



Research Article

An investigation of the views of parents of gifted children on the influences of the labeling

Derya Uygun^{1*} and Sahil Ceylan²

Mustafa Kemal Primary School, Eskisehir, Turkiye

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Abstract

The identification of gifted individuals and the use of the 'gifted' label for these individuals remain controversial topics in educational literature, both pedagogically and socially. While research on the effects of this label on individuals has been conducted, studies focusing on parents' experiences and perceptions remain limited. This study aims to examine the perceptions of parents of 8-year-old gifted children regarding the labeling process and the influence of this label on their children's social and academic lives. The study was conducted using a phenomenological approach, a qualitative research design. It was carried out in 2025 with nine parents (six mothers, three fathers; age range: 30-43) whose children had officially been identified as gifted. Data were collected through a semi-structured interview form titled "Parents' Views on the Labeling Effects of Gifted Children" and analyzed thematically. The findings of the study were structured around four main themes and 13 subthemes. First, under the theme of reactions to giftedness identification, it was observed that parents had both positive (happiness, pride, excitement) and negative (anxiety, uncertainty, fear of inadequacy) emotional responses to the identification of their children as gifted. Under the theme of the effect of identification, it was found that some parents took more conscious steps toward developing their child's potential, accepted the identification, and normalized it; while others did not observe any change in their children and did not inform their child about the identification. Third, under the theme of the effect of the gifted label on social relationships of gifted children, most parents reported no significant changes in social relationships, while some stated that their children experienced an increase in self-confidence after the identification. Lastly, under the theme of the effect of gifted labeling on academic success, it was found that children showed tendencies such as fast learning, dislike for repetition, and development of academic control. Some parents stated that the identification positively contributed to academic success in some cases, while in other cases, the effect was limited. Despite the limitations, such as the small number of participants and focusing only on one age group, the findings provide valuable insights for the development of strategies for talent management in early childhood. Based on the findings of this study, a holistic support model consisting of three stages is proposed for the families of gifted children.

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Introduction

Labeling is one of the most significant challenges in special education. In the early identification process, some parents hesitate to engage due to concerns about the potential social, psychological, and academic consequences of labeling. Even when parents recognize their child's special educational needs, they may avoid the identification process out of fear that the label will become a permanent identity and negatively affect their child's future education and social life.

Dweck (2000) argued that the label "gifted" reinforces the belief that intelligence is fixed and sends the message to students that intelligence is an immutable trait. According to Dweck (2000), this label gives students the impression that

¹ Dr., Teacher of gifted, Ministry of National Education, Turkey. E-mail: derya.u1@gmail.com ORCID: 0000-0001-6423-1914

² Dr., Ministry of National Education, Turkey. ORCID: 0009-0001-9536-9163

a great deal of intelligence has been magically bestowed upon them, making them special. Students labeled this way may be less inclined to make an effort to develop their abilities in order to justify the label. Students who believe their intelligence is special may feel ordinary and worthless if they lose the label. This concern highlights the importance of fostering the understanding that intelligence is changeable, an idea that has been frequently emphasized in recent literature (Subotnik et. al, 2012).

In this context, the consequences of labeling are increasingly being questioned not only for individuals with disabilities but also for students labeled as "gifted." In Turkey, while the term "gifted" generally evokes positive associations, there are growing concerns about the potential social pressure and stigmatizing effects this label may have on students. In educational policy, there has been a shift towards using more inclusive and non-labeling language, and in the 2013 Strategy and Implementation Plan, a recommendation was made to use the term "special talent" instead of "gifted" (TÜBİTAK, 2013).

Educational literature highlights both the advantages and disadvantages of labeling. On the one hand, labeling can facilitate access to appropriate educational services (Gagné, 2011); on the other hand, it can create a self-fulfilling prophecy, shaping expectations from the child's academic and social environment (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). While it provides children with access to tailored educational opportunities, it can also lead to stigmatization, discrimination, and exclusion (Lindsay, 2007). This issue affects both students with special needs and gifted children. For some parents, the giftedness label is perceived as a privilege, while for others, it is associated with heightened expectations and the risk of social isolation (Matthews et al., 2014).

Parents play a pivotal role in shaping their children's self-concept and attitudes towards learning. When parents hold positive perceptions of giftedness, they are more likely to foster an environment that encourages exploration and academic achievement (Wilson, 2015). Conversely, negative perceptions may lead to stress and anxiety for both the child and the family, potentially hindering the child's development and well-being (Leana-Taşçılar et al., 2016). Furthermore, existing literature indicates that parental attitudes toward giftedness can significantly affect their children's self-perception and emotional well-being (Reis-Jorge et al., 2021). For instance, parents' understanding of giftedness can shape their expectations and interactions with their children, affecting the children's academic motivation and social relationships (Tercan & Bıçakçı, 2022; Leana-Taşçılar et al., 2016).

