

interview through a phone call. Upon completion of all interviews, data were transcribed verbatim.

### **3.5 Validity and Reliability Issues**

Test scores are an integral part in research claims and hypotheses are supported and created based on test scores (Kane, 2013). Therefore, validity and reliability issues should be considered while conducting a study. Validity and reliability are what indicate the accuracy and adequacy of the instruments used (Haertel, 2018). The term “validity” indicates the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Haertel, 2018). As for the term “reliability”, it refers to the precision of judgement by the researcher; it indicates how dependable and consistent the instrument is (Haertel, 2018).

In Al Zoubi’s study (2018), both instruments – the interview and survey – were found to be reliable and valid. Moreover, McCoach’s and Siegle’s (2007) results confirmed the reliability and validity of the survey used in this study. The alpha values of the subscales “support”, “elitism”, “acceleration”, and “self-perceptions” were found to be .76, .80, .71, and .94 respectively.

### **3.6 Data Collection and Analysis**

Data was gathered through both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Regarding the interviews, data collection consisted of the recorded and written interviews. In depth data was collected about principals’ perceptions of giftedness and

programs for gifted students. The qualitative data was analyzed by using coding strategy. Coding allows the researcher to translate the responses and information into categories by dividing them into themes. Through coding, the researcher retrieves the data and identifies similar information. The codes that are frequent indicate a pattern. The patterns that are related to each other are grouped into themes. This information highlights principals' perceptions of giftedness and gifted programs.

As for the surveys, data was gathered and analyzed through descriptive statistics by using SPSS. The mean (i.e., one of the measures of central tendency) and the standard deviation (i.e., one of the measures of dispersion) of each item and/or category-subcategory were measured. Furthermore, frequencies and percentages of the demographic variables were calculated.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

As this case study involved human subjects, it was conducted by ensuring compliance with and respecting the ethical guidelines of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Lebanese American University (LAU). The IRB protects the rights of the participants and the researcher. Upon IRB approval, the process of data collection was initiated. At first, the principals of the schools were contacted. They were provided with a consent form explaining their rights and the purpose of the study. Next, the principals who agreed to participate in the study completed the interview and the teachers who agreed to participate in the study completed the survey.

Moreover, the confidentiality of the participants was respected. Regarding the interview, the Word Documents containing principals' answers were saved anonymously on the researcher's laptop. In addition, the Zoom and phone call interviews were conducted in a private room. The confidentiality of the schools was also respected; the names of schools were not mentioned.

Furthermore, the surveys were completed anonymously online through Outlook Forms. Through the consent forms that were sent to them, the participants were assured that they have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage. The completed surveys were accessible only to the researcher. All data gathered from the interviews and surveys are stored in a secure document on the researcher's laptop and will be discarded three years after the completion of this research study.

This chapter presented the methodology of the case study: research design, participants, procedure, instruments, validity and reliability issues, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. The next chapter presents the results of the data analysis.



# **Chapter Four**

## **Results**

This chapter presents the results of the case study that was conducted to examine principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. This study adopted a mixed-method approach through the use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods; that is, an interview designed for the principals and a survey designed for the teachers, respectively. This chapter includes the qualitative results and the quantitative results; consequently, it answers the research questions of this study, which were:

1. What are principals' perceptions of giftedness at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?
2. What are principals' attitudes towards establishing programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of giftedness at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?
4. What are teachers' attitudes towards establishing programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?

### **4.1 Qualitative Data Analysis – Interview Results**

The qualitative data analysis was the result of seven interview responses (n=7). This section answers the first and second research questions: “What are principals' perceptions of giftedness at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?” and “What are principals' attitudes

towards establishing programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?”

The results were analyzed by using coding strategy and divided into the following subcategories: 1) principals’ perceptions of giftedness and 2) principals’ attitudes towards establishing programs for gifted students. Five themes were extracted by analyzing the interview data: 1) principals’ conceptions of giftedness and characteristics of gifted students, 2) catering to the needs of outstanding students, 3) supporting programs for gifted students, 4) barriers for implementing programs for gifted students, and 5) ideal program for gifted students. Theme number one belongs to the first subcategory (i.e., principals’ perceptions of giftedness), whereas themes number 2, 3, 4, and 5 belong to the second subcategory (i.e., principals’ attitudes towards establishing programs for gifted students).

#### **4.1.1 Principals’ Perceptions of Giftedness**

This section presents the results of the first research question of this case study: “What are principals’ perceptions of giftedness at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?” The first theme that was evident in the principals’ interview responses was principals’ conceptions of giftedness and characteristics of gifted students. It was divided into two categories: 1) achievement and 2) personality. The first category (i.e., achievement) was classified into five subcategories: domain-specific abilities, outstanding abilities, natural vs environmental, practice and support, and uniqueness. The second category (i.e., personality) was divided into three subcategories: psychological factors, multiple intelligences, and social difficulties.

It was a recurring pattern that the principals described giftedness with regards to “achievement.” It was expressed in terms of five subcategories: domain-specific abilities, outstanding abilities, natural vs environmental, practice and support, and uniqueness. Principals described giftedness and characteristics of gifted students in general without focusing or specifically relating them to academic and/or non-academic domains. They spoke about the concept of giftedness in general terms. On the other hand, the three principals who elaborated on their answers by giving examples, included items from both academic and non-academic domains. This was evident in their statements “If he/she has an innate ability in mathematics, he/she excels in that subject. Similarly, if he/she has an innate ability in music, he/she excels in that field, and so on in other fields”, “for example, if he/she is gifted in mathematics, this domain will be easy for him/her, or in music, arts”, “Just like intelligence (multiple intelligences), when we talk about gifted students, then you have to ask gifted in what sense and in what domain”, and “Because, if you think about it, everybody is gifted in certain sense, you may be gifted in playing the violin, while I may be gifted in English or my linguistic abilities.”

All seven principals who participated in this interview perceived giftedness as domain-specific. This was notable in the following statements (one statement by each principal): “Giftedness is when a child possesses a certain skill [...]”, “If he/she has an innate ability in mathematics, he/she excels in that subject. Similarly, if he/she has an innate ability in music, he/she excels in that field”, “Just like intelligence (multiple intelligences), when we talk about gifted students, then you have to ask gifted in what sense and in what domain”, “A gifted student may have above average skills in a specific given domain”, “if he/she is gifted in mathematics, this domain will be easy for him/her, or in

music, arts”, “the characteristics of gifted students are their special and in most of the times rare approach or interest in a specific domain”, “They have better abilities [...] in a given field.”

In addition, all seven principals considered outstanding abilities as a characteristic of giftedness. This was revealed in the following statements: “highly developed”, “remarkably distinct”, “excel”, “special in a field”, “distinguished ability”, “much better than everybody else”, and “above-average ability.” These outstanding abilities were considered to be innate/natural by four out of seven principals. The statements “innate ability”, “a value given by God”, and “Gifted people are people who do things sort of naturally, without having to put effort in it” depicted this understanding of giftedness. Another principal argued that giftedness can be innate and/or acquired: “an ability that can be related to human formation or an ability that is innate. It is neither exclusively innate nor acquired. Both are possible or they can grow together.”

Moreover, six out of seven principals mentioned that giftedness needs practice and support – from self and others – in order to be fully developed. This subcategory was constantly mentioned by the principal interviewees: “The only thing needed so that it manifests itself is certain guidance, encouragement, practice and only little learning for extra development”, “ability that is developed through hard work, self-discipline, and guidance”, “the role of schools is to give basics of all of that and then focus on the gift of each child and help him/her develop”, “gifted student [...] can excel in a given domain with support of school and parents”, “should be valued, encouraged, and nurtured”, and “I like to encourage these students [...] to let them develop their skills and improve [...].” Four of the seven principals perceived giftedness as unique. This was apparent in the

following statements: “differs [...] by the manifestation of his/her talent”, “do a certain task effortlessly”, “being special”, “unique characters”, and “special and [...] rare approach or interest.”

Giftedness was also constantly described with regards to “personality”. This category was divided into three subcategories: psychological factors, multiple intelligences, and social difficulties. Three out of seven principals highlighted some psychological factors as indicators of giftedness in statements and personal traits such as “enthusiastic once their subject of interest is brought up”, “awareness of talent”, “fast problem solvers”, “proactive”, “initiative takers”, “creative”, and “quick perceivers.” Support of some of the multiple intelligences was evident as they were constantly pointed while the principals were elaborating on their answers by giving examples: academic, linguistic (English), social, artistic (arts and theater), bodily-kinesthetic (sports), musical, chess, logico-mathematical (math, reasoning, and logic), intrapersonal, and scientific (science, physics, and chemistry).

On the other hand, four of the seven principals stated that they had concerns about the social difficulties gifted students may face. These were expressed in the following statements “once their giftedness is revealed, they might face social problems, that are their friends might not include them in their plays and games, might make fun of them for being different”, “use their gifts to dominate their classmates”, “will eventually face all the hardships that come with being gifted, such as rejection from others, envy”, and “I am afraid that some gifted students may have introverted characters or have maybe less social skills than others once again because they may have other interests than their peers.”

In general, the principals mostly had positive perceptions of giftedness; they expressed negative characteristics only with regards to the social difficulties gifted students may face. Table 3 represents the principals' perceptions of giftedness, characteristics of gifted students, and statements extracted from their interview responses.

**TABLE 3. PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF GIFTEDNESS AND GIFTED STUDENTS**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Subcategories</b>	<b>Statements extracted from principals' interview responses</b>
<b>Achievement</b>	Domain-specific abilities	A gifted student may have above average skills in a specific given domain
		a certain skill
		If he/she has an innate ability in mathematics, he/she excels in that subject. Similarly, if he/she has an innate ability in music, he/she excels in that field, and so on in other fields
		If he/she is gifted in mathematics, this domain will be easy for him/her, or in music, arts
		You have to ask gifted in what sense and in what domain
		Everybody is gifted in certain sense, you may be gifted in playing the violin, while I may be gifted in English or my linguistic abilities
		excel in a given domain
		rare approach or interest in a specific domain
		in a given field
	Outstanding abilities	skill which is highly developed and remarkably distinct from his peers of similar ages
		he/she excels in that subject
		Gifted means that you can do a certain task effortlessly, much better than everybody else can
		gifted student who can excel in a given domain
		above average skills in a specific given domain
		the characteristics of gifted students are their special and in most of the times rare approach or interest in a specific domain
		a distinguishing ability
		have better abilities
	Natural vs environmental	innate and not acquired
		innate ability
		Natural

		a value given by God
		an ability that can be related to human formation or an ability that is innate. It is neither exclusively innate nor acquired. Both are possible or they can grow together.
	Practice and support	certain guidance, encouragement, practice
		only little learning for extra development
		is developed through hard work, self-discipline, and guidance
		the role of schools is to give basics of all of that and then focus on the gift of each child and help him/her develop
		guide gifted learners
		should be valued, encouraged, and nurtured
		encourage these students as well as their parents and their teachers to let them develop their skills and improve more
	Uniqueness	differs from the others by the manifestation of his/her talent
		being special
		makes them special in a specific field
		the characteristics of gifted students are their special and in most of the times rare approach or interest in a specific domain
		unique characters
<b>Personality</b>	Psychological factors	enthusiastic once their subject of interest is brought up
		a great deal of awareness of talent
		fast problem solvers in a given field
		proactive, initiative takers, and creative
		quick perceiver, skilled
	Multiple intelligences	innate ability in mathematics
		innate ability in music
		Just like intelligence (multiple intelligences), when we talk about gifted students, then you have to ask gifted in what sense and in what domain
		domain of social intelligence
		gifted academically
		everybody is gifted in certain sense, you may be gifted in playing the violin, while I may be gifted in English or my linguistic abilities
		if he/she is gifted in mathematics, this domain will be easy for him/her, or in music, arts
		specific field
		multiple intelligence

	Social difficulties	might face social problems, that are their friends might not include them in their plays and games, might make fun of them for being “different”
		use their talent to dominate on their classmates
		will eventually face all the hardships that come with being gifted, such as rejection from others, envy
		I am afraid that some gifted students may have introverted characters or have maybe less social skills than others

In sum, all seven principals perceived giftedness as excellence in a specific domain, and not necessarily in all domains. They considered both academic and non-academic domains as indicators of giftedness. Some principals expressed their concerns regarding the social difficulties gifted students may face.

#### **4.1.2 Principals’ Attitudes towards Establishing Programs for Gifted Students**

This section presents the results of the second research question of this study: “What are principals’ attitudes towards establishing programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?” The four themes that appeared in this category are: A) catering to the needs of outstanding students, B) supporting programs for gifted students, C) barriers for implementing programs for gifted students, and D) ideal program for gifted students.

*Catering to the Needs of Outstanding Students.* This theme represents current standing of the schools in terms of the programs and services they provide to cater to the needs of outstanding students. One principal mentioned that her school provides differentiated class work by explaining that the school offers



“different ways of learning, homework submission and also projects and assessment tools.” Also, the school holds “parental awareness meetings and mini workshops.”

