

## Adjustment Problems and Self-efficacy among Gifted Students in Salt Pioneer Center

Jihad Turki\* and Lama Majed Al-Qaisy\*\*

\**Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Tafila Technical University (TTU), P.O. Box (179), Tafila (66110), Jordan*  
*E-mail: <dr.alturk@hotmail.com>, \*\*<lamaqaisy@yahoo.com>*

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**ABSTRACT** The relationships between adjustment problems and self-efficacy were investigated in a sample of 80 gifted students who were studying in 7th- 10th enrolled at Salt Pioneer Center, using the adjustment problems scale and self-efficacy scale. The results indicated that the gifted students showed mid levels of adjustment problems. In addition, results showed a significant correlation between total scores of adjustment problems and self-efficacy. It showed there are indicated that no differences between self-efficacy and gender, also it is not statistically significant between adjustment problems and variables (gender and class) of the gifted students, but significant difference between interaction class and gender attributed to male and 8th class.

### INTRODUCTION

Gifted students are as vulnerable as their non-gifted peers to social and emotional problems in their childhood and adolescence (Pfeiffer and Stocking 2000). Because of their giftedness or being labeled gifted, might also be associated with unique characteristics that place them at a higher risk for specific social and emotional problems (Neihart 1999; Tannenbaum 1997). These problems may arise from gifted students' needs for learning and thinking at a pace and level unmatched by the educational environments, their creativity, energy, intensity, aspirations, and developmental asynchronies, as well as their concerns for finding compatible friends and coping with feeling different (Genshaft et al. 1995; Swiatek 1995). Further, these adjustment problems could be expected to become more salient with the highly gifted students, who might feel even more different from their non-gifted age peers (Shek Chan and Lee 1997). Thus, gifted students, especially the highly gifted, might be at greater risk for specific adjustment difficulties that might merit counseling attention and preventive interventions. In this connection, it has been suggested that, in

general, the greater the gift, the greater the counseling need and the need for preventive interventions (Davis and Rimm 1998; Moon et al. 1997). Webb (1993) argues that intrapersonal or endogenous factors are frequently cited as the cause for maladjustment when in fact the larger risk stems from contextual factors. Thus, for example, under-achievement or emotional difficulties may be associated with poverty, inappropriate educational placement or curriculum demands, or family factors (Neihart 1999; Zeidner and Schleyer 1999). In Pirlto's (1999) study, intellectually gifted student from unhappy homes were found to be more troubled or disturbed and Robinson and Noble (1991) concluded 'Like other students, the problems gifted students bring to counseling usually arise from family relationships'. The negative effects of growing up in a 'hurried' or 'hothouse' environment have been demonstrated (Freeman 1998).

Despite the research base demonstrating favorable psychosocial adjustment of intellectually gifted individuals, particularly in the pre-adolescent period, several authors have identified 'specific stresses' that are associated with giftedness (Pirlto 1999; Moon et al. 1997). These specific pressures, which may stem from endogenous or exogenous sources, bestow upon gifted youth challenges that are unique or intensified relative to their average ability peers. These pressures include endogenous factors such as the management of uneven and extreme rates of development, heightened psychological inten-

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*Address for Correspondence:*  
 Dr. Lama M. Al-Qaisy  
 Department of Psychology,  
 Faculty of Education,  
 Tafila Technical University,  
 P.O. Box (179), Tafila (66110), Jordan  
*E-mail: lamaqaisy@yahoo.com*

sity, sensitivity (Cross Coleman and Stewart 1993; Silverman 1993), perfectionism, multi-potentiality, high expectations of self- concept and self-efficacy (Piechowski 1997; Davis and Rimm 1998). In general, the self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes, which are: 1-cognitive, 2-motivational, 3-affective and 4- selection processes (Bandura 1994). Each period of development brings with it new challenges for coping efficacy. As adolescents approach the demands of adulthood, they must learn to assume full responsibility for themselves in almost every dimension of life (Schuler 2000). This requires mastering many new skills and the ways of adult society. Learning how to deal with pubertal changes, emotionally invested partnerships and sexuality becomes a matter of considerable importance. The task of choosing what lifework to pursue also looms large during this period. These are but a few of the areas in which new competencies and self-beliefs of efficacy have to be developed (Robbins and Kliewer 2000; Silverman 1993).