Despite the importance of parental perceptions in the context of gifted education, there is a lack of comprehensive qualitative research that explores the nuanced views of parents regarding the giftedness label (Sezgin, 2020). This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the perceptions of families with 8-year-old gifted children regarding the giftedness label. The findings of this research are expected to help parents develop a more informed perspective on the labeling process and support them in guiding their children's educational journeys more effectively. In this context, the study also aims to provide valuable insights for educators, fostering greater parental awareness and engagement in the education of gifted children.

Labelling theory

Labeling theory is a social theory that argues that both individuals' behaviors and society's attitudes toward them change after labeling. Although this theory is primarily used to explain behaviors considered deviant by society, it has also been applied in the context of gifted education (Guskin et al. 1986). Students labeled as gifted may perceive themselves differently from their non-labeled peers. As a result, certain behaviors, such as perfectionism, may emerge, which can be interpreted either positively or negatively. Gifted children may be subject to stereotyped views of their personality or abilities. For example, classmates or even teachers might assume a "gifted" child is socially awkward or arrogant or conversely expect them to be well-behaved and successful at everything (Gates, 2010). These stereotypes can alter how the child is treated and how they form their identity. Some gifted youth feel uncomfortable being singled out and just want to fit in with peers. In fact, many gifted students report mixed or even negative feelings about the label, associating it with being "different" (Gates, 2010).

Labeling theory suggests that once a child is publicly labeled, their social interactions change. Gifted students can experience exclusion or bullying from age-mates due to envy or the perception of being the "teacher's pet" (Gates, 2010).

They might also self-isolate or be excluded, feeling that others don't understand them. Some adolescents report ambivalence about being labeled, noting that it sets them apart in ways that are not always positive (Robinson, 1990; Cross & Coleman, 1993).

In summary, labeling theory and halo effect are complementary in explaining how the gifted label influences educational experiences. Labeling theory provides the overarching cycle of label and response, the halo effect highlights immediate perception biases due to the label. Recognizing all two helps educators and parents understand the full picture. Parents play a crucial role in how the gifted label affects a child. Their perceptions of the label can influence how they support or pressure their child and how they communicate about the child to others.

Understanding how parents perceive the giftedness label and its effect on their children requires a theoretical framework that explains the broader social and psychological consequences of labeling. Labeling theory and Halo effect, widely used in social psychology, provide a valuable framework for explaining parents' perceptions of the giftedness label. These theories are essential for understanding how children labeled as gifted, and their families adapt to societal reactions and how this label influences children's academic and social lives.

Halo Effect and the Perception of Giftedness

The halo effect is a cognitive bias that occurs when an individual generalizes about a person, object, or institution based on limited information (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). This process can be considered an attempt to predict missing information based on what is already known, and it can result in both positive and negative perceptions. In the educational context, a general perception formed based on a single prominent characteristic may overshadow other attributes of a student, influencing how they are treated and potentially leading to negative educational outcomes.

However, the increased parental involvement in their children's education contradicts the assumption proposed by the halo effect, which suggests that "gifted students, due to their innate abilities, do not require additional educational support." The findings indicate that parents actively seek more enrichment opportunities for their children, recognizing the necessity of specialized educational interventions to meet the unique learning needs of gifted students. This challenges the misconception that gifted children can thrive without tailored support and highlights the role of parents in advocating for their children's academic development.

The study conducted by Ferrandiz et al. (2025) demonstrates that both teachers and parents can exhibit the halo effect toward gifted children. The research found that when a student was labeled as gifted, teachers perceived them significantly differently. The same student description was used, but with the addition of the "gifted" label. The results indicated that students identified as gifted were not only perceived as more intelligent but also as more motivated, better-behaved, more physically attractive, and more athletically capable.

Literature Review

In recent years, scholarly attention has increasingly focused on examining how the application of the giftedness label shapes children's self-concepts, parental roles, and educational trajectories within contemporary sociocultural contexts. Pfeiffer and Foley-Nicpon (2021) indicates that labeling exerts a significant influence not only on children's self-perception but also on interpersonal dynamics with peers, educators, and family members.

The identification of giftedness often serves as a crucial moment for parents, reshaping their understanding of their child's abilities and educational needs. When parents encounter the "gifted" label for their children, they often begin to have higher academic expectations. This can sometimes create pressures such as perfectionism or competitiveness for the children (Rimm, 2008; Adams-Byers et al., 2004). Researchers like Jolly and Matthews (2012) have observed that parents of labeled children tend to advocate more strongly for participation in special education programs. However, this label can also highlight social pressures and a sense of superiority in parents, which may lead them to hide the existence of the label in order to avoid societal judgments (Sezgin, 2020).

The gifted label also carries social consequences. The "gifted" label can lead to social isolation and exclusion among children. Labeled children may be perceived as "elitist" or "nerds" by their peers, which can create difficulties in their social relationships (Morawska & Sanders, 2008). However, parents' attitudes can help balance these negative effects. Positive parental attitudes can support children in overcoming these challenges (Yildiz & Altay, 2021).

Öpengin and Sak (2012) found that while no significant change was observed in the overall perceptions of students labeled as gifted, their perceptions regarding peer relationships were negatively affected. This finding suggests that labeling may have adverse effects on social adjustment. While Öpengin and Sak (2012) contribute important findings regarding peer relations of gifted-labeled students, their study is limited to student perceptions and does not consider the role of family dynamics or educational context in shaping these outcomes.