On the other hand, six principals stated that even though currently they do not offer an official program for gifted students, they do strive for alternative methods. For example, they provide gifted students with opportunities to express their ‘gifts’ whenever possible. This was noticeable through the following statements: “we try to give the student a chance to express his abilities”, “we try by having several programs”, and “the administration and the teachers encourage these students and their skills and/or talents by finding a specific task or occasion to let them express themselves whenever it is possible.”

In order to cater to the needs of outstanding students, the alternative methods used by these principals were: encouragement, extracurricular, co-curricular as well as summer programs, referral, differentiated instruction, and parental involvement. Encouraging the student was frequently mentioned by four out of seven principal interviewees. Encouraging gifted students was carried out in various ways: “bonuses”, “rewarding the student”, “prizes”, “awards”, “award prizes”, and “extra financial aid.” Alongside encouragement, five of the seven interviewed principals assured that they provide gifted students with opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities, co-curricular activities, and summer programs. Some examples of these opportunities are “sending them in competitions, talent shows, conferences to represent the school”, “actively participating in extracurricular activities, school clubs, Student Council, Youth

Movement, sports, cultural activities, and competitions”, “sports”, “STEM club”, “theater class (theater group) that had its yearly production every single year”, “we have had music clubs and we have had concerts”, “[...] chess and drawing. We give them an opportunity for an exhibition, and in the case of chess, there is a tournament specified by the school.” Moreover, one principal reported that whenever they do not have the necessary equipment or conditions to nurture a gifted student’s needs to their maximum potential, they refer them to appropriate places: “we could not provide the professional level of environment that a child of his abilities would need. So if that happens you outsource; you refer them [...] to other places where they can get the support that they need.” This alternative was mainly for non-academic domains.

Another alternative method was differentiating instruction. This alternative was mainly for academic domains and in class work. The effort was done by the classroom teacher. Differentiated instruction was a topic stated by three principals: “If a student is gifted in an academic domain, the teacher nurtures the student’s outstanding abilities”, “Children who are gifted academically can become better when they work in classrooms; sometimes teachers would give them extra exercises that they could solve”, “through differentiated class work”, “our teachers address the [...] above average”, and “different ways of learning, homework submission and also projects and assessment tools.”

Finally, three principals mentioned “parental involvement” and “communication with parents” as part of nurturing the abilities of gifted students.

These were evident in the following statements by the interviewed principals: “parents awareness meetings”, “informing the parents about their child's gifts”, and “encourage these students as well as their parents [...] to let them develop their skills and improve.”

In sum, even though none of the schools offers official programs for gifted students, they all adopt alternative strategies to cater to the needs of gifted students to their maximum extent possible. The alternative strategies used by these schools were: differentiated instruction, encouragement, rewards, bonuses, awards, competitions, exhibitions, extracurricular activities, co-curricular activities, summer programs, and referral.

*Supporting Programs for Gifted Students.* This theme represents the support of the interviewed principals with regards to programs for gifted students. Six of the seven principals support the notion that gifted students should receive special programs in schools in Lebanon. The main reason is that gifted students are neglected and/or deprived from their rights. This was constantly argued by four principals in their statements, such as “many Lebanese students who are gifted [...] but unfortunately [...] these students are either neglected and/or unrevealed”, “the special skills and “gifts” are suppressed and even overlapped”, “some of the students are really wasting their talent away”, “he would have better opportunities in receiving scholarships, going to universities”, “deprived of their right of a special program”, “have opportunities to go beyond that, but they are deprived of them”, and “the rights of gifted students are forgotten.” One of these principals suggested that these programs should be prepared by special educators

– “special programs or extra sessions well studied and prepared by special educators.”

One principal expressed uncertainty because of lack of knowledge in the field of giftedness – “I do not have a lot of knowledge about the special programs for gifted students provided abroad.” He was also concerned that schools in Lebanon are currently facing many challenges; however, he considered this practice as important. This was evident in the following statement: “Lebanese schools are facing many difficulties that the program you propose may be of secondary importance, but this does not mean that such a program is useless or unimportant.”

In sum, the principals demonstrated supportive attitudes towards programs for gifted students. One principal considered these programs as secondary given all the problems the schools in Lebanon are facing nowadays. However, he clarified that they still consider it important.

*Barriers for Implementing Programs for Gifted Students.* This theme depicts the reasons that programs for gifted students are lacking in schools in Lebanon. The analysis is based on the answers of six principals as one principal declined to answer this questions. These barriers were divided into five main categories: Lebanese curriculum and education system, beliefs and intentions, qualified staff, financial resources, and cultural aspects.

To begin with, six of the seven principals blamed the Lebanese curriculum and the education system for the lack of gifted programs or special services in

their schools. They used negative adjectives, such as “outdated”, “old”, “not valuable”, “tiring” and “difficult”, when referring to the Lebanese curriculum. One principal even criticized the Lebanese government as being corrupt and pointed that, for this reason, the personnel who are responsible for curriculum development lack the necessary qualifications. This was expressed in his statement: “reason is the corruption and stagnation in government, where “ungifted” people, people who do not have the correct abilities are responsible for curriculum development. They don’t know what they are doing.” Another principal argued that the Lebanese curriculum and education system push the teachers to teach for the government exams. Hence, she explained that “In order for students to be admitted to a university, they must pass a state exam; the school is obliged to ensure the success of students in this exam.”

One interviewed principals claimed that gifted education and specialized governmental exams for gifted students are not integrated in the Lebanese curriculum nor in the education system. Another principal also pointed to the absence of differentiation in the Lebanese education system. These themes were clear in the following statements: “Lebanese state program does not have special governmental exams for talented people” and “think about people as categories [...] Individualization in those categories is not encouraged.

In addition to the Lebanese curriculum and the education system in Lebanon, beliefs and intentions towards giftedness and programs for gifted students were considered as barriers. In fact, two principals pointed out that there is a lack of conviction and intention towards establishing gifted programs. They

argued that “the importance of such a service is not yet rooted in our educational understanding”, “some people are unfortunately not convinced with the idea”, and “there is a lack of work towards such programs.” Two principals argued that only one end of special education – students with disabilities – is targeted in Lebanon. The statements “psychological group who will work with students with special needs in terms of disabilities”, “emphasis is on students with disabilities rather than the gifted students”, “If they cater to the needs of students with difficulties/disabilities, through special educators, they consider their job done”, and “gifted education should be part of the general curriculum, just as catering to the needs of students with disabilities is integrated into the general educational system and curriculum.” One principal added that identification methods for gifted students lack in Lebanon: “Lack of special trainings to help detect the giftedness.”

Lack of qualified staff was also considered to be a barrier to gifted education by four principals. This was clear in their following statements: “lack of special educators”, lack of specialists in the field”, “teachers are also not trained to deal with talented students in the right way”, and “lack of qualified pedagogical staff.”

Another barrier is the lack of financial resources. This was revealed in the following statements of five principals: “socio-economic situation”, “top obstacle would certainly be about money”, “financial reasons”, “lack of financial support for special programs for gifted students”, and “lack of funding and financial resources.” In addition, one principal considered cultural aspects as barriers to

gifted programs. He argued that "local mentality that is sometimes intimidated from the 'giftedness' of some students."

In sum, most of the principals criticized the Lebanese curriculum and the education system in Lebanon; they considered it as one of the main barriers that programs for gifted students are nonexistent in Lebanon. The other barriers communicated by the interviewed principals were the lack of convictions and intentions, limited financial resources, and lack of qualified personnel.

*Ideal Program for Gifted Students.* This theme portrays the ideal program for gifted students as described by the interviewed principals. Six out of seven principals suggested that ideally, programs for gifted students would be integrated in the general education program. It would come in a form of differentiated individualized instruction, as revealed in these statements: "gifted students must not be separated from 'ordinary' students", "be taught according to the 'gifts' of the students", "customized program", "integrated into the general system", "work with that student individually", and "differentiated education/instruction must be adopted/accepted by everyone." Two of these principals believed that programs for gifted students should be developed at the national level by the Ministry of Education: "developed at the governmental level" and "Lebanese official program must be adopted." Subject-acceleration was supported by two principals: "for example, he/she completes 7th grade math in half a year and enters 8th grade math in the second semester" and "The student can take a music appreciation class at level A, while English can be taken at level B, for example Economics can be taken at level C."

The interviewed principals believed that individualized and differentiated instruction should be implemented by a multidisciplinary professional team specialized in the field of Gifted Education. They expressed this concern in the following statements: “professional psychological team, who will engage with gifted students and will create for them the appropriate environment”, “prepared by educators, special educators and specialists in the field of interest of the gifted student”, “have a pedagogical staff“, and “program that trains teachers (an administrator, counselor, teachers).”

On the other hand, one principal suggested to have specialized schools as the ideal for educating gifted students. He argued that “there should be specialized schools, certainly.” He suggested providing students with different levels in each domain. Hence, gifted students can receive high levels of education in their domain of giftedness, but lower or basic levels of education in the other domains. For instance, students who are gifted in music should be in “a school that teaches music primarily, but also teaches Science, Arabic, English because those are also important, but at a slightly lower level.” This principal then expressed concerns about the identification process.

Lastly, one principal suggested that gifted students should receive psychological support for social adjustment purposes. The argument used was “so that this “gift” is not wasted/disappeared, or the opposite, he/she is not isolated (he's a nerdy), or self-isolated by perceiving himself/herself as superior from others (I am a genius), or does not perceive himself/herself being different as



normal (I am not normal).” Two principals also found exchange programs to be beneficial for gifted students.

In sum, most principals considered embedding programs for gifted students within the general curriculum as the ideal for educating gifted students. They suggested to do so through differentiated instruction. The interviewed principals believed that an official gifted program established by the Ministry of Education is crucial. One principal had a different view of the ideal program; he suggested specialized schools for educating gifted students.

#### **4.1.3 Summary of Qualitative data**

The qualitative data analysis revealed that the interviewed principals were in agreement concerning the nature of giftedness and programs for gifted students. They perceived giftedness mainly in terms of achievement and personality traits. They considered giftedness to be domain specific in both academic and non-academic domains.

Even though the schools do not have programs for gifted students, the principals stated that they attempt to cater to the needs of gifted students as much as possible through alternative strategies. The principals argued that gifted programs are essential for gifted students to develop to their fullest potential. The participants were also in favor of establishing programs for gifted students and believed that official gifted programs should be embedded within the Lebanese curriculum.

## **4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis – Survey Results**

Quantitative data collected via surveys ( $n = 80$ ) were analyzed using SPSS.

Descriptive statistics were performed for the following variables: demographic variables, teachers' perceptions of giftedness, and teachers' perceptions of programs for gifted student. This section answers the third and fourth research questions: “What are teachers' perceptions of giftedness at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?” and “What are teachers' attitudes towards establishing programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?”

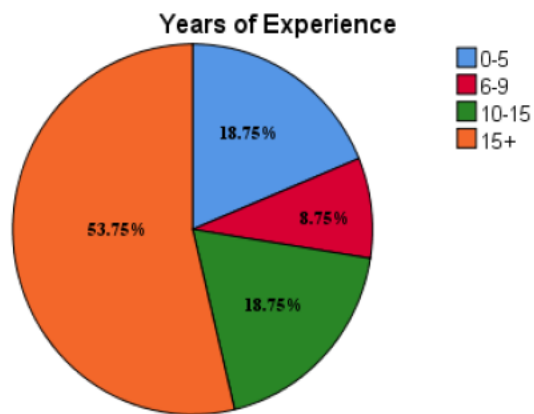
### **4.2.1 Demographic Variables of the Participant Teachers**

The demographics of the 80 teachers who completed the survey are: A) years of experience, B) educational level, C) age range, and D) gender.

*Years of Experience.* As shown in Table 4 and Figure 1, the majority of participating teachers had a teaching experience of above 15 years (53.75%) whereas participants whose teaching experience ranged between 6-9 years were the minority in the sample (8.75%).

**TABLE 4. FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF THE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE OF THE PARTICIPANT TEACHERS**

<b>Years of Experience</b>			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0-5	15	18.8
	6-9	7	8.8
	10-15	15	18.8
	15+	43	53.8
	Total	80	100.0



**FIGURE 1. PERCENTAGES OF THE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE OF THE PARTICIPANT TEACHERS**

*Educational Level.* As shown in Table 5 and Figure 2, most of the participants (62.5%) had a bachelor's degree whereas only 6% of the participants had only a high school degree. Also, two of the teachers who checked the "Other" category indicated that they were Ph.D. candidates.