With growing independence during adolescence, some experimentation with risky behavior is not all that uncommon. Adolescents expand and strengthen their sense of efficacy by learning how to deal successfully with potentially troublesome matters in which they are unpracticed as well as with advantageous life events (Pajares and Schunk 2001). Insulation from problematic situations leaves one ill-prepared to cope with potential difficulties. Whether adolescents forsake risky activities or become chronically enmeshed in them is determined by the interplay of personal competencies, self-management efficacy and the prevailing influences in their lives (Kimberly and McClendon 2002).

Impoverished hazardous environments present especially harsh realities with minimal resources and social supports for culturally-valued pursuits, but extensive modeling, incentives and social supports for transgressive styles of behavior. Such environments severely tax the coping efficacy of youth enmeshed in them to make it through adolescence in ways that do not irreversibly foreclose many beneficial life paths (Siegle and Schuler 2000; Janos and Robinson 1985).

## Factors Affecting Self-efficacy

Bandura (1997) shows four sources affecting self efficacy:

### 1. *Experience*

“Mastery experience” is the most important factor deciding a person’s self efficacy. Simply, success raises self- efficacy, failure lowers it.

### 2. *Modeling*

Social persuasions relate to encouragements/discouragements. These can have a strong influence most people remember times where something said to them severely altered their confidence.

So positive persuasions increase self- efficacy whereas negative persuasions decrease it. It is generally easier to decrease someone’s self efficacy than it is to increase it.

### 3. *Social Persuasions*

Social persuasions relate to encouragements/discouragements. These can have a strong influence. Most people remember times where something said to them severely altered their confidence. Where positive persuasions increase self- efficacy, negative persuasions decrease it. It is generally easier to decrease someone’s self-efficacy than it is to increase it.

### 4. *Physiological Factors*

In unusual, stressful situations, people commonly exhibit signs of distress; shakes, aches and pains, fatigue, fear, nausea. A person’s perceptions of these responses can markedly alter a person’s self- efficacy.

## Types of Self-efficacy

- **Self-Regulatory Self-efficacy:** ability to resist peer pressure, avoid high-risk activities.
- **Social Self-efficacy:** ability to form and maintain relationships is assertive, engage in leisure time activities.
- **Academic Self-efficacy:** ability to do course work, regulate learning activities, meet expectancies (Eden and Aviram 1993).

According to Bandura, Self-Regulation strongly depends on self-efficacy beliefs. “Perceived

self-efficacy influences the level of goal challenge people set for themselves, the amount of effort they mobilize, and their persistence in the face of difficulties. Perceived self-efficacy is theorized to influence performance accomplishments both directly and indirectly through its influences on self-set goals (Zimmerman et al. 1992; Shafran and Mansell 2001).

Bandura's (1994) social cognitive theory postulates that perceived self-efficacy affects an individual in all aspects of life, including educational experiences. Beliefs about one's competence to successfully perform a task can affect motivation, interest, and achievement. Bandura et al. (1996) the higher the perceived efficacy, the higher the goal aspirations people adopt and the firmer their commitment to achieving those goals. An important assumption of Social Cognitive Theory is that personal determinants, such as forethought and self-reflection, do not have to reside unconsciously within individuals. People can consciously change and develop their cognitive functioning. This is important to the proposition that self-efficacy too can be changed, or enhanced.

Drawing on self-efficacy theory, it can be assumed that self-efficacious students also have adjustment difficulties, but they perceive more challenge than threat or loss of control. Moreover, while they do have ups and downs in mood and performance, their perceived self-efficacy or optimistic efficacy beliefs help them manage the negative affective experiences before these experiences become stabilized as symptoms of psychological distress (Chwalisz et al. 1992). Alternatively, a lack of self-efficacy or low self-efficacy might be associated with anxiety, worry, and self-doubts (Schwarzer and Greenglass 1999). Thus, it can be conjectured that control beliefs may mediate the impact of adjustment difficulties on the psychological well-being of students (Parkes 1991). The present study aimed at examining the relationships between adjustment problems and self-efficacy in a sample of salt center gifted students.