Some descriptive literature exists on how parents react to the gifted label. Freeman (2010) conducted an extensive longitudinal study of the lives of 20 high-potential individuals in the UK, documenting that some of them were identified as gifted during their childhood. According to Freeman, children whose parents presented them as gifted were more likely to experience emotional difficulties, have fewer friends, and be seen as more “challenging” individuals (p. 205). In the section on the influence of the gifted label, Freeman discusses the case of a musically talented girl whose parents imposed heavy expectations on her to excel, based on this label. The pressure led to negative outcomes, which had lasting effects on her life. Nevertheless, the same chapter also shares the story of another child who, despite the gifted label, grew up to be a successful adult. Freeman (2010) suggests that many of the challenges faced by children with the gifted label may actually be attributed to other external factors, rather than the label itself. Freeman’s (2010) study is one of the rare longitudinal investigations that examines the effects of the “gifted” label on children’s lives within a temporal framework. However, the time that has passed since its publication highlights the importance of supporting these findings with contemporary research.

Sezgin (2020) aimed to understand how parents experience their children’s gifted identification and how this label affects their parenting roles, relationships with their children, and psychosocial status. The study included three different groups of parents: those whose children had received the gifted label, those with gifted children who had not been labeled, and those with typically developing children. The research was conducted through focus group discussions, the Parental Perception of Child’s Intelligence Scale, and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicate that the giftedness label becomes a key aspect of parental identity, bringing social pressure, superiority bias, and emotional effects. Parents of identified children sometimes chose to conceal the label due to high societal expectations, which also influenced their social interactions. Additionally, while the giftedness label facilitates access to special education opportunities, it has also been found to create a market/sector that may contribute to social stratification in education.

The study indicates that parents of children who received the gifted label were more affected by it compared to other groups, experienced social pressure, and sometimes tended to conceal the label. However, the study does not directly examine changes in children’s academic and social lives before and after identification. While the research explores changes in parents’ perceptions of the label, it does not provide a detailed analysis of the transformations in children’s socio-academic processes.

Matthews et al. (2014) examined how parents navigate the use of the giftedness label and the factors influencing their decision to use or avoid it. Their study, which included 106 parents, utilized open-ended survey questions analyzed phenomenologically. The findings indicate that many parents were hesitant to use the gifted label due to concerns about societal judgment, potential misconceptions, and fears of their child being perceived as different. Instead of directly referring to their children as gifted, some parents emphasized specific achievements or personality traits to avoid negative social reactions. Parents of twice-exceptional children often prioritized discussing their child’s disabilities over their giftedness. However, a subset of parents actively used the gifted label to advocate for gifted education and raise awareness about the needs of gifted students. The study highlights the varying parental approaches to the gifted label, as well as the broader social, academic, and psychological complexities associated with it. Matthews et al. (2014) examined how parents perceive the giftedness label and the reasons they choose to use or avoid it. However, the changes in children’s academic and social lives before and after identification were not addressed in this study.

Jolly and Matthews’ (2012) Literature Review on Parenting Gifted Students is a comprehensive review of 53 sources covering the years 1983-2011. The study found that research on parents of gifted children is relatively sparse and mostly descriptive. They noted that most of the literature fell into three themes: (a) how parents influence the development of their gifted children, (b) parents’ beliefs and perceptions about giftedness, and (c) parents’ satisfaction with gifted

programs. The authors suggest that parents' perceptions are an under-theorized area and that more rigorous research is needed. Jolly and Matthews' (2012) literature review identifies key themes in research on parenting gifted children; however, much of the reviewed literature is descriptive in nature and lacks empirical rigor or theoretical grounding.

Understanding parents' perceptions of the giftedness label is crucial in determining its effect on children's academic and social development. The giftedness label can provide access to specialized educational services and opportunities; however, it can also lead to high expectations, social pressures, and potential stigmatization (Gagné, 2011; Matthews et al., 2014). Parents' attitudes toward this label play a critical role in shaping their children's self-concept, motivation, and overall well-being (Borland, 2005; Reis-Jorge et al., 2021). Ryan (2013) emphasizes the importance of investigating parents' views on the gifted label and highlights the need to examine their awareness of how this label affects their children's social and academic lives. However, existing research has primarily focused on the general effects of labeling, and studies examining how parental perceptions change before and after identification, as well as how these changes affect children's educational and social lives, remain limited (Sezgin, 2020). This study aims to contribute a new perspective to the literature by systematically analyzing the changes in parental perceptions of the label.

Research Aim

The aim of this study is to understand the perceptions and experiences of parents of regarding the giftedness label. The study examines how parents' perceptions of their children's abilities change before and after identification, the effect of the giftedness label on children's social and academic lives, and the attitudes parents develop toward this label. The findings will provide valuable insights for educators by revealing how parents interpret and respond to the giftedness label and its effects on their children's development.