TABLE 5. FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF THE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF THE PARTICIPANT TEACHERS

**Educational Level**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	High School	6	7.5
	University Bachelors or equivalent	50	62.5
	Graduate or Post Graduate	19	23.8
	Other	5	6.3
	Total	80	100.0

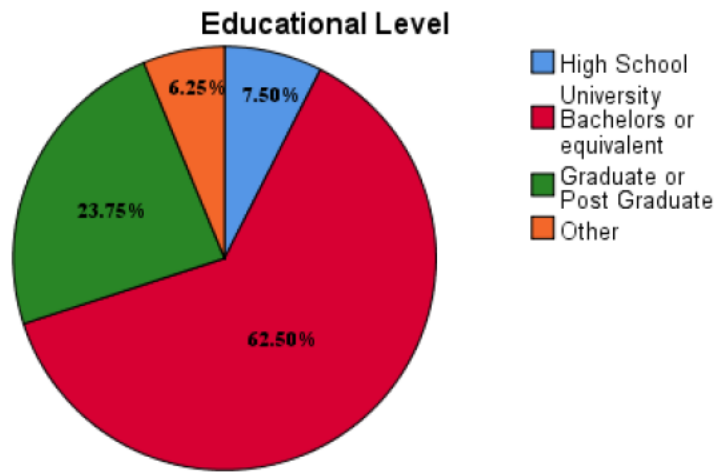
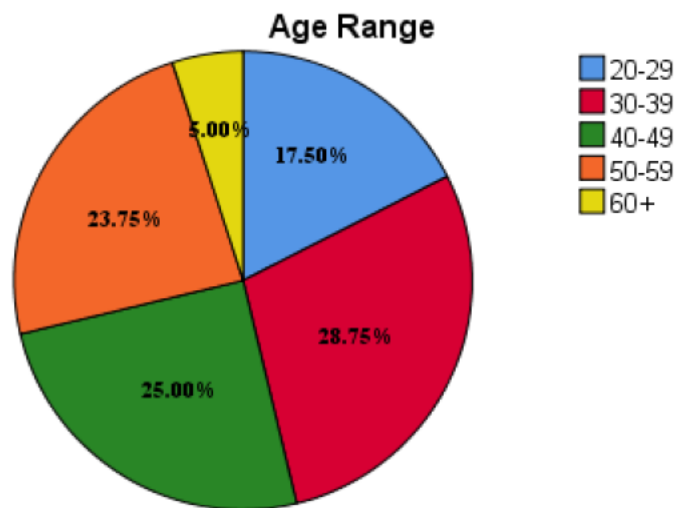


FIGURE 2. PERCENTAGES OF THE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF THE PARTICIPANT TEACHERS

*Age Range.* As shown in Table 6 and Figure 3. 17.5% of participating teachers are between 20 to 29 years whereas about one-third (28.75) of the teachers had an age range between 30 to 39 years old is 28.75%. Only a small percentage of teachers (5%) were 60 years or older.

**TABLE 6. FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF THE AGE RANGE OF THE PARTICIPANT TEACHERS**

<b>Age Range</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Valid	20-29	14	17.5
	30-39	23	28.7
	40-49	20	25.0
	50-59	19	23.8
	60+	4	5.0
	Total	80	100.0

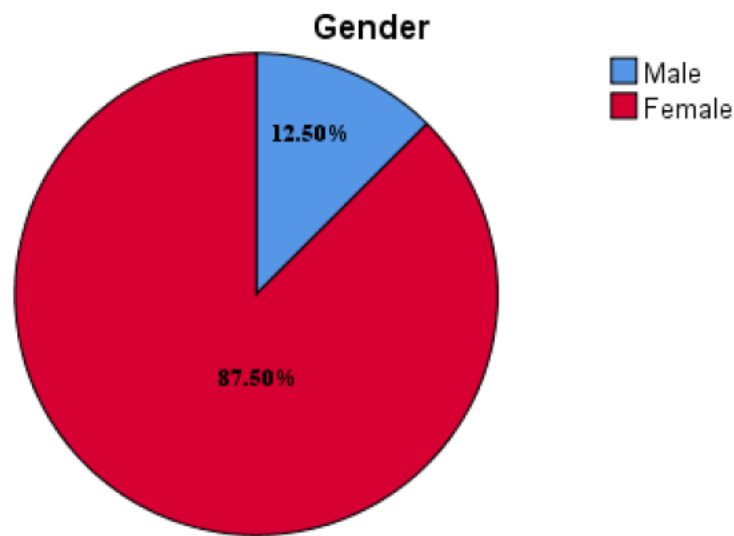


**FIGURE 3. PERCENTAGES OF THE AGE RANGE OF THE PARTICIPANT TEACHERS**

*Gender.* As shown in Table 7 and figure 4, the majority of the participants were females (87.5%) whereas males represented only 12.5% of the sample.

**TABLE 7. FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF THE GENDER OF THE PARTICIPANT TEACHERS**

Gender		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	10	12.5
	Female	70	87.5
	Total	80	100.0



**FIGURE 4. PERCENTAGES OF THE GENDER OF THE PARTICIPANT TEACHERS**

#### **4.2.2 Teachers' Perceptions of Giftedness**

This section describes teachers' perceptions of giftedness with regards to three of the waves (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2007): domain-general models, domain-specific models, and systems models. Hence, this section presents the results of the third research question: "What are teachers' perceptions of giftedness at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?" As proposed by Gagné and Nadeau (1991), the rating of each item was classified depending on its mean score: the items with the mean score between 4 and 5

were rated as very positive [VP], those between 3.25 and 3.99 were rated as positive [P], those between 2.75 and 3.24 were rated as ambivalent [A], those between 2.74 and 2 were rated as negative [N], while those between 1 and 2 were rated as very negative [VN] perceptions of giftedness.

The mean, standard deviation, and rating of each item (as per the participants' answers) is listed in table 8. As each of the items belongs to a different wave conceptions of giftedness as described by Kaufman and Sternberg (2007), they are color coded for organization purposes. The items colored in yellow refer to the domain-general models, the ones colored in blue refer to the domain-specific models, and those colored in pink are about the systems models.

**TABLE 8. MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND RATING OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF GIFTEDNESS**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b>Q12 - Gifted students have an above-average ability in a specific domain</b>	80	4.23	.941	VP
<b>Q2 - Gifted students have a high ability in performing tasks</b>	80	4.00	.955	VP
<b>Q14 - Gifted students are highly motivated to persist working on a task until completion</b>	80	3.87	1.048	P
<b>Q1 - Gifted students have a high IQ</b>	80	3.87	1.072	P
<b>Q13 - Gifted students are highly creative</b>	80	3.80	1.130	P
<b>Q3 - Gifted students score in the top 3-5 percentile on standardized (IQ) tests</b>	80	3.80	1.024	P

<b>Q5 - Gifted students have a high ability in using good reasoning and understand numeric relationships</b>	80	3.74	.978	P
<b>Q9 - Gifted students are highly aware of their own strengths, weaknesses and needs</b>	80	3.52	1.102	P
<b>Q10 - Gifted students have a high ability to discriminate among living things, such as plant and animals, and features of the natural world, such as clouds and rock configurations</b>	80	3.50	.968	P
<b>Q4 - Gifted students have a high ability in using language well and creatively for expressing themselves</b>	80	3.47	1.091	P
<b>Q7 - Gifted students have a high ability in using body-motor skills and physical coordination</b>	80	3.20	.920	A
<b>Q6 - Gifted students have a high musical ability</b>	80	3.14	1.088	A
<b>Q8 - Gifted students have a high ability to deal with varied social situations and understandings of others</b>	80	3.06	.998	A
<b>Q11 - Gifted students have an above-average ability in all domains</b>	80	2.99	1.238	A

### Index:

Domain-General Models



Domain-Specific Models

Systems Models

Table 8 reveals that Q12 and Q2 have the highest mean scores: 4.23 and 4.00 respectively. They are rated as very positive. The standard deviations of these two items (i.e., 0.941 and 0.955) are amongst the lowest in this section. The values were clustered near the mean score; hence, the participants' answers had a low variation. In other words, most teachers in this study perceived giftedness as outstanding abilities belonging to specific domains.

On the other hand, Q7, Q6, Q8, and Q11 received the lowest mean scores: 3.20, 3.14, 3.06, and 2.99 respectively. They are rated as ambivalent. This finding suggests that the teachers in this study were uncertain whether bodily-kinesthetic, musical, and interpersonal abilities constitute characteristics of giftedness. Item Q11 has the lowest mean score ( $M=2.99$ ), but the highest standard deviation (i.e., 1.238). This indicates that the scores were spread on a wider range from the mean score. Even though the participant teachers are doubtful that outstanding abilities in all domains is an indicator of giftedness, their answers to this item indicated a higher variability.

The mean scores of Q14, Q1, Q13, Q3, Q5, Q9, Q10, and Q4 are 3.87, 3.87, 3.80, 3.80, 3.74, 3.52, 3.50, and 3.47 respectfully. All are rated as positive. These findings indicate that teachers valued both academic (e.g., high IQ, top 3-5 percentile score, logico-mathematical abilities, linguistic abilities) and non-academic (e.g., task commitment, creativity, intrapersonal abilities, naturalistic abilities) domains of

giftedness. None of the items are rated as negative or very negative as all mean scores are above 2.75.

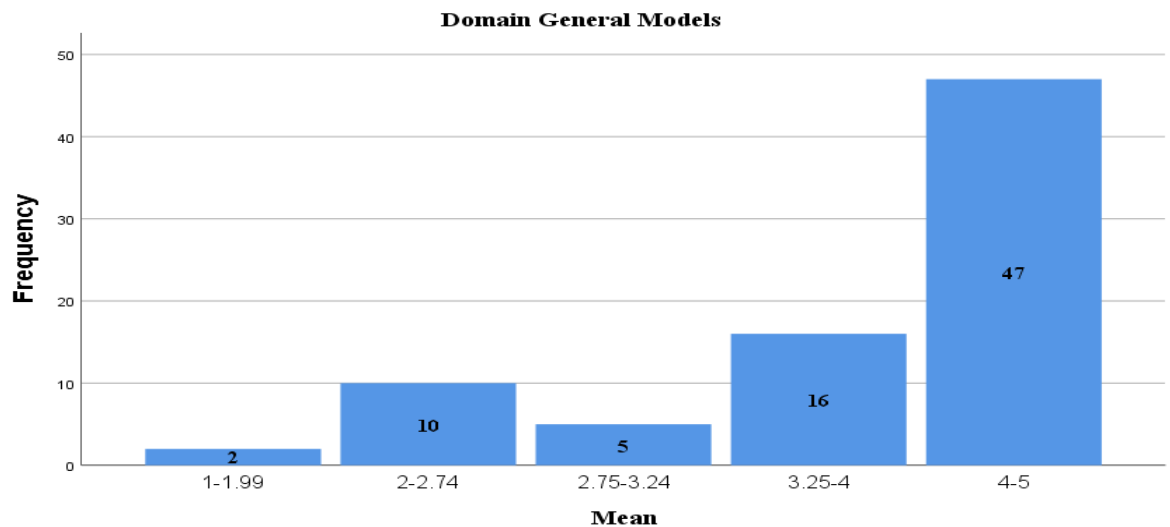
Of all items, the highest and lowest rated items are Q12 (M=4.23) and Q (M=2.99), respectively. They both belong to the “Systems Models” wave. This indicates that teachers perceive gifted students as those who have above-average abilities in specific domains, but not necessarily in all domains. The other two items of the “Systems Models” wave – Q14 (M=3.87) and Q13 (M=3.80) – are rated within the range of positive perceptions of giftedness. Hence, the teachers in this study consider psychological variables, such as creativity and task commitment as indicators of giftedness.

As for the “Domain-General Models” wave, Q2 (M=4.00) is rated as very positive, whereas Q (M=3.87) and Q (M=3.80) are rated as positive. This indicates that the participating teachers highly believe that gifted students excel in task performance. Moreover, they perceive gifted students as those who have high IQ and excel in the standardized tests (top 3 to 5 percentile). These results indicate that gifted students are perceived as having outstanding cognitive abilities.

With regards to the “Domain-Specific Models” wave, which targets the multiple intelligences, four items – Q5 (M=3.74), Q9 (M=3.52), Q10 (M=3.50), and Q4 (M=3.47) – were rated as positive. This wave supports the concept that giftedness is not necessarily translated as high IQ scores or excellence in all domains. The results indicate that the participant teachers believe that students who have outstanding ability in one domain only, such as logical-mathematical or linguistic domains can be classified as gifted, too. On the other hand, three items in this wave – Q7 (M=3.20), Q6 (M=3.14),

Q8 (M=3.06) – are rated as ambivalent. That is, teachers’ perceptions of giftedness are undecided regarding non-academic intelligences, such as outstanding bodily-kinesthetic, musical, and interpersonal abilities.

*Sample Distribution of the three waves.* The mean score of each of the three waves are presented in separate bar graphs (see figures 5, 6, and 7). Figure 5 represents the sample distribution of the ‘Domain-General Models’ wave. The majority of the participant teachers (i.e., 63 participants) are in the very positive or positive rating category, with mean scores ranging between 4-5 and 3.25-4 respectfully. Five participant teachers are in the ambivalent rating category with mean score between 2.75-3.24, whereas 12 participant teachers are in the negative and very negative rating category (i.e., mean score between 2-2.75 and 1-1.99 respectfully).