### Limitations of the Study

The present study was applied only on (7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> class) at salt pioneer center for students.

## METHODS

The study was undertaken at Salt Pioneer Center for students from 13-16 year. The center

attracts many gifted students and enrolls students from various social, cultural and religious backgrounds.

### Participants

The participants for the study were 80 students (40 male and 40 female) who are studying in 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> enrolled at the center. (See Table 1).

**Table 1: The distribution of the study sample according to their gender and class**

Class	Gender	
	Male	Female
7 <sup>th</sup>	12	10
8 <sup>th</sup>	8	11
9 <sup>th</sup>	9	8
10 <sup>th</sup>	11	10
Total	40	40

### Measures

#### *Adjustment Problems Scale*

Adjustment Problems Scale contains 24 items. Six problem areas are assessed: Intense Involvement, Multipotentiality, Parental Expectations, Perfectionism, Poor Interpersonal Relationships, and Unchallenging Schoolwork. Each problem area is represented by four items, and respondents respond to each item by rating the extent to which these adjustment problems are descriptive of them or apply to them using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all descriptive) to 5 (very descriptive) (Chwalisz et al. 1992).

#### *The Self-efficacy Scale*

The Self-efficacy Scale (Pajares 1997) is used. It contains 10- item developed to assess gifted students' perceived self-efficacy in general. Two factor areas are assessed: perseverance and resourcefulness. In completing the self-efficacy scale, respondents are requested to judge how true the items could describe them in a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 4 (exactly true). A total score can be obtained by summing the item responses, and a higher score reflects greater self-efficacy.

## Hypotheses

- 1- There is a significant difference in adjustment problems of gifted students.
- 2- There is a significant difference in self-efficacy of gifted students.
- 3 There is a significant difference in adjustment problems due to gender and class.
- 4- There is significant difference in self-efficacy due to gender and class.
- 5- There is a relationship between adjustment problems and self-efficacy.

## RESULTS

To know the intensity of the range of gifted students adjustment problems, means and standard deviation have been computed, and they are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Means, and standard deviations for the degree of factor adjustment problems by gifted students**

Factor solution of adjustment problems	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Poor interpersonal relationship	80	3.3313	.95116
Intense involvement	80	2.4625	.93972
Unchallenging schoolwork	80	2.3313	.52887
Parental expectations	80	2.2094	.87642
perfectionism	80	2.1375	.81608
Multi potentiality	80	1.9688	.63067
Total		2.4068	.52488

The means of factor adjustment problems are (3.33, 2.46, 2.33, 2.209, 2.13, 1.96) respectively. That means the high scores in poor interpersonal relationship factor and the sever score in multi potentiality factor. This indicated that gifted students total adjustment problems score is at a mild level there are presented in Table 2.

To know intensity of gifted students self-efficacy, mean and standard deviation have been computed as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Means, and standard deviations for the degree of self-efficacy by gifted students**

Factor solution of self-efficacy	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Perseverance	80	3.3650	.32728
Resourcefulness	80	2.0350	.63228
Total		2.7000	.43487

Table 3 shows the mean factor of self-efficacy are (3.36, 2.03) respectively. That means

the high scores in perseverance factor and the sever score in resourcefulness factor. This indicated that gifted students total self-efficacy score is at a mild level there are presented in Table 3.

To knowing the difference between adjustment problems by gifted students attributed to class and gender have been computed mean, and standard deviation, are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: 2 way ANOVA of adjustment problems by gifted students attributed to class and gender**

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Class	.825	3	.275	1.124	.345
Gender	.372	1	.372	1.523	.221
Class * Gender	2.959	3	.986	4.033	.010
Error	17.609	72	.245		
Total	485.168	80			
Corrected Total	21.765	79			

Ratio shows that F is not statistically significant at .05 level. This means that there is no difference in adjustment problems for gender and class of the gifted students. But statistically significant with interaction between class and gender (F 4.033), hence calculated means, and standard deviations to knowing the differences. (see Table 5).