Research Questions

Based on the interview questions, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What do parents think about their child's giftedness identification?
- How do parents' perceptions of their child change before and after the giftedness identification?
- How does the giftedness label affect children's social relationships?
- How does the giftedness label influence children's educational experiences and academic success?

Method

Research Design

This study was conducted using a qualitative research method to explore parents' perceptions of the giftedness label, their experiences before and after the identification, and the effect of the label on their children's academic and social lives. A phenomenological research design was chosen to allow participants to express their experiences and perspectives in detail. Phenomenology focuses on understanding individuals' perceptions, emotions, and experiences related to a particular phenomenon, enabling an in-depth analysis of parents' experiences with the giftedness label (Creswell, 2013).

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of parents of 8-year-old children who had been officially identified as gifted. Since children at the age of 8 may not be able to express themselves clearly, another reason for selecting parents as the participant group is to better understand the effects of early labeling. Parents play a crucial role in observing their child's identification process, the influence of the giftedness label on their child's academic and social life, and the changes experienced throughout this process. Therefore, they provide valuable insights into the consequences of early labeling.

The participants were selected using the purposeful sampling method, specifically the criterion sampling technique. The inclusion criteria for participation in the study were as follows:

- The child must have received an official identification of giftedness,
- The child must be 8 years old,
- The child must be enrolled in a primary school in Eskişehir, Turkey
- The parent must have voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

A total of 9 parents participated in the study, including 6 mothers and 3 fathers. The participants' age, gender, occupation, and educational background are presented in Table 1.

All participants were informed about the purpose and procedure of the study and signed an informed consent form before the interviews. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the research process, ensuring participant confidentiality and the anonymization of all data. All parents were assigned unique participant codes (e.g., No-Gender-Age, P1-F-34) to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. These codes were used throughout the study to reference participants while maintaining their privacy. The profiles of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants structures and coding

No	Gender	Age	Education Level	Occupation	Codes
1	Female	34	Postgraduate	Assist Prof. Dr.	P1-F-34
2	Male	32	Bachelor's	Civil Servant	P2-M-32
3	Female	33	Postgraduate	Civil Servant	P3-F-33
4	Female	30	High school	Housewife	P4-F-30
5	Female	38	Bachelor's	Civil Servant	P5-F-38
6	Male	43	High School	Civil Servant	P6-M43
7	Female	37	Bachelor's	Teacher	P7-F-37
8	Male	32	Bachelor's	IT Expert	P8-M-32
9	Female	36	High school	Security	P9-F-36

As seen in Table 1, the participants come from various professional backgrounds, middle aged, and most of them are university graduates.

Data Collection Tool

Parents’ of Gifted Views about Labeling Effects on Gifted Children Form

The data collection tool used in this study was a semi-structured interview form. The form included four main interview questions, and one preparatory question designed to help participants ease into the interview process. After the semi-structured interview form was developed, it was reviewed by two experts holding doctoral degrees in the field of gifted education. Their evaluations confirmed the validity and appropriateness of the interview questions (Appendix 1). As part of this study, interview questions were designed to explore the perceptions and experiences of parents of gifted children regarding the "giftedness label."

Data Analysis

The thematic analysis method was used to analyze the data. The audio recordings were transcribed, and then both researchers independently categorized the data into themes and sub-themes. Direct quotations were also included to support the findings. To ensure the reliability of the analysis, two researchers independently coded the data by identifying themes and sub-themes. The intercoder reliability was calculated using Miles and Huberman’s (1994) formula, resulting in a 98% agreement rate, indicating a high level of coding consistency.

Procedure and Ethics

Parents were invited to the school for data collection, and the interviews were conducted in a quiet setting. Before the main interviews, a pilot interview session was held to ensure the clarity and effectiveness of the questions. During the interviews, audio recordings were taken with the participants' consent. In this study, the participation of families with gifted children was carried out voluntarily.

Findings

The findings of this study are presented based on the research questions. Each research question is analyzed separately to provide a clear understanding of parents' perceptions of the giftedness label. The results include direct quotations from participants to support the themes and sub-themes that emerged during the analysis.

Before starting the main interview, a preparatory question was asked to help parents ease into the discussion and provide context for their child's gifted identification. This question aimed to understand how, when and where their child was identified and their initial reactions. Some parents had already suspected their child's giftedness, while others found the identification process overwhelming yet clarifying. For instance, one parent stated, "We always felt our child was different, but the official identification helped us understand their needs better." These insights provide a foundation for examining parents' perceptions of the giftedness label in the following sections. Figure 1 presents the analysis of the preparatory question.