**FIGURE 5. SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION OF THE DOMAIN-GENERAL MODELS WAVE**

Figure 6 represents the sample distribution of the ‘Domain-Specific Models’. It indicates that slightly over half of the participant teachers (i.e., 46

teachers) fall under the very positive rating category with mean scores between 4 and 5. This is the highest ranked category. On the other hand, 34 participant teachers fall under the ambivalent, negative, and very negative rating categories (i.e., mean scores between 2.75-3.24, 2-2.74, and 1-1.99 respectfully)

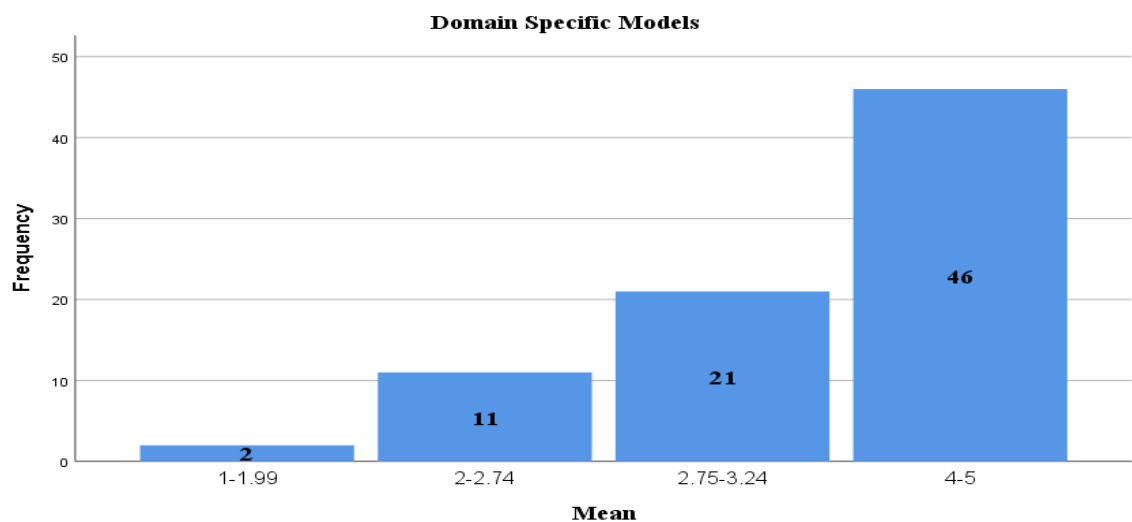
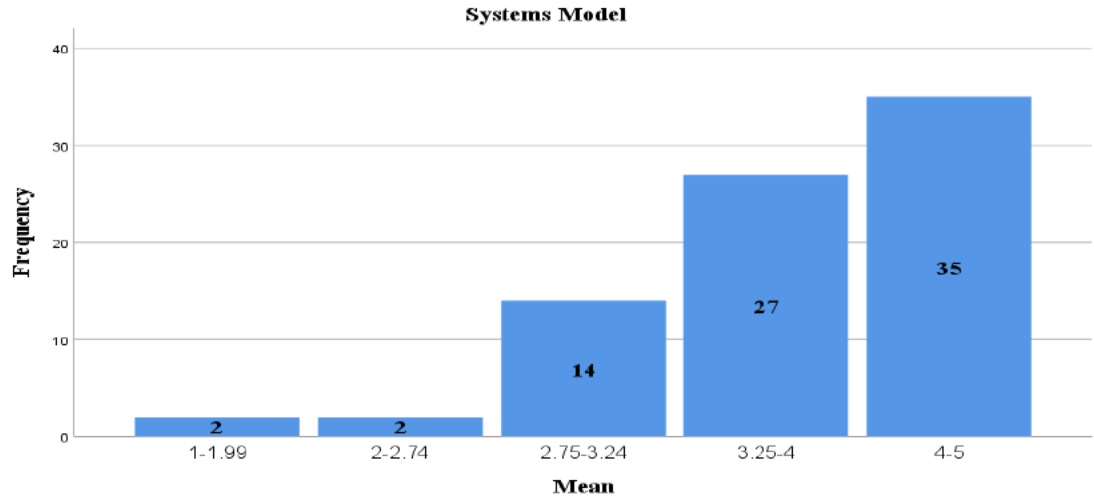


FIGURE 6. SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION OF DOMAIN SPECIFIC MODELS

Figure 7 represents the sample distribution of the ‘Systems Models’. It indicates that most of the participant teachers (i.e., 62 teachers) scored very positive and positive rating with mean scores between 4-5 and 3.25-4 respectively. On the other hand, 18 participant teachers fall under the ambivalent, negative, and very negative rating categories with mean scores between 2.75-3.24, 3-3.74, and 1-1.99 respectfully.



**FIGURE 7. SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION FOR SYSTEMS MODELS**

*Sample Distribution of the entire Section.* The mean score and standard deviation of each of the three waves are displayed in Table 9.

**TABLE 9. MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF EACH OF THE THREE WAVES**

		Domain General Models	Domain Specific Models	Systems models
N	Valid	80	80	80
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		3.6000	3.8917	3.7219
Std. Deviation		1.05062	.87756	.72805

Table 9 presents the sample distribution of each of the three waves: ‘Domain-General Models’, ‘Domain-Specific Models’, and ‘Systems Models’. All three waves have very close mean scores:  $M=3.60$ ,  $M=3.89$ , and  $M=3.72$  respectively. ‘Systems Models’ has the lowest standard deviation score ( $S=0.72$ ). This indicates that the answers were closest in agreement. On the other hand, ‘Domain-General Models’ has the highest standard deviation score ( $S=1.050$ ). This indicates that the participants’ answers had a high variability.

In sum, the mean scores of all three waves are similar and range between 3.25 and 4. Hence, the participants have positive perceptions of all three waves: ‘Domain-General Models’, ‘Domain-Specific Models’, and ‘Systems Models’.

#### **4.2.3 Teachers’ Attitudes towards Establishing Programs for Gifted Students**

This section describes teachers’ perceptions of establishing programs for gifted students as proposed by McCoach and Siegle (2007) with regards to four subscales: support, elitism, acceleration, and self-perception. Hence, this section presents answers to the fourth research question of the current study: “What are teachers’ attitudes towards establishing programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon?” The answers are the results of the data analysis of the second section of the survey, which included twenty questions (i.e., 5, 6, 4, and 5 questions in the subscale support, elitism, acceleration, and self-perception respectively). The mean, standard deviation, and rating of each question were analyzed. The same rating system as in the first section of the survey – as proposed by Gagné and Nadeau (1991) – was used in this section. The mean scores of the items that had negative wording – Q17, Q19, and Q29 – were reverse coded. The results of each subscale are discussed below separately.

*Support.* The ‘support’ subscale includes five items. The items assess participants’ perceptions of support for programs and services for gifted students. A high score on this subscale indicates positive perceptions of programs for gifted students (McCoach and Siegle, 2007). The mean, standard deviation, and rating of each item are presented in Table 10.

**TABLE 10. MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND RATING OF THE SUPPORT SUBSCALE**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b>Q16 - The gifted need special attention to fully develop their talents</b>	80	4.35	.915	VP
<b>Q15 - Our schools should offer special education services for the gifted</b>	80	4.21	1.002	VP
<b>Q18 - Since we invest supplementary funds for funds for children with difficulties, we should do the same for the gifted</b>	80	4.16	.947	VP
<b>Q19 - All special programs for the gifted should be abolished (Reverse scored)</b>	80	3.64	1.245	P
<b>Q17 - Tax payers should not have to pay for special education for the minority of children who are gifted (Reverse scored)</b>	80	2.88	1.072	A

As shown in Table 10, Q16 has the highest mean score of 4.35. It is rated as very positive. Two other items, Q15 (M=4.21) and Q18 (M=4.16) are also rated as very positive. These three items – Q16, Q15, and Q18 – also have the lowest standard deviation scores of this subscale (i.e., 0.915, 1.002, and 0.947 respectively). This indicates that the results are relatively closer to the mean.

On the other hand, Q19 has a mean score of 3.64. It is rated as positive. However, it has the highest standard deviation score (i.e., 1.245), which indicates that the answers were distributed are on a wider range from the mean score. The

item that has the lowest mean score is Q17 ( $M=2.88$ ); hence it is rated as ambivalent. The standard deviation of this item is the second highest (i.e., 1.072) in this subscale. It indicates that the answers to these items had a high variability. Items Q19 and Q17 were reverse scored.

In sum, the results showed that the participant teachers highly support the specific needs of gifted students. They also believe that gifted students should receive specialized services, just like students with disabilities, so that they can develop their abilities to their fullest potential. On the other hand, the results also reveal that the participants have unclear perception of whether tax payers should financially support the special education programs of gifted students.

*Elitism.* This subscale includes six items. The items examine the participants' perceptions of giftedness as an elite status and of gifted programs as promoting an elitist status among those placed in them. A high score on this subscale indicates negative perceptions (McCoach and Siegle, 2007). Therefore, the mean scores were rated as follows: very negative perception (i.e., mean score between 4 and 5), negative perception (i.e., mean score between 3.25 and 3.99), ambivalent perception (i.e., mean score between 2.75 and 3.24), positive perception (i.e., mean score between 2 and 2.74), and very positive perception (i.e., mean score between 1 and 2). The mean, standard deviation, and rating of each item are presented in Table 11.



**TABLE 11. MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND RATING OF THE ELITISM SUBSCALE**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b>Q23 - By separating students into gifted and other groups, we increase the labeling of children as strong-weak, good-less good, etc</b>	80	3.70	1.226	N
<b>Q22 - When the gifted are put in special classes, the other children feel devalued</b>	80	3.31	1.143	N
<b>Q21 - Special educational services for gifted children are a mark of privilege</b>	80	3.21	1.122	A
<b>Q24 - The gifted are already favored in our schools</b>	80	3.16	1.084	A
<b>Q25 - Gifted children might become vain or egotistical if they are given special attention</b>	80	3.04	1.152	A
<b>Q20 - Special programs for gifted children have the drawback of creating elitism</b>	80	3.01	1.000	A

As shown in Table 11, the Q23 (M=3.70) and Q22 (M=3.31) have the highest mean scores. They are rated as negative. However, they also have relatively higher standard deviations (i.e., 1.226 and 1.143). This indicates a high variability in the participants' answers. Q21 has a mean score of 3.21, Q24 has a

mean score of 3.16, Q25 has a mean score of 3.04, and Q20 has a mean score of 3.01. Hence, Q21, Q24, Q25, and Q20 are rated as ambivalent.

In sum, the results revealed that the participating teachers are not in favor of developing programs specifically for gifted students as this practice promotes elitism. However, the answers also vary in agreement range as the standard deviations of the items Q23 and Q22 are relatively high. This means that the perceptions regarding this issue varied greatly amongst the participating teachers. Moreover, the teachers were ambivalent about whether gifted programs promote elitism. They were also unsure about whether gifted students are favored by their teachers and whether this favoritism might lead to feelings of vanity on their part due to the special attention they might receive at their schools.

*Acceleration.* This subscale includes four items. The items examine the teachers’ perceptions of academic acceleration of gifted students (e.g., “Children who skip a grade are usually pressured to do so by their parents). A high score on this subscale indicates negative perceptions of acceleration as a practice for gifted students (McCoach and Siegle, 2007). Therefore, the mean scores were rated similarly to the ‘Elitism’ subscale. The mean, standard deviation, and rating of each item are presented in Table 12.

**TABLE 12. MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND RATING OF THE ACCELERATION SUBSCALE**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b>Q28 - When skipping a grade, gifted students miss important ideas (They have holes in their knowledge)</b>	80	3.54	1.055	N

<b>Q26 - Most gifted children who skip a grade have difficulties in their social adjustment to a group of older students</b>	80	3.50	1.067	N
<b>Q27 - Children who skip a grade are usually pressured to do so by their parents</b>	80	3.47	1.067	N
<b>Q29 - A greater number of gifted children should be allowed to skip a grade (Reverse scored)</b>	80	3.31	1.026	N

Table 12 reveals that the highest mean score is that of Q28 (M=3.54), whereas the lowest mean score is that of Q29 (M=3.31). Item Q29 is reverse scored. The mean of Q26 is 3.50 and the mean of Q27 is 3.47. All the items in this category are rated as Negative. All the items have high standard deviation scores indicating high variability in the participants' answers.

In sum, the results showed that the participating teachers perceive the importance of establishing special programs for the gifted. They also acknowledge the possibility of gifted learners having social adjustment difficulties with other peers. The findings also revealed that the participants perceive parents are the ones who pressure their children to skip a grade. On the other hand, teachers are not in favor of grade acceleration for gifted students; they support the placement of gifted students in regular classrooms. However, there is a great variability in the answers of the participants regarding grade acceleration, as evidenced by the high standard deviation values.

*Self-Perception.* This subscale includes five items. The items examine whether the participants perceive themselves as gifted. A high score indicates positive perceptions. The mean, standard deviation, and rating of each item are presented in Table 13.

**TABLE 13. MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND RATING OF THE SELF-PERCEPTION SUBSCALE**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b>Q32 - I am gifted</b>	80	3.17	1.003	A
<b>Q34 - People consider me gifted</b>	80	3.15	.843	A
<b>Q31 - Most of my family and friends consider me gifted</b>	80	3.15	.969	A
<b>Q30 I was or could have been in a gifted program in school</b>	80	2.91	.983	A
<b>Q33 - Most of my family and friends are gifted</b>	80	2.90	.976	A

As shown in Table 13, item Q32 (M=3.17) has the highest mean score of this subscale, whereas item Q33 (M=2.90) has the lowest score. As for the other items, Q34 has a mean of 3.15, Q31 has a mean of 3.15, and Q30 has a mean of 2.91. Hence, all the items in this subscale are rated as ambivalent. The standard deviation of the items in this subscale are relatively low indicating low variability in the teachers/ answers.