**Table 5: Means, and standard deviations for the degree of interaction between class and gender in adjustment problems**

Class	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. deviation
7 <sup>th</sup>	2.4833	.52271	2.6750	.51849
8 <sup>th</sup>	2.7042	.47728	1.9292	.35684
9 <sup>th</sup>	2.4125	.54378	2.3125	.08839
10 <sup>th</sup>	2.3000	.72882	2.4375	.47396
Total	2.4750	.57339	2.3385	.46877

Table 5 shows the means to interaction between gender and class are (2.4833, 2.7042, 2.4125, 2.300, 2.6750, 1.9292, 2.3125, 2.4375) respectively. That means the high scores in the male in class 8<sup>th</sup> there are presented in Table 5.

To knowing the difference between self-efficacy by gifted students attributed to class and gender have been computed mean, and standard deviation, are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 shows that the obtained F value is statistically significant. This means that there is self-efficacy differ with gender and class of the gifted students attributed to class (F 29.943). But not statistically significant with interaction

**Table 6: 2 way ANOVA of self-efficacy by gifted students attributed to class and gender**

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Class	8.137	3	2.712	29.943	.000
Gender	.025	1	.025	.270	.605
Gender * class	.256	3	.085	.944	.424
Error	6.522	72	.091		
Total	598.140	80			
Corrected Total	14.940	79			

between class and gender, hence we used Post Hoc Tests (Scheffe) to knowing the differences between classes, (See Table 7).

**Table 7: Post Hoc Tests (Scheffe) class**

Class	7	8	9	10
	2.17	2.89	2.73	3.01
7	-	0.71*	.055*	0.834*
2.17				
8	-	-	0.155	0.125
2.89				
9	-	-	-	*0.28
2.73				
10	-	-	-	-
3.01				

There are statistically significant differences between students of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> classes attributed to class 8<sup>th</sup> (2.89), also between students of 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> attributed to class 9<sup>th</sup> (2.73), and between students of 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> attributed to class 10<sup>th</sup> (3.01) there are presented in Table 7.

To knowing the relationship between adjustment problems and self-efficacy, have been computed correlation test. (see Table 8).

**Table 8: Correlation between adjustment problems and self-efficacy**

Factor of adjustment problems	Factor of self-efficacy		
	Perseve- rance	Resource fulness	Total
Poor interpersonal relationship	-.184	-.355**	-.267*
Intense involvement	-.303**	-.285*	-.328**
Unchallenging schoolwork	-.095	-.072	-.096
Parental expectations	-.066	-.036	-.062
perfectionism	-.112	.090	-.047
Multi potentiality	.077	.170	.120
Total	-.171	-.195	-.206*

There is significant correlation between total scores of adjustment problems and self-efficacy that is (-.206\*) and significant correlation in poor interpersonal relationship, intense involvement and resourcefulness (-.355\*\*,-.303\*\*

and -.285\*) respectively. While not significant correlation in others factors between adjustment problems and self-efficacy there are presented in Table 8.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study are consistent with derived research demonstrate mid levels adjustment problems in gifted students. This study provided data that poor interpersonal relationship adding intense involvement to cover problems arising from gifted students. According to the study of Chan (2003), less salient was the problem of poor interpersonal relationships. Pollins (1983) is in contradiction to that of the present study; the result shows that the gifted children did show significantly better adjustment than did the athletes. Results of this study indicate that statistically is not significant between adjustment problems, and variables (gender and class) of the gifted students, at the same time, statistically significant with interaction between class and gender for male and 8<sup>th</sup> class. This is conformity to the studies of (Janos and Robinson 1985; Neihart 1999). In addition results indicated there is no difference between self-efficacy and gender. The finding of the study conducted by Chan (2007) is a contradiction to that of the present study. In other hand, the result indicated the significant correlation between adjustment problems and self-efficacy. According Gross (1994) has stated that the gifted student are higher expectation of self-efficacy than other students.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to recognize the adjustment problems and self-efficacy of the gifted students, since the results benefit the teachers of special education and educational experts in recognizing the level of adjustment problems and self-efficacy of the gifted students. It is also possible to conduct similar studies by using different variables with different ages and instruction, in addition, to conducting contrastive studies between gifted and normal students with other variables.

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