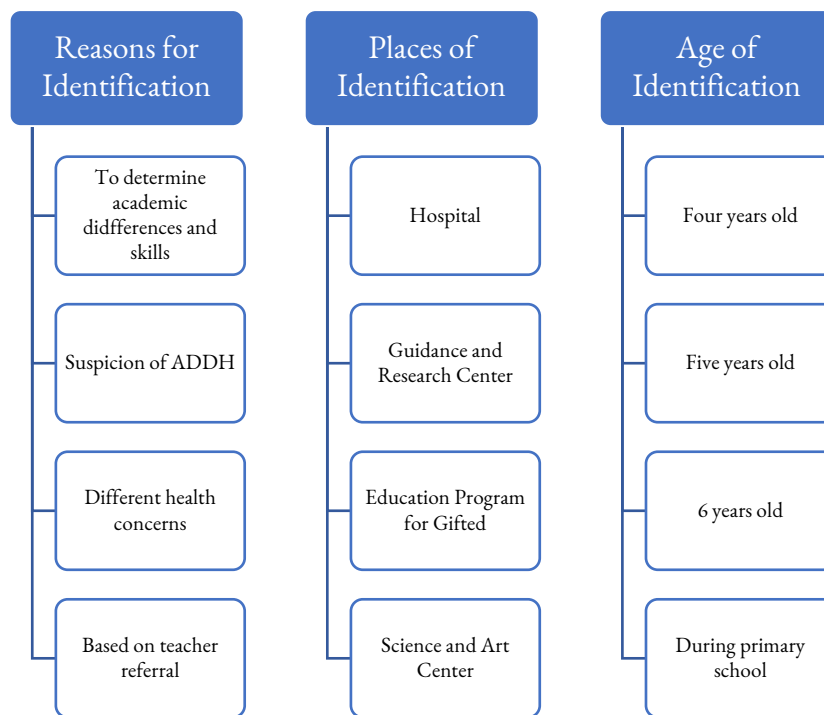


Figure 1. Parents' views on identification process of their gifted children

The analysis highlights those parents had their children evaluated for different reasons, including academic performance concerns, suspected attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and teacher referrals. Additionally, multiple pathways were used for identification, such as hospitals, research centers, and specialized gifted programs. The identification age varied, with some children being identified as early as four years old, while others received their identification during primary school. These findings provide insight into the diverse experiences of parents in the giftedness identification process.

Theme 1. Reactions of giftedness identification

Before presenting the first table, it is important to highlight the initial question posed to the parents: "What do you think about your child being identified as gifted?" This question aimed to explore parents' perceptions, emotions, and thoughts regarding the giftedness label and its implications for their child's life. The themes and sub-themes of parents' responses to this question are presented in Table 3. Additionally, direct quotations from the participants have been included to provide deeper insight into their perspectives.

Table 3. Parents' views about the reactions of giftedness identification

Theme 1. Reactions of giftedness identification				
Subthemes	Codes	f	Parents	Quotes
Emotional Reactions	Positive emotions (happiness etc)	3	P5, P8, P9	<i>"It is a beautiful thing, we were happy." (P8-M-32)</i>
	Negative emotions (anxiety, uncertainty, fear of inadequacy)	4	P2, P3, P6, P7	<i>"It is a difficult process; we don't know how to guide her." (P2-M-32)</i>
Educational and Academic Life	Need for different education	4	P5, P7, P8, P9	<i>"It is a situation that requires special education." (P5-F-38)</i>
	Risk of boredom in standard education	3	P5, P7, P8	<i>"He gets bored more quickly and completes activities with alternative methods." (P7-F-37)</i>
Social and Emotional Adjustment	No change in social relationships	6	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8	<i>"There is no social change, my child was already social." (P2-M-32)</i>
	Increase in self-confidence	2	P7, P9	<i>"His self-confidence increased, now he expresses thoughts more comfortably." (P9-F-36)</i>
Family Dynamics	Increased support within the family	3	P1, P7, P9	<i>"We provide more attention and educational support to the child." (P7-F-37)</i>
	No significant change in family relationships	4	P2, P5, P6, P8	<i>"The identification did not have a direct effect on family relationships." (P6-M43)</i>
Perceived effect of the Label	Support for specialized education	3	P1, P7, P9	<i>"We provide more attention and educational support to the child." (P7-F-37)</i>
	Concerns about stereotyping	2	P7, P3	<i>"I worry that once people know about my child's giftedness, they will treat them differently. I don't want them to be seen as someone who is too smart to play with other kids or as someone who always has to perform perfectly." (P3-F-33)</i>

The findings indicate that parents' perceptions of their child's giftedness identification vary significantly. While some parents expressed positive emotions such as pride and happiness, others experienced uncertainty and concern about how to navigate the process. In terms of education, many parents highlighted the need for differentiated instruction, while others noted that their child faced challenges such as boredom in a standard educational setting. Most parents reported that their child's social relationships remained unchanged post-identification (P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8). However, a smaller group of parents observed an increase in their child's self-confidence (P7, P9). This finding suggests that while some gifted children benefit from the label by gaining confidence, others do not experience significant social changes. While some parents reported an increase in family support and engagement in their child's education (P1, P7, P9), others noted that the gifted identification did not significantly alter family relationships (P2, P5, P6, P8). This variation indicates that the gifted label influences family dynamics differently based on parental attitudes and involvement levels. Some parents highlighted the importance of specialized education for their child (P1, P7, P9). On the other hand, concerns about stereotyping were expressed by parents (P7, P3), who feared that their child might be treated differently due to the giftedness label.