In sum, the participating teachers are ambivalent about themselves, their family members and their friends as being gifted. They are unsure whether they

are perceived as gifted by their surroundings, or whether they would have qualified to be in gifted programs at their own schools.

#### **4.2.4 Summary of quantitative Results**

In sum, the results of the first section of the survey indicated that the participants generally positively supported all three waves described by Kaufman and Sternberg (2007): ‘Domain-General Models’, ‘Domain-Specific Models’, and ‘Systems Models.’ Therefore, the participating teachers perceive giftedness in terms of high cognitive abilities, excellence in a specific domain, and/or psychological factors.

In addition, the findings revealed that the teachers identified gifted students as those who score high on IQ tests and on standardized tests (3-5 percentile), and those who have outstanding abilities in specific domains, but not necessarily in all domains. They also valued outstanding abilities in the following specific intelligences: logical-mathematical, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and linguistic abilities. Creativity and high performance on tasks were also considered as indicators of giftedness.

The second section of the survey indicated that the teachers highly acknowledged the needs of gifted students and support establishing special programs for them. On the other hand, the teachers were not in favor of acceleration and had ambivalent perceptions of whether programs for the gifted promote elitism. They believed that separating gifted students from their peers will result in labeling the students with those not identified feeling demeaned. Finally, the participants were ambivalent in their self-perceptions of giftedness.



## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

This case study examined principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. This chapter presents the discussion of the findings as they compare to the literature and to the Lebanese context. This chapter also includes recommendations for practice, recommendations for future research, limitation of the study, and a conclusion.

#### **5.1 Discussion Related to the Literature**

The results of this study align with the modern or re-conceptualized approaches of defining giftedness. That is, the participants support the notion that giftedness refers to outstanding abilities in both academic and non-academic domains, as defined by Gardner (1993), Marland (1971), Renzulli (2005, 2011, 2012), Sternberg (1995, 1997, 2019). In fact, the interviewed principals highlighted academic abilities, artistic intelligence, creativity, musical intelligence, psychological traits, fast learning, and initiative taking as characteristics of giftedness. These are indeed characteristics of giftedness as described by Gardner (1993) in his 'Multiple Intelligences' theory, by Marland (1971) in his definition of giftedness, Renzulli (2005, 2011, 2012) in his 'Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness' theory, and Sternberg (1995, 1997, 2019) in his 'Triarchic Theory of Intelligence'. On the other hand, even though the survey results revealed that the teachers supported multiple abilities as characteristics of giftedness, the teachers believed that

high IQ scores were also related to giftedness. This conception of giftedness (i.e., giftedness defined by IQ scores) is compatible with the view of Alfred Binet and Lewis Terman. Hence, the results of this study are compatible with previous findings on the numerous conceptions of giftedness (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Alhusaini & Maker, 2018; Antoun et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2019; Kuusisto et al., 2016; NAGC, 2007; Renzulli, 2011; Sternberg, 2007). One possible explanation of this finding might be the lack of an official definition of giftedness and identification tools in Lebanon.

The findings also support the ‘excellence criterion’ of giftedness stipulated by Sternberg (1995) in his ‘Pentagonal Implicit Theory’ of giftedness: high achievement was highlighted by the principals as a characteristic of giftedness. In accordance with the literature (Gardner 1993; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2007; Marland, 1971; Miedijensky, 2018; Renzulli, 2005, 2011, 2012; Sternberg, 1995, 1997, 2019), this excellence in abilities was perceived to be in one or more specific domains (rather than in all domains) (Carroll, 1993; Cattell & Horn, 1966; Christodoulou et al., 2011; Coleman & Cross, 2014; Gagné, 1999, 2005; Gardner, 1993; Kuusisto et al., 2016; Thurstone, 1938; Van Tassel-Baska, 2005). The ‘rarity criteria’ as defined by Sternberg’s (1995) in his ‘Pentagonal Implicit Theory’ of giftedness was also revealed in the interview data. The principals believed that gifted students have unique and rare abilities and interests. This finding aligns with findings in the literature (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2007; Miedijensky, 2018; Sternberg, 1995).

As for gifted programs, the findings of this case study were not compatible with previous research on the educators’ neglect of gifted students’ needs and their unsupportive attitudes towards gifted programs (Antoun et al., 2020; Cooper, 2009;



Cramond & Martin, 1987; Karantzas, 2019; Landis & Reschly, 2013; McGinnis, 2019; Moon, 2009; Park & Renzulli, 2000; Winebrenner, 2000). The findings in this study revealed that the participants had positive attitudes towards the ‘support’ subscale and believed gifted programs were crucial for the development of gifted students’ needs. On the other hand, the findings also aligned with previous research on the ‘support’ subscale (Antoun et al., 2020; Al Zoubi, 2018; Kokaridas et al., 2014; McCoach & Siegle, 2007). In the interview, the principals elaborated on their support of gifted programs by listing reasons similar to those found in the literature. Gifted programs provide gifted students with opportunities to enhance their abilities to their fullest potential (Grob, 2008; Renzulli, 2012) and improve society as gifted students are considered to be beneficial for the welfare of a country (Renzulli, 2012). Even though the participant schools did not offer programs for gifted students, they did cater to the needs of gifted students through alternative methods. Both teachers and principals were supportive of gifted programs despite the fact that they are nonexistent in Lebanon. The barriers listed also aligned with those in the literature: lack of funding, facilities, guidelines to evaluate gifted programs, policies by the Ministry of Education (Anuruthwong, 2017) and lack of qualified pedagogical staff (Anuruthwong, 2017; Croft, 2003; Hansen and Feldhusen, 1994; Miedijensky, 2018; Mills, 2003; Renzulli, 1985; Quigley and Vialle, 2002).

In alignment with McCoach and Siegle’s (2007) study, the participating teachers had ambivalent perceptions of the ‘elitism’ subscale. They had indecisive and mixed attitudes towards whether gifted programs encourage elitism. This contradicts the findings of Kokaridas, Gari, Patsiaouras, and Polyzopoulou’s (2014) that showed that the participants believed that gifted programs did in fact promote elitism. One explanation

might be that educators in Lebanon are not familiar with gifted programs in all their aspects.

As for the ‘acceleration’ subscale, educators’ attitudes were depicted to be controversial or mixed (McCoach & Siegle, 2007; NAGC, 2009). Some studies were in favor of acceleration (Assouline et al., 2010; Little et al., 2013; Lohman, 2004), whereas others revealed that the educators had negative attitudes towards this practice in spite of its benefits (Antoun et al., 2020; Kokaridas et al., 2014; McCoach & Rambo, 2012). The findings of this study aligned with the latter findings.

Finally, principals’ conceptions of the ideal gifted programs were compatible with the suggestions of by the National Association of Gifted children (NAGC, 2007): differentiated instruction. The principals suggested embedding programs for gifted students within the general curriculum, while differentiating instruction according to each student’s abilities and needs. Conceptualizations of ideal programs with regards to enrichment (e.g., Renzulli’s ‘Enrichment Triad Model’ and ‘Schoolwide Enrichment Model’) and acceleration were overlooked by the principals. Only one principal suggested subject/domain acceleration according to the abilities of the students. Nevertheless, some principals explained that their schools offer enrichment programs in the form of additional classwork, co-curricular activities, extracurricular activities, exhibitions, competitions, and summer programs. However, these special services were not developed in a formal manner and were overlooked when describing the ideal gifted program. A possible explanation could be related to the absence of gifted programs in the country and the lack of support by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Antoun et al., 2020; Sarouphim, 2007, 2010, 2015). In fact,

one principal admitted being not very knowledgeable in the field of gifted education and its practices.

## **5.2 Discussion Related to the Lebanese Context**

The findings of this case study support Sarouphim's (2007, 2010, 2015) finding that gifted programs are nonexistent in Lebanon; only some enrichment services are administered in some schools. This was also evident in other studies conducted in Lebanon that examined educators' perceptions of giftedness and gifted programs (Antoun et al., 2020; Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Al Zoubi, 2018). In this case study, only one principal reported that her school offers differentiated instruction according to students' abilities. The others argued that even though they do not provide gifted programs, they opt for alternative enrichment methods to cater to gifted students' needs. As for Al Hroub and El Khoury's (2018) study, teachers were unaware of gifted programs provided at schools in Lebanon. In Al Zoubi's (2018) study, seven principals admitted that their schools do not provide gifted programs, whereas two principals reported offering enrichment activities in their schools. The findings of this case study align with Sarouphim's (2007, 2010, 2015) argument concerning the lack of gifted programs in the country.

In addition, the studies conducted in Lebanon highlight the absence of a definition of giftedness and the lack of identification methods in the country (Antoun et al., 2020; Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Al Zoubi, 2018; Sarouphim, 2007, 2010, 2015). Nevertheless, one interesting finding is that educators had positive perceptions of

giftedness and gifted programs (Antoun et al., 2020; Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Al Zoubi, 2018). The participants in this study considered such programs to be crucial in nurturing gifted students' abilities. Some principals also argued that gifted students add to the welfare of society; hence, the importance of gifted programs. This perception was also highlighted in Antoun, Kronborg, and Plunkett's (2020) study.

Moreover, the results revealed that the participating teachers perceived giftedness in terms of multiple abilities. They had positive perceptions of all three waves as described by Kaufman and Sternberg (2007): Domain-General Models, Domain-Specific Models, and Systems Models. All findings were compatible with that of Al Zoubi's (2018) study. That is, educators acknowledged giftedness in terms of both academic and non-academic abilities. On the other hand, the findings of this study are not compatible with those of Al Hroub and El Khoury's (2018) and Antoun, Kronborg, and Plunkett's (2020), in which the educators' view of giftedness was found to be limited to high grades and to academic domains; the non-academic domains were overlooked or less emphasized. In fact, non-academic abilities were perceived to be talents, not gifts (Antoun, Kronborg, and Plunkett's, 2020). This could be because of the cultural beliefs in Lebanon.

There was a discrepancy between this and Al Zoubi's (2018) findings regarding the social skills of gifted students. Some participants in this study were concerned with the social difficulties gifted students might face whereas in Al Zoubi's (2018) study, the participants considered social skills as a strength in gifted students.

All studies conducted on schools in Lebanon, including this study revealed that giftedness can be manifested in one or more domains, rather than in all domains (Antoun

et al., 2020; Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; Al Zoubi, 2018). The interview results revealed that the principals consider these abilities to be innate and natural; however, they also find it crucial to nurture these abilities. This finding was also apparent in Al Hroub and El Khoury's (2018) and Al Zoubi (2018) studies.

As for the 'acceleration' subscale, the findings of this study were compatible with those of Antoun, Kronborg, and Plunkett, (2020) and Al Zoubi's (2018) revealing that teachers had negative attitudes towards acceleration. Moreover, this acceleration is believed to happen under parental pressure. One explanation could be that the Lebanese curriculum and the system of education in Lebanon focus on teaching to the test; that is, teachers' goal is to ensure that students pass the official exams. When skipping grades, students may miss concepts that are required in these exams. Moreover, labeling, distribution of students by age, and competition are part of the Lebanese culture and educational system. Hence, implementing acceleration – especially when there are no official guidelines and policies – may do more harm than good.

Lastly, regarding the 'self-perception' subscale, the findings were incompatible with the previous studies conducted in Lebanon. One explanation might be the absence of an official definition for giftedness in the country as well as the lack of identification tools. Another possible explanation might be the emphasis on the academic domain and high grades as measures of giftedness in the Lebanese culture (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018). Non-academic domains are often overlooked when defining giftedness. (Al Hroub & El Khoury, 2018).

### **5.3 Recommendations for Practice**

The recommendations for practice are:

- To revise the policy and law related to special education in Lebanon.
- To revise the Lebanese curriculum so that it caters to the needs of gifted students.
- To emphasize gifted education in education programs at the universities in Lebanon.
- To provide educators with opportunities to engage in ongoing professional development, especially regarding gifted education. Trainings and workshops related to giftedness and programs for gifted students would be beneficial for educators so that they can have knowledge in and understanding of gifted education, and consequently cater to the needs of gifted students.
- To work on formulating a basic conception of giftedness.
- To develop measures for the identification of gifted students in Lebanon.

### **5.4 Recommendations for Future Research**

The recommendations for future research are:

- To conduct future studies that include all the population of Armenian schools in Lebanon.
- To conduct future studies that include a representative sample of all schools in Lebanon.

- To conduct research that examines parents' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students.
- To conduct research that examines students' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students.
- To include more variables in data analysis (e.g., the effect of age, gender and years of experience on the participants' perceptions).