Theme 2. The Effect of Identification

The second question "Were your perceptions of your child different before and after the gifted identification? If so, how?" aimed to explore whether parents' perceptions of their child changed before and after the gifted identification. The themes and subthemes derived from parents' responses are presented in Table 4, along with direct quotations illustrating their perspectives.

Table 4. A content analysis of the views of parents of gifted children on the effect of identification

Theme 2. The Effect of Identification				
Subthemes	Codes	f	Parents	Quotes
Parental Attitude	Accepting and normalizing the identification	6	P1, P2, P4, P5, P7, P9	"Our thoughts did not change before and after the identification." (P2-M-32), "Everything is the same." (P4-F-30)
	Developing the child's potential	2	P2, P3	"If there is potential, we must transform it into performance." (P2-M-32)
No Change in Perception	The child remained the same, perceptions did not change	6	P1, P2, P4, P5, P7, P9	"Nothing changed before and after the identification." (V9)
	The child was not informed about the identification	1	P3	"We did not tell the child about the identification." (P3-F-33)
Change in Post-Identification Approach	Providing more guidance in the child's education	1	P6P	"We started directing the child's education more." (P6-M43)
	Conducting more research on educational opportunities after identification	3	P3, P6, P8P	"I researched Science and art center, there are extra programs available." (P3-F-33)

The responses indicate that most parents did not perceive a significant change in their child's abilities or behaviors before and after the gifted identification. However, some parents acknowledged the need to support and guide their child's potential more effectively. While a few parents took an active role in researching educational opportunities, others either maintained their previous perceptions or chose not to inform the child about the gifted identification. These findings indicate that the identification affects parental attitudes in different ways but mostly leads to a more active parenting approach.

Theme 3. The effect of the gifted label on social relationships of gifted children

The third question "How does the giftedness label affect children's social relationships?" aimed to explore whether gifted identification had any effect on children's social relationships. Parents were asked whether their child's social life changed after the identification and, if so, in what ways. The themes and sub themes derived from their responses are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. A content analysis of the views of parents of gifted children on the effect of the gifted label on their children's social relationships

Theme 3. The effect of the gifted label on social relationships of gifted children				
Subthemes	Codes	f	Parents	Quotes
effect of Identification on Social Relationship	No change in social relationships	6	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8	"It didn't affect much; daily life continues as normal." (P6-M43)
	Increased self-confidence after identification	2	P7, P9	"Before, he didn't explain what he knew; now he says, 'I know this'." (P9-F-36)
	Seeking social support and compensating for weaknesses	1	P7P	"We are trying to compensate for areas where he is lacking." (P7-F-37)
Child's Social Nature	Social and extroverted	3	P3, P5, P7	"He talks to everyone, communicates with both older and younger people." (P5-F-38)
	Introverted and emotional	3	P1, P2, P9P	"He used to be more withdrawn, but now his confidence has improved." (P9-F-36)

The findings suggest that for most parents, their child's gifted identification did not lead to major changes in social relationships. However, some parents reported an increase in self-confidence, with children being more willing to express

their knowledge. Social nature also varied among children, with some maintaining extroverted traits and others showing a transition from introversion to greater self-assurance. Overall, while the giftedness label did not drastically alter most children's social relationships, for some, it played a role in boosting confidence and shaping peer interactions.

Theme 4. The effect of gifted labeling on academic success

It is important to examine whether the gifted identification had an effect on children's education and academic success. To explore this, parents were asked whether their child's gifted identification influenced their educational experiences or academic performance. I asked to parents this question *"How does the giftedness label influence children's educational experiences and academic success?"*. Their views analysed and themes and subthemes that emerged from the parents' responses are summarized in Table 6, along with direct quotations illustrating their perspectives.

Table 6. The effect of gifted labeling on academic success

Theme 4. The Effect of gifted labeling on academic success				
Subthemes	Codes	f	Parents	Quotes
Academic Success and Learning	Fast learning, dislike of repetition	2	P1, P4	"He gets bored quickly, doesn't want to repeat." (P1-F-34)
	Academic ambition and self-control development	4	P5, P6, P7, P9	"He became more ambitious in his lessons." (P6-M43)
effect of Identification on Academics	Positive effect	4	P7, P9, P6, P4	"After being identified, his academic success increased." (P9-F-36)
	No or limited effect	3	P2, P3, P8	"It didn't affect his academic success." (P2-M-32)
Parental Attitude	Efforts to Enrich Education	3	P5, P1, P9	"We are now sending our child to two courses instead of one." (P1-F-34)
	Concern About Doing More	3	P8, P1, P5P	"I am trying my best, but I don't know if it is enough." (P5-F-38)

The results indicate that while some children demonstrated increased academic ambition after being identified as gifted, others showed no significant changes. Additionally, parents exhibited a strong inclination to support and enrich their child's learning, but some struggled with concerns about adequacy. These findings highlight the need for better parental guidance and resources to ensure that gifted students receive the right balance of challenge and support.

Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, the perceptions of parents of 8-year-old children who have been identified as gifted regarding the giftedness label and its effects on their children's academic and social lives were examined. The findings reveal that parents develop different emotional responses to the identification process, increase their efforts to support their children's educational journey, and that the influence of the identification on social relationships and academic success varies from family to family.

The findings of the study indicate that parents develop both positive and negative emotions regarding the identification process. While some parents perceive their child's giftedness as a privilege and a source of pride, others experience anxiety due to the uncertainty and high expectations associated with it. This finding aligns with studies in the literature that highlight the complex emotional responses of parents toward the giftedness label (Matthews et al., 2014; Sezgin, 2020). In particular, the uncertainty about how the label will affect their children's future social pressures and educational challenges increases parents' concerns about the process. The observed anxiety about future challenges particularly resonates with Ryan's (2013) concept of stereotype threat, suggesting that parents may internalize societal expectations and potential stigmatization even before their children encounter these challenges directly.

Some parents stated that they had already recognized their child's potential before the identification process, and thus, the identification did not significantly alter their perspective. Others, however, reported that they became more focused on their child's development after the identification, leading them to adopt a more proactive approach in supporting their child's education. These parents expressed a tendency to guide their children's educational journey more consciously, such as by seeking out additional educational programs and courses. This finding aligns with previous

research indicating that the identification process influences parental involvement in providing educational support (Gagné, 2011). In his 2011 paper, François Gagné presents a differentiated model of giftedness and talent (DMGT), emphasizing that giftedness represents natural abilities, while talent refers to systematically developed competencies in specific domains. He argues that raw potential alone is insufficient for high achievement; rather, a range of environmental and personal catalysts, such as motivation, personality, and supportive educational environments, are essential for developing talent.

However, this increased parental engagement contradicts the assumption suggested by the halo effect, which implies that gifted students do not require additional educational support due to their innate abilities. The observed tendency of parents to seek further educational enrichment opportunities for their children suggests that, contrary to this perception, many parents acknowledge the necessity of tailored educational interventions to meet the unique learning needs of gifted students.

A notable finding is that one parent (P3) deliberately avoided telling their child about the gifted label, possibly to prevent the formation of self-imposed pressures or social stigmatization. This aligns with existing literature suggesting that parents may withhold such information to protect their child from external expectations (Matthews et al., 2014).

The findings indicate that children did not experience significant changes in their social relationships; however, some children gained self-confidence and began to express themselves more comfortably in social environments. This finding is consistent with the literature suggesting that the social relationships of gifted children largely depend on personality traits, parental attitudes, and environmental factors (Reis-Jorge et al., 2021). In their study examining primary school teachers' perceptions of gifted students and their classroom practices in Portugal, Reis-Jorge et al. (2021) found that while some teachers stated that gifted students could easily socialize with their peers, others indicated that these students might experience social isolation due to being perceived as different.

The fact that there were no significant changes in the social relationships of 8-year-old children highlights the developmental effect of age on social interactions. Social relationships are dynamic and shaped over time through personality development and environmental factors (Reis-Jorge et al., 2021). In this context, the absence of significant changes in social relationships among 8-year-old children can be explained by the fact that this age group is typically in a period of greater social stability. Compared to adolescents, children at the age of 8 have not yet fully developed their social identities and are in a more flexible and adaptive phase of social development (Morawska & Sanders, 2008). Therefore, the effects of gifted labeling on social relationships may become more pronounced in older children, particularly during adolescence. For instance, Ryan (2013) suggests that societal pressures and stigmatization are more evident in older children and adolescents. Therefore, changes in social interactions among 8-year-old children may become more visible later, particularly as children begin to develop their social identities.

Findings indicate that parents have differing views regarding the influence of gifted identification on academic success. While some parents reported a noticeable improvement in their child's academic performance, others stated that the identification itself did not directly influence their child's academic achievement. However, it was observed that after the identification, parents became more involved in their children's educational processes and increased their efforts toward enrichment activities. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that parents tend to provide more educational support to their children following the identification process (Mohamed & Elhoweris, 2022). In their study examining kindergarten teachers' perceptions of the characteristics of gifted students and the educational practices implemented for them in Abu Dhabi, Mohamed and Elhoweris (2022) found that teachers observed significant changes in parental involvement following the identification of giftedness. Many teachers reported that parents became more proactive in seeking enrichment opportunities, additional academic resources, and specialized programs to support their children's intellectual development.

This study demonstrates that parents' perceptions of the giftedness label vary based on individual differences and that this label has diverse effects on their children's educational and social development. The findings suggest that raising parental awareness and providing support play a crucial role in enhancing the positive influences of a giftedness diagnosis

on children. Educators and policymakers should take parents' concerns and expectations into account while developing guidance and support mechanisms for families.

Recommendations

The findings of the study indicate that receiving a gifted identification may lead to various negative outcomes for some students. The anxiety, uncertainty, and feelings of inadequacy experienced by parents after the identification may result in children perceiving the process as stressful and overwhelming. Moreover, some parents' decisions not to disclose the identification to their children or to normalize and downplay it may hinder the development of the child's self-awareness regarding their own potential. Academically, while gifted students tend to learn quickly, this may lead to boredom during repetitive tasks and, consequently, a decline in learning motivation. These findings underscore the importance of structuring post-identification support not only to address cognitive needs, but also to encompass emotional and social dimensions to ensure holistic development.