## **5.5 Limitations**

The limitations of this study are:

- It was based on the assumption that the participants responded truthfully – and not in a way to appear “right”, “supportive”, or “good” – to the interview questions and the survey.
- It was based on the assumption that the three interview responses that were translated from Armenian to English did not affect the reliability and validity of the results. Translating the answers verbatim may not make sense; changing the words may result in a mistranslation of the idea.
- The sample included only the Armenian schools in Lebanon. Hence, the results may be generalized only to the Armenian schools in Lebanon.
- The survey originally includes a fourth wave (i.e., developmental model). This study did not target this wave.
- The sample size was relatively small. I believe this is because of the current situation in Lebanon: the global pandemic, the new teaching-learning method, the

financial crisis, and the result of the tragic Beirut blast. The sample size might have been larger otherwise. One school permanently closed down and some educators left the schools for various reasons (e.g., left the country, financial reasons, and so on). Moreover, educators were overloaded with online learning, which was something new to most of the schools in Lebanon, including the Armenian schools included in this study. Some schools were also undergoing constructions as a result of the tragic Beirut explosion. Hence, participating in this study was difficult for many schools.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this case study shed light on the understanding of giftedness and the implementation of gifted programs in Lebanon. It contributed to the limited literature on gifted education in Lebanon by examining principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. The results were mostly aligned with the literature and were compatible with the Lebanese context. These findings may mark the start of gifted education journey in Lebanon as educators appear to be supportive of it.



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## Appendix A Survey

### Appendix A Survey

<b>Questionnaire – Section 1</b>					
Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. In answering each question, use a range from (1) to (5) where (1) stands for strongly disagree and (5) stands for strongly agree. Please circle any one response choice per question. Please answer as spontaneously as possible.	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
	Gifted students have a high IQ				
Gifted students have a high ability in performing tasks					
Gifted students score in the top 3-5 percentile on standardized (IQ) tests					
Gifted students have a high ability in using language well and creatively for expressing themselves					
Gifted students have a high ability in using good reasoning and understand numeric relationships					
Gifted students have a high musical ability					
Gifted students have a high ability in using body-motor skills and physical coordination					
Gifted students have a high ability to deal with varied social situations and understandings of others					
Gifted students are highly aware of their own strengths, weaknesses and needs					
Gifted students have a high ability to discriminate among living things, such as plant and animals, and features of the natural world, such as clouds and rock configurations					
Gifted students have an above-average ability in all domains					



Gifted students have an above-average ability in a specific domain						
Gifted students are highly creative						
Gifted students are highly motivated to persist working on a task until completion						
<b>Questionnaire – Section 2</b>						
<b>Support</b>	Our schools should offer special education services for the gifted					
	The gifted need special attention to fully develop their talents					
	Tax payers should not have to pay for special education for the minority of children who are gifted (Reverse scored)					
	Since we invest supplementary funds for funds for children with difficulties, we should do the same for the gifted					
	All special programs for the gifted should be abolished (Reverse scored)					
<b>Elitism</b>	Special programs for gifted children have the drawback of creating elitism					
	Special educational services for gifted children are a mark of privilege					
	When the gifted are put in special classes,					



	the other children feel devalued					
	By separating students into gifted and other groups, we increase the labeling of children as strong-weak, good-less good, etc					
	The gifted are already favored in our schools					
	Gifted children might become vain or egotistical if they are given special attention					
<b>Acceleration</b>	Most gifted children who skip a grade have difficulties in their social adjustment to a group of older students					
	Children who skip a grade are usually pressured to do so by their parents					
	When skipping a grade, gifted students miss important ideas (They have holes in their knowledge)					
	A greater number of gifted children should be allowed to skip a grade (Reverse scored)					
<b>Self-perception</b>	I was or could have been in a gifted program in school					
	Most of my family and friends consider me gifted					
	I am gifted					



	Most of my family and friends are gifted					
	People consider me gifted					
<b>Questionnaire – Section 3</b>						
<b>Please indicate your:</b>						
Years of experience:						
0-5						
6-9						
10-15						
15+						
<b>Educational Level:</b>						
High school						
University Bachelors or equivalent						
Graduate or Post Graduate						
Other:						
<b>Please indicate your age range:</b>						
20 – 29 years:						
30 – 39 years:						
40 – 49 years:						
50 – 59 years:						
60+ years:						
<b>Please indicate your gender:</b>						
Male						
Female						

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## **Appendix B**

### **Interview**

#### **Appendix B**

##### **Semi Structured interview questions**

- 1- What are your views on giftedness? In other words, what do you think giftedness is?
- 2- In your opinion, what are the characteristics of gifted students?
- 3- How does your school cater to the needs of outstanding students?
- 4- Do you think that special programs for gifted students should be offered in schools in Lebanon?
- 5- Does your school offer any special services for gifted students? If yes, please describe these services.
- 6- If not, what are the reasons these services are lacking at your school and/or schools in Lebanon in general?
- 7- In your opinion, what would be an ideal program for gifted students?



## Appendix C

### IRB Approval Letter



Institutional Review Board (IRB)

لجنة المراجعة

#### NOTICE OF IRB EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

<b>To:</b>	Ms. Lory Sinabian Advisor: Dr. Ketty Sarouphim McGill School of Arts & Sciences	<b>APPROVAL ISSUED:</b> 16 March 2020 <b>EXPIRATION DATE:</b> 16 March 2022 <b>REVIEW TYPE:</b> EXEMPT CATEGORY B
<b>Date:</b>	March 16, 2020	
<b>RE:</b>	<b>IRB #:</b> LAU.SAS.KS3.16/Mar/2020 <b>Protocol Title:</b> Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of Giftedness and Programs for Gifted Students at the Armenian Schools in Lebanon	

Your application for the above referenced research project has been reviewed by the Lebanese American University, Institutional Review Board (LAU IRB). This research project qualifies as exempt under the category noted in the Review Type

This notice is limited to the activities described in the Protocol Exempt Application and all submitted documents listed on page 2 of this letter. **Final reviewed consent documents or recruitment materials and data collection tools released with this notice are part of this determination and must be used in this research project.** Kindly secure the written approval from the participating schools prior to data collection and forward a copy to the LAU IRB.

#### CONDITIONS FOR ALL LAU NOTICE OF IRB EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

**LAU RESEARCH POLICIES:** All individuals engaged in the research project must adhere to the approved protocol and all applicable LAU IRB Research Policies. **PARTICIPANTS must NOT be involved in any research related activity prior to IRB notice date or after the expiration date.**

**EXEMPT CATEGORIES:** Activities that are exempt from IRB review are not exempt from IRB ethical review and the necessity for ethical conduct.

**PROTOCOL EXPIRATION:** The LAU IRB notice expiry date for studies that fall under Exemption is 2 years after this notice, as noted above. If the study will continue beyond this date, a request for an extension must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the Expiry date.

**MODIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS:** Certain changes may change the review criteria and disqualify the research from exemption status; therefore, any proposed changes to the previously IRB reviewed exempt study must be reviewed and cleared by the IRB before implementation.

**RETENTION:** Study files must be retained for a period of 3 years from the date of project completion.

**IN THE EVENT OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ABOVE CONDITIONS, THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR SHOULD MEET WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE IRB OFFICE IN ORDER TO RESOLVE SUCH CONDITIONS. IRB CLEARANCE CANNOT BE GRANTED UNTIL NON-COMPLIANT ISSUES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED.**

If you have any questions concerning this information, please contact the IRB office by email at [irb@lau.edu.lb](mailto:irb@lau.edu.lb)

BEIRUT CAMPUS	BYBLOS CAMPUS	NEW YORK OFFICE
R.O. Box: 13-5053 Chouran Beirut 1102 2801 Lebanon	R.O. Box: 36 Byblos Lebanon	475 Riverside Drive Suite 1846 New York, NY 10115
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[www.lau.edu.lb](http://www.lau.edu.lb)



*The IRB operates in compliance with the national regulations pertaining to research under the Lebanese Minister of Public Health's Decision No.141 dated 27/1/2016 under LAU IRB Authorization reference 2016/3708, the International guidelines for Good Clinical Practice, the US Office of Human Research Protection (45CFR46) and the Food and Drug Administration (21CFR56). LAU IRB U.S. Identifier as an international institution: FWA00014723 and IRB Registration # IRB00006954 LAUIRB#1*

**Dr. Joseph Stephan**  
Chair, Institutional Review Board

**DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED:**

IRB Exempt Protocol Application	Received 10 March 2020
Proposal	Received 10 March 2020
Letter to Schools	Received 10 March 2020
Informed Consent – Interviews	Received 10 March 2020
Informed Consent – Survey	Received 10 March 2020
Instruments	Received 10 March 2020
NIH Training – Ketty Sarouphim	Cert. # 1961841 Dated (21 January 2016)
NIH Training – Lory Sinabian	Cert.# 34936373 Dated (8 March 2020)





**Appendix D**  
**Email letter to schools – Invitation for Participation**

To Whom it May Concern,  
I hope this email finds you well.

I am Lory Sinabian. I am majoring in Masters in Educational Management and Leadership at the Lebanese American University. I am currently working on my thesis entitled "Principals' and Teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon".

I would like to invite [Name of the School] to participate in my research study. Kindly find attached the instruments and the consent for participation. The survey is designed for the teachers and the interview is designed for the principals.

For everyone's safety, because of the coronavirus, both the interview and the survey can be done online.

I can send you the link of the survey (both in Armenian and in English) and the interview questions in the form of a word document (the principal can type the answers and send the document back to me). The interview can also be done through Zoom; I will have to audiotape it for transcription purposes. The instrument is to be filled in one language of the participant's choice.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further assistance.

Thank you,  
Lory Sinabian

76062257

**Note:** The instrument, the consent for participation to the Interview, and the consent for participation to the survey were attached to this email. A customized letter was also sent to the school upon request.

## Appendix E

### Letter to the principals with whom the invitation for participation was done over the phone

Dear Principal,  
I hope this email finds you well.

As per our phone conversation, kindly find attached the interview questions (designed for the principals) in the form of a word document.

In addition, kindly find below the links of the survey designed for the teachers.

Survey in English:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=6Bqym-fEoUmryRmhVTakaTMWLAZ1sMxHm5okKwexmepUOVNQSE9QV0JIRTJPRzNaV085SVNBR0Y1MC4u>

Survey in Armenian:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=6Bqym-fEoUmryRmhVTakaTMWLAZ1sMxHm5okKwexmepUNkxSUU1QOEM3TkYxUjlTVDdFOEJSM0FVNC4u>

Do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further assistance.

Thank you in advance,  
Lory Sinabian  
76062257

**Note:** The interview questions in the form of a word document, the consent for participation to the interview, and the consent for participation to the survey were attached to this email.

## Appendix F

### Consent of Participation in Survey

#### *Consent to participate in a Survey*

*Principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon.*

*I would like to invite you to participate in a research project. You are being asked to complete a short survey. I am a student at the Lebanese American University. I would appreciate it if you can answer the following questions as part of my Senior Study. This survey aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon.*

*The information you provide will be used to enhance and improve our understanding of giftedness and programs for gifted students. Completing the survey will take about 5 to 10 minutes of your time.*

*By continuing with the survey, you agree with the following statements:*

- 1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project.*
- 2. I understand that my answers will not be released to anyone and my identity will remain anonymous. My name will not be written on the questionnaire nor be kept in any other records.*
- 3. I understand that all responses I provide for this study will remain confidential. When the results of the study are reported, I will not be identified by name or any other information that could be used to infer my identity. Only researchers will have access to view any data collected during this research however data cannot be linked to me.*
- 4. I understand that I may withdraw from this research any time I wish and that I have the right to skip any question I don't want to answer.*
- 5. I understand that my refusal to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which I otherwise am entitled to.*
- 6. I have been informed that the research abides by all commonly acknowledged ethical codes and that the research project has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the Lebanese American University*
- 7. I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can ask the research team listed below.*
- 8. I have read and understood all statements on this form.*
- 9. I voluntarily agree to take part in this research project by answering the research questions.*

*If you have any questions, you may contact:*

<i>Name (PI)</i>	<i>Phone number</i>	<i>Email address</i>
<i>Lory Sinabian</i>	<i>76062257</i>	<i>lory.sinabian@lau.edu</i>

*If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or you want to talk to someone outside the research, please contact the:*

*IRB Office,  
Lebanese American University  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Dorm A, Byblos Campus  
Tel: 00 961 1 786456 ext. (2546)*



## Appendix G

### Consent of Participation in Interview

#### *Consent to participate in an Interview*

*Principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon*

*I would like to invite you to participate in a research project. You are being asked to take part in a short interview. I am a student at the Lebanese American University. I would appreciate it if you can answer the following questions as part of my Senior Study. This interview aims to investigate principals' perceptions of giftedness and programs for gifted students at the Armenian schools in Lebanon. The information you provide will be used to enhance and improve our understanding of giftedness and programs for gifted students. Answering the interview questions will take about 10 to 15 minutes of your time.*

*By continuing with the interview, you agree with the following statements:*

- 1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project.*
- 2. I understand that my answers will not be released to anyone and my identity will remain anonymous. My name will not be written on the questionnaire nor be kept in any other records.*
- 3. I understand that all responses I provide for this study will remain confidential. When the results of the study are reported, I will not be identified by name or any other information that could be used to infer my identity. Only researchers will have access to view any data collected during this research however data cannot be linked to me.*
- 4. I understand that I may withdraw from this research any time I wish and that I have the right to skip any question I don't want to answer.*
- 5. I understand that my refusal to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which I otherwise am entitled to.*
- 6. I have been informed that the research abides by all commonly acknowledged ethical codes and that the research project has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the Lebanese American University*
- 7. I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can ask the research team listed below.*
- 8. I have read and understood all statements on this form.*
- 9. I voluntarily agree to take part in this research project by answering the interview questions.*

\_\_\_\_\_ *I consent to the interview being tape recorded*  
\_\_\_\_\_ *I do not consent to the interview being tape recorded*  
\_\_\_\_\_ *I am answering the interview questions electronically*

*If you have any questions, you may contact:*

<i>Name (PI)</i>	<i>Phone number</i>	<i>Email address</i>
<i>Lory Markos Sinabian</i>	<i>76062257</i>	<i>lory.sinabian@lau.edu</i>

*If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or you want to talk to someone outside the research, please contact the:*

*IRB Office,  
Lebanese American University  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Dorm A, Byblos Campus  
Tel: 00 961 1 786456 ext. (2546)*



## Appendix H

### Customized Letter to Schools



Chartered in the State of New York

To: Armenian Schools

Beirut, Lebanon

March 10, 2020

**Object: Consent to collect data for an LAU research study entitled *Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of Giftedness and Programs for Gifted Students at the Armenian Schools in Lebanon*.**

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to request permission for my students to be able to collect data from your school principals and teachers. Lory Sinabian is a graduate student in Education at the Lebanese American University (Department of Education) and would be visiting your facility only in order to complete a research project related to assessing school principals' and teachers' perceptions of giftedness and gifted programs.

The data collected, which is based on a 10-15 minutes questionnaire (attached to this letter) or 10-minute interview (attached to this letter) will be kept anonymous and will not be used for any other purpose.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any additional information.

Sincerely yours,

#### Acknowledgement

Name:

Signature:

Date:

**Ketty Sarouphim-McGill, PH.D.**  
Associate professor, School of Arts & Sciences  
Department of Education  
Tel. 01-786456 ext.1496  
Beirut, Lebanon



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Beirut 1102 2901	+961 3 60 37 03	Syblous	+961 3 79 13 14	Suite 1546, New York	+1 212 870 2579
Lebanon	Fax: +961 1 86 70 98	Lebanon	Fax: +961 9 54 62 62	NY 10115-0065 - USA	Fax: +1 212 870 2762 <a href="http://www.lau.edu.lb">www.lau.edu.lb</a>

## **Appendix I**

### **Interview Responses – Transcribed**

#### **Principal I**

- 1. What are your views on giftedness? In other words, what do you think giftedness is?**

Giftedness is when a child possesses a certain skill which is highly developed and remarkably distinct from his peers of similar ages. Giftedness is innate and not acquired. The only thing needed so that it manifests itself is certain guidance, encouragement, practice and only little learning for extra development.

- 2. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of gifted students?**

I believe gifted students show a great deal of interest in a certain subject. They become enthusiastic once their subject of interest is brought up. On the other hand they might show a complete disinterest in other subjects and become passive. In addition, once their giftedness is revealed, they might face social problems, that are their friends might not include them in their plays and games, might make fun of them for being “different”.

- 3. How does your school cater to the needs of outstanding students?**

Our school encourages outstanding students by constantly rewarding them, providing them with extra financial aids and sending them in competitions, talent shows, conferences to represent the school.

- 4. Do you think that special programs for gifted students should be offered in schools in Lebanon?**

Yes, definitely. I believe that there are many Lebanese students who are gifted or at least they possess extra developed skills but unfortunately, because of the outdated official Curriculum, these students are either neglected and/or unrevealed. Not to mention that due to the super charged lessons of the Curriculum, the special skills and “gifts” are suppressed and even overlapped.

**5. Does your school offer any special services for gifted students? If yes, please describe these services.**

As mentioned above we adopt the “encouragement” approach. Other than that we still don’t offer special services.

**6. If not, what are the reasons these services are lacking at your school and/or schools in Lebanon in general?**

I believe that these services are lacking at almost all the schools in Lebanon. The main reason is the outdated and failed educational system in the country which is based on a very old and tiring Curriculum. Other than that, the socio-economic situation is also playing its role that is by not providing opportunities for these students to specialize more in their talent and excel in that field. Not to mention the local mentality that is sometimes intimidated from the “giftedness” of some students.

**7. In your opinion, what would be an ideal program for gifted students?**

First of all, gifted students must not be separated from “ordinary” students so that they do not feel different from the other members of future society. Second, these students must be exposed to various kinds of educational programs that enhance and develop their “gifts”. Finally, these gifted students must have the chance to

participate in an exchange student program to be exposed in various kinds of societies and educational programs.



## **Principal II**

**1- What are your views on giftedness? In other words, what do you think giftedness is?**

Talent is an innate ability that is developed through hard work, self-discipline, and guidance.

**2- In your opinion, what are the characteristics of gifted students?**

The gifted student differs from the others by the manifestation of his/her talent. If he/she has an innate ability in mathematics, he/she excels in that subject.

Similarly, if he/she has an innate ability in music, he/she excels in that field, and so on in other fields. In terms of their character, gifted students have a great deal of awareness of talent. There are those whose talent is manifested and developed at the school (thanks to the environment, experienced teachers, age, conditions provided, etc.). Other gifted students have discovered their talents, but don't manifest their skills, as they perceive this is a normal thing, but they do not express it as being more exceptional than others. There are also those who use their talent to dominate on their classmates, this misbehavior overrides on their talent.

**3- How does your school cater to the needs of outstanding students?**

We do not have a special program for gifted students. If a student is gifted in an academic domain, the teacher nurtures the student's outstanding abilities. This will allow the gifted students to benefit from the "gifts" they possess; it is also an

important factor when it comes to their professional orientation in the future. If a student is gifted in a non-academic domain (arts, social communication skills, sports, and so on), then we try to give the student a chance to express his abilities by participating in extracurricular activities. This is done by actively participating in extracurricular activities, school clubs, Student Council, Youth Movement, sports, cultural activities, and competitions. We strive to use the exceptional academic “gifts” and social skills for the benefit of the immediate community, such as class explanations for those who have difficulty in a given subject, and so on.

**4- Do you think that special programs for gifted students should be offered in schools in Lebanon?**

I do not have a lot of knowledge about the special programs for gifted students provided abroad, in Europe, in the United States or elsewhere. I know the principle is that keeping a gifted student in a regular school can hinder the maximum display of his talent. So I cannot give a definite answer to this question, simply adding that today the Lebanese school is facing many difficulties that the program you propose may be of secondary importance, but this does not mean that such a program is useless or unimportant.

**5- Does your school offer any special services for gifted students? If yes, please describe these services.**

As planned programs, as you say we do not have "special" programs. In the third question, I tried to summarize our approach.

**6- If not, what are the reasons these services are lacking at your school and/or schools in Lebanon in general?**

The reasons for the absence are subjective and substantive. I think the importance of such a service is not yet rooted in our educational understanding. This can be attributed to the country, Lebanon, the entire education system, and so on. And, of course, there is a lack of work towards such programs, or a lack of qualified pedagogical staff for that purpose. For example, I do not know how deeply a university student specializing in pedagogy studies this subject.

**7- In your opinion, what would be an ideal program for gifted students?**

First of all, to have a pedagogical staff to notice, discover and practice gifted education through systematic work.

Second, the school curriculum and the teacher's schedule should be adapted to work with that student individually, so that, for example, he/she completes 7th grade math in half a year and enters 8th grade math in the second semester. If he/she is talented in all subjects, same idea applies to the other subjects...

It is important to have a psychologist with a gifted student and his/her friends so that this "gift" is not wasted/disappeared, or the opposite, he/she is not isolated (he's a nerdy), or self-isolated by perceiving himself/herself as superior from

others (I am a genius), or does not perceive himself/herself being different as normal (I am not normal):

### **Principal III**

#### **1- What are your views on giftedness? In other words, what do you think giftedness is?**

Giftedness as a topic, the main question that comes to my mind when we talk about giftedness is “Giftedness in which domain?” Because in terms of school, when we talk about giftedness, generally we discuss it in light of academic results or academic achievement as related to abilities that have to do with reasoning, with logic, even with sometimes rote studying is considered giftedness (students who have the ability to study and memorize quickly are considered gifted). So the question that comes to my mind is “Giftedness in terms of what?” Just like intelligence (multiple intelligences), when we talk about gifted students, then you have to ask gifted in what sense and in what domain. Just like you have the domain of social intelligence, a student may be gifted in that aspect gifted in terms of his social interactions with his peers and with his classmates. In some cases, maybe that is a much better skill/gift to have compared to a student who is gifted academically, but does not have equivalent, or at least average social intelligence. So we have to discuss gifted in what. Because, if you think about it, everybody is gifted in certain sense, you may be gifted in playing the violin, while I may be gifted in English or my linguistic abilities. The question you are asking is very important in terms of giftedness because if we consider “What is a general role of education? Why do we have schools?” This is a central point of the whole idea of having schools. If you want everybody to have access to certain material and then leave them (teaching them physics, chemistry, biology, math, Arabic, all

the subject in terms of knowledge). If that's the role of school, probably we will fail eventually. But if the role of schools is to give basics of all of that and then focus on the gift of each child and help him/her develop in a way that he feels or she is comfortable in and can excel in, maybe that should be the entire point of schooling.

**2- In your opinion, what are the characteristics of gifted students?**

Again, gifted in what sense? Gifted means that you can do a certain task effortlessly, much better than everybody else can. The others maybe can perform at the same level, but they have to put a lot of effort into it. Gifted people are people who do things sort of naturally, without having to put effort in it.

**3- How does your school cater to the needs of outstanding students?**

Let me tell you about the issue first; let's consider in the same perspective of multiple intelligences. Here we are talking of individualized instruction where you can give gifted children the attention that they need and opportunities that would help them develop in them in the best possible way (develop their skills in the best possible way). Because there are so many abilities and there are so many intelligences and gifts that people may have, catering to all these needs would become very difficult for schools. Still, we try by having several programs for the past ten years. We haven't been able to do it during the past 2 or 3 years, but for around 6 or 7 years we have been able to sustain a theater class (theater group) that had its yearly production every single year. We had students participating in

theater production for various authors. So in there we had truly gifted children in theater, who were able to find a space where they could develop their skills and, at the same time, with their skills they were able to grow their self-efficacy, the way they view themselves, their self-confidence, their linguistic abilities, and their ability to express themselves clearly. The theater was one example which was beyond academics where children that have these special gifts would be able to develop their abilities. On the other hand, when it comes to sport abilities for example let's consider a student who was particularly gifted in basketball, maybe we provided some an environment where he could play, but of course we could not provide the professional level of environment that a child of his abilities would need. So if that happens you outsource; you refer them to teams or to other places where they can get the support that they need. So in our schools, in terms of gifted in arts, we have the extracurricular or co-curricular activities, like the STEM club, where they can use their imagination to develop their skills, to become better at what they are gifted at. In case of musical expression, we have had music clubs and we have had concerts by children throughout the years. An area that they can sharpen their skills, of course not at the professional level. You cannot be professional music school and at the same be a professional academic school, but we do the best we can. We provide opportunities for these children to express their skills and become more confident in terms of what they can and what they can offer to others. And that is the key, I think, because in schools most often they focus on the academics and forget about everything else. At the same time, we shouldn't forget about the children who are academically gifted.

Children who are gifted academically can become better when they work in classrooms; sometimes teachers would give them extra exercises that they could solve. We have one very gifted child for example now in grade 12 and he is a challenge for the teachers. Because of him, the entire level of discussions in the classroom goes up to a different level. He discusses things with the teacher and when the teacher gives him ideas, he comes up with another. The others that are next to him, they also benefit from this discussion that goes deep into the subject, whether it is physics, or math, or whatever. People around gifted children are also affected positively if the gifted child is allowed to flourish. What I mean is that giftedness can also become a social interaction, not just gifted in terms of the student alone. So when the school gives opportunities of expressions for gifted children, it also helps itself and helps the others students in the classroom.

**4- Do you think that special programs for gifted students should be offered in schools in Lebanon? In your opinion, what would be an ideal program for gifted students?**

There should be specialized schools, certainly. I feel that some of the students are really wasting their talent away. But then again, if we return to somebody who is gifted in music for example. If they want to specialize in music, I had students who intended to do that and they did it. They graduated, they had to suffer through the secondary classes because they were gifted in playing the piano, but they had nothing to do with science or anything else. They were not interested in all of that, but they had to go through the process because that was the normal



thing to do. After graduation, they pursued their university degrees in Music. So, why not give them the opportunity to have a specialized music school who also teach academics, right the secondary level. You could have a school that teaches music primarily, but also teaches Science, Arabic, English because those are also important, but at a slightly lower level. Much like you would have in the British system, for example. The student can take a music appreciation class at level A, while English can be taken at level B, for example Economics can be taken at level C.