Based on the findings of this study, a comprehensive The Three-Tiered Support Model has been proposed for families of gifted children, consisting of: pre-identification guidance and expectation management, post-identification guidance, and lifelong adaptation support. By combining preventative, targeted support strategies within a unified framework, the model aims to optimize talent development while mitigating common psychosocial risks associated with giftedness, such as social isolation, perfectionism, and asynchronous development.

A Three-Tiered Support Model for families of gifted children

The literature underscore the necessity of a structured, multi-level support system for families navigating the complexities of raising gifted children (Cross & Cross, 2022; Pfeiffer, 2015). Traditional approaches often adopt a reactive stance, intervening only after challenges emerge (academic disengagement, social isolation, or parental burnout). In contrast, this paper proposes a proactive, preventative, and developmental three-tiered support model (Table 7). This framework aims to mitigate potential adverse effects of gifted labeling while optimizing the child's cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Tier 1. Pre-Identification Guidance and Expectation Management

This tier aims to provide parents with the necessary information prior to formal identification processes, helping to prevent misunderstandings and reduce anxiety. Key components include psychoeducational workshops addressing all aspects of giftedness, covering topics such as asynchronous development and twice-exceptionality, while dispelling common myths such as the assumption that giftedness guarantees success. Additionally, this tier includes early screening consultations using strength-based assessment tools and pre-diagnostic counseling to help parents recognize gifted characteristics without pathologizing differences. To address anticipatory anxiety, peer discussion groups are formed, and growth mindset principles are emphasized. This approach frames giftedness as a dynamic trait to be nurtured, rather than a fixed characteristic. These interventions enable parents to approach the identification process with a balanced perspective, significantly reducing the stress that may arise from labeling.

Tier 2. Post-Identification Guidance

Post-identification guidance, utilizing principles of self-efficacy and family empowerment, aims to create Personalized Family Action Plans (PFAP) in collaboration with educators. This phase seeks to provide academic and social-emotional support through these customized plans. Mentorship programs that pair experienced parents with newcomers, as well as peer groups for gifted children, aim to reduce isolation. These interventions ensure that families have access to educational services that align with their child's needs.

Tier 3. Lifelong Adaptation Support

This level aims to provide dynamic and developmentally sensitive resources to help families navigate the challenges encountered throughout their gifted child's developmental process. This stage offers support modules that provide guidance for critical transition periods, such as addressing issues like underachievement during school years, the development of functional skills during adolescence, and career planning.

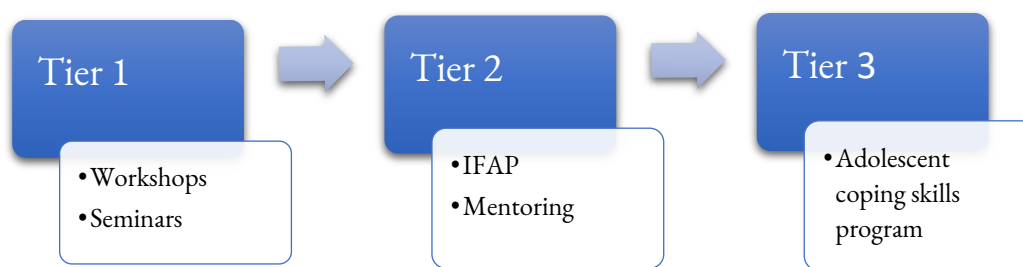


Figure 2. Three-Tiered Support Model for families of gifted children

Figure 2 presents the Three-Tiered Support Model for families of gifted children and its implementation strategies. Based on a developmental approach, the model addresses family needs from the pre-identification stage through adolescence. The first tier includes workshops and seminars, while the second tier offers an Individualized Family Assistance Plan (IFAP) and mentoring support. The third tier consists of a program designed to enhance coping skills during adolescence. Transitions between tiers are flexible and based on the evolving needs of families.

Limitations of Study

This study provides valuable insights into parents' perceptions of the giftedness label and its effects on their children's academic and social lives; however, it has several limitations. First, the small sample size of nine parents limits the generalizability of the findings, as a larger and more diverse sample could provide a broader understanding of parental perspectives. The use of a qualitative phenomenological research design, while beneficial for exploring in-depth experiences, relies on subjective perspectives, which may not capture the full complexity of the issue. Future studies could incorporate quantitative methods to enhance the reliability of findings. Despite these limitations, the study contributes to the literature by shedding light on the multifaceted effect of the giftedness label and underscores the need for further research to develop a more comprehensive understanding of its implications.

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Appendix 1. Semi-structured Interview Questions

Semi-structured Interview Questions

- Q1.** When and where was your child identified as gifted?
- Q2.** What do you think about your child being identified as gifted?
- Q3.** Were your perceptions of your child different before and after the gifted identification? If so, how?
- Q4.** Has your child's gifted identification affected their social relationships? If so, how?
- Q5.** Has your child's gifted identification influenced their education or academic success? If so, how?