Certainly this could be the ideal program gifted students, but then the question would become “How do you measure this giftedness?” How do you quantify it to say that this child is gifted enough and has enough skills to go into this school for gifted children? We have one teacher who comes from the Soviet Union and he used to be a football player there. When I asked him one day “Coach how did you find yourself in this domain?” (he’s a teacher and at the same time he is a coach at our school, and he coaches teams professionally). He said that one day, people from the government came to our school and watched us play football. At the end of the day they came in with the principal to the classroom, we were 40 students in the class, and they said you and you and you starting tomorrow, you go to school specialized for football and you don’t continue your education here anymore. So he went that school, which was specialized in football, and right from the beginning there was this process of selection of people who were gifted in certain domain and allowing them to develop their skills. We don’t have that in Lebanon. In the Lebanese system, how fair you could be to allow these gifted

children to have access to such schools or colleges. I would love to have for example schools for gifted children in science, because I see the struggle.

Children who are truly gifted in Mathematics and Physics, and they hate Arabic, Joughrafya (Geography), and Economics. But we have them sit through that. The more interesting thing is that because they excel in Math, Physics, and Chemistry, but they do poorly in Arabic, if you look at their general average, the general average would be something like 70. Considering that this child is truly gifted, if you were in an environment where Arabic wasn't that important, then perhaps his general average would be in the 90 and he would have better opportunities in receiving scholarships, going to universities, and having the opportunity to use his gifts for the betterment of himself and the humankind. Sometimes, he loses these opportunities because of this generalized view of students in our schools. I am not talking about our school specifically; I am talking about schools in general. To be fair though, sometimes I see universities doing the selection process meticulously and focusing on the individual grades of students, rather than the general average.

- 5- Does your school offer any special services for gifted students? If yes, please describe these services.**

(Answered together with question number 3)

- 6- If not, what are the reasons these services are lacking at your school and/or schools in Lebanon in general?**

I would say first we're still living in a country that likes to categorize people in terms of sects. So many times if you go deeper, you discover that when two people meet, generally the discussion would begin in one asking the other "Where are you from?", meaning are you Christian, Muslim, if you're Christian, which sects etc. So we like that categorization thing. So we want to think about people as categories. In the Lebanese system we have one group called (if you consider the secondary students) "ES Sociology-Economics Students" – this is a category and people inside it are all the same more or less – and we have another category called "Scientific" (LS or GS) – these are the better people, smarter people, they have the better abilities and these are going to be the doctors and the engineers. Individualization in those categories is not encouraged. This is of course analysis, I am not talking about numbers, I don't have research about that, but this is something that we live in. The second reason is the corruption and stagnation in government, where "ungifted" people, people who do not have the correct abilities are responsible for curriculum development. They don't know what they are doing. They happen to be there by chance, or because somebody else in the government, or their sects pushed them into that position. So, curriculum development is stagnant because of the presence of such individuals, in addition to corruption, to the lack of funds, lack of intention. Just for you to know, I am sure that you are already familiar with this, the lack of funds should not really be a concern because in the past ten - twelve years almost a billion dollars has been spent on education in Lebanon from the European Union, from the USA, people have donated all over so that Lebanon would be able to develop its curriculum

efficiently. But that never materialized, again, because of known reasons. The top obstacle would certainly be about money. If I am planning to have a school for gifted children in science, then that would mean that I would need to have labs that are made for that purpose, equipment, specialized teachers. Gifted children need gifted teachers. That would mean that you would have to pay a lot of money to be able to get those teachers. So, if we are considering the private sector, certainly it would be a problem.

**7- In your opinion, what would be an ideal program for gifted students?**

(Answered together with question number 4)

## **Principal IV**

### **1- What are your views on giftedness? In other words, what do you think giftedness is?**

Diversity among students is found in each classroom and mainly schools focus on the average classroom, which is the majority and even put effort to help the academically weak students. Rarely do they challenge the gifted student who can excel in a given domain with support of school and parents. We need to have more awareness how to guide gifted learners and tailor work for them to let them shine.

### **2- In your opinion, what are the characteristics of gifted students?**

A gifted student may have above average skills in a specific given domain.

### **3- How does your school cater to the needs of outstanding students?**

Through differentiated class work, our teachers address the below average, average and above average, through offering different ways of learning, homework submission and also projects and assessment tools.

### **4- Do you think that special programs for gifted students should be offered in schools in Lebanon?**

Special training needs to be tailored to all school teachers so they individually follow up and cater the needs of the students whatever they are.

### **5- Does your school offer any special services for gifted students? If yes, please describe these services.** Differentiated program and parents awareness meetings and mini workshops

**6- If not, what are the reasons these services are lacking at your school and/or schools in Lebanon in general?**

*(Not Answered)*

**7- In your opinion, what would be an ideal program for gifted students?**

A program that trains teachers (an administrator, counselor, teachers), keeps records, and involves parents to be their partners in guiding these gifted kids into brighter horizons than the limits of the Lebanese curricula and classroom

## **Principal V**

### **1. What are your views on giftedness? In other words, what do you think giftedness is?**

Talent or gift, a value given by God that should be valued, encouraged, and nurtured. The gifted have a role, a duty to do in the world / universe, if they are ignored, the nature will be completely deprived of that talent-gift.

### **2. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of gifted students?**

- a) A person, who is born with a gift that he does not know when or how to get acquainted with.
- b) After knowing, he/she will first experience the joy of being special, then` the frustration of being different, and will eventually face all the hardships that come with being gifted, such as rejection from others, envy, and so on.
- c) As we see, there are more difficulties that he/she will face, except in the domain in which he/she is gifted, and that gift will make his/her life easier in that domain, for example, if he/she is gifted in mathematics, this domain will be easy for him/her, or in music. arts ...

### **3. How does your school cater to the needs of outstanding students?**

Unfortunately, our college does not have a special section for gifted students (like many schools). Our work is limited to encouragement, helping gifted students to develop their abilities, informing the parents about their child's gifts, and so on.

**4. Do you think that special programs for gifted students should be offered in schools in Lebanon?**

Yes, of course, schools should have a special program for gifted students. As I said before, their gifts not only help the gifted individual, but when it is developed, the country, the world, humanity will benefit from it.

**5. Does your school offer any special services for gifted students? If yes, please describe these services.**

Unfortunately, only partially. teachers encourage gifted students by giving them extra work, exercises, books, and experiments. They also encourage gifted students to participate in various competitions where they will use and develop their abilities.

**6. If not, what are the reasons these services are lacking at your school and/or schools in Lebanon in general?**

We do not have this program because:

- a) Financial reasons
- b) The Lebanese state program does not have special governmental exams for talented people (like the special exams for students with special needs).
- c) Teachers are also not trained to deal with talented students in the right way in order to orient them correctly.



- d) We have a psychological group who will work with students with special needs in terms of disabilities. When they notice a group of talented students, try to help them in the ways mentioned in number 3.
- e) Finally, the Lebanese government program, which is very difficult, at the same time very old-fashioned, not valuable, hinders students from having special sections such as talented people in arts, sports, etc. In order for students to be admitted to a university, they must pass a state exam; the school is obliged to ensure its success.

**7. In your opinion, what would be an ideal program for gifted students?**

If we consider a program for gifted students from a purely educational point of view, it can be taught according to the “gifts” of the students in the upper classes, not change the program.

If you need a complete program, in that case:

- a) A Lebanese official program must be adopted; setting standards by which schools can prepare gifted students to go to university.
- b) To have a professional psychological team, who will engage with gifted students and will create for them the appropriate environment in which it will be easier for gifted students to get along with the other students and to give the gifted students the ability to live "normally".
  - Note . Of course, it is this team that must determine whether a student is gifted, after a conducting assessments.

- c) Professional teachers in all subjects are needed to work with gifted students, so that they can help gifted students develop their full potential according to their abilities.
- d) Have technical, laboratory, art equipment and facilities for practical and experimental purposes

## **Principal VI**

### **1- What are your views on giftedness? In other words, what do you think giftedness is?**

I am really amazed by gifted students and I like to encourage these students as well as their parents and their teachers to let them develop their skills and improve more and more their performance in a specific field in which they are interested and would like to improve themselves.

I think giftedness represents special skills that are developed in some people and that makes them special in a specific field.

### **2- In your opinion, what are the characteristics of gifted students?**

In my opinion, the characteristics of gifted students are their special and in most of the times rare approach or interest in a specific domain. I think they have unique characters since their interest may vary from their peers, and sometimes I doubt and I am afraid that some gifted students may have introverted characters or have maybe less social skills than others once again because they may have other interests than their peers.

### **3- How does your school cater to the needs of outstanding students?**

Our school does not have a special curriculum or program for gifted students, but the administration and the teachers encourage these students and their skills

and/or talents by finding a specific task or occasion to let them express themselves whenever it is possible.

**4- Do you think that special programs for gifted students should be offered in schools in Lebanon?**

Yes, special programs or extra sessions well studied and prepared by special educators must be offered to gifted students in schools in Lebanon.

**5- Does your school offer any special services for gifted students? If yes, please describe the services.**

Same answer as in question number 3.

**6- If not, what are the reasons these services are lacking at your school and/or schools in Lebanon in general?**

I guess these services are lacking in schools because of the following three reasons:

- Lack of special trainings to help detect the giftedness and know the need of a gifted student.
- Lack of special educators to help detect gifted students and know the need of a gifted student.
- Lack of financial support for special programs for gifted students.

**7- In your opinion, what would be an ideal program for gifted students?**

In my opinion, a program prepared for gifted students must be a customized program suitable to the interests and needs of each student as well as prepared by educators, special educators and specialists in the field of interest of the gifted student.



## **Principal VII**

### **1. What are your views on giftedness? In other words, what do you think giftedness is?**

Giftedness is a special talent. Sometimes, it is also a distinguishing ability; an ability that can be related to human formation or an ability that is innate. It is neither exclusively innate nor acquired. Both are possible or they can grow together.

### **2. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of gifted students?**

As we said in the first place, it is a distinguishing ability (which is distinguished from the norm and average ability) as compared to that of the same age groups. They have better abilities and are fast problem solvers in a given field. They are proactive, initiative takers, and creative. In general, these are the characteristics: fast problem solvers, quick perceiver, skilled, initiative takers, and creative.

### **3. How does your school cater to the needs of outstanding students?**

We adopt methods of encouragements, that is, sometimes bonuses are awarded and sometimes prizes are given during extracurricular activities or at the end of the year ceremony. However, of course, if there is to be a systemic approach, the ideal way to cater for the needs of outstanding students would be different. It is the encouragement methods that are used primarily at our school. Gifted students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their outstanding skills to their surrounding. We give them the opportunity to be on stage, give them a chance to perform, and

award prizes (other than the bonuses). This refers to academic and non-academic domains, such as chess and drawing. We give them an opportunity for an exhibition, and in the case of chess, there is a tournament specified by the school on a sports day, and they are awarded accordingly.

**4. Do you think that special programs for gifted students should be offered in schools in Lebanon?**

I am convinced that in every school, special programs for gifted students should be adopted at the level of the country. This is because, in general, the current emphasis is on helping the students who have difficulties. The rights of gifted students are forgotten. They are sometimes deprived of their right of a special program because the teachers are determined to teaching at the average level, where the majority of the students are, so that the lesson is accessible to all. The gifted students have opportunities to go beyond that, but they are deprived of them. In general, the emphasis is on students with disabilities rather than the gifted students. gifted students will receive special attention by receiving awards during special events. Unfortunately, there is no such thing as an education system that gives gifted students their fair share. We are talking about a diversified education system – differentiated education – which is something that requires financial resources and appropriate professional staff to exist, which is not the case with our school.

**5. Does your school offer any special services for gifted students? If yes, please describe these services.**

Other than encouraging and rewarding the gifted students, we did the following differently. For example, students who excel in mathematics have engaged in a program called the Math Contest. I can say that we have implemented it for four summers. It is done only in the summers, but it is a special program designed only for those who are gifted at it. It is based on an American textbook and it is divided into levels; it was a quite interesting competition. However, it has not been permanent.

**6. If not, what are the reasons these services are lacking at your school and/or schools in Lebanon in general?**

First of all, some people are unfortunately not convinced at the idea. There is a question of consciousness that gifted students must be entitled to receive education in differentiated ways. They do not accept it. If they cater to the needs of students with difficulties/disabilities, through special educators, they consider their job done. However, the truth is that special educators want gifted programs as well. In my opinion, first of all, there is a lack of conviction and consciousness. Second, there is a lack of specialists in the field. Specialists are generally reluctant to work on difficulties that some students have. That is, a special educator is generally required for teaching students with disabilities. In fact, I have not met a special educator who said that he/she is working on specialized programs and differentiated instructions for gifted students. And the third reason

is that, even if the above mentioned two reasons exist – people are convinced and the appropriate team is available – there is a lack of funding and financial resources.

**7. In your opinion, what would be an ideal program for gifted students?**

The ideal program for gifted students must be integrated into the general system, and the concept of this differentiated education/instruction must be adopted/accepted by everyone. This may be the solution. In other words, gifted education should be part of the general curriculum, just as catering for the needs of students with disabilities is integrated into the general educational system and curriculum. These programs should be developed at the governmental level and adopted by every school.