

# The Degree of Academic Passion Among Gifted Students in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

KHALED ARAB<sup>1</sup>

## **Abstract**

*The current study aimed to identify the academic passion among gifted students in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and to identify the differences between averages of academic passion depending on the variable (gender), and the sample of the study consisted of (214) talented, the study relied on the descriptive approach, and to achieve the objectives of the research the researcher used academic passion scale translated by Husban (2021) applied to the study sample. The study showed the following results: the averages of the academic passion scale is (3.69), at a high level and there are no statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for the gender variable on academic passion. The prevailing type of passion was harmonious passion.*

**Keywords:** *Academic Passion, Harmonious Passion, Obsessive Passion, Gifted Students*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The gifted are a group of people who have been gifted by God with characteristics that make them distinct from others. These characteristics may be latent abilities that need someone to stimulate them through education and the implementation of various activities. This group is capable of leading society and progressing in it in all fields, when they have the opportunity to show their talents through their care. Providing a safe and attractive environment for them that stimulates their thinking and stimulates their energies. The gifted person is able to develop work and advance the institution and society as a whole. This is why countries at all levels care about the gifted, care for them, and provide them with their needs, so that this is reflected in their performance and the renaissance of society. Talent begins in a person from the beginning of his life, so the first role is for the family. In its development and care, this responsibility is then transferred to the school, which soon discovers that this student is gifted with several characteristics (Shaaban, 2013).

Marland defines gifted students as those children who have been identified by qualified people and experts and who have the ability to perform outstandingly through clear abilities. They need distinct programs that differ from those offered by regular schools and are capable of outstanding performance in the areas of: general mental intelligence, Special academic intelligence, creative and productive thinking, leadership abilities, and the ability to perform in the visual and administrative arts (Al Bataineh et al., 2009)

Gifted students need educational programs and special services that differ from those provided to ordinary students, and there are several justifications, the most important of which is the inability of regular programs to meet the special and general needs of gifted students, and that special programs are their right like other students with special needs, to ensure the well-being of society, and to achieve equality. And justice in education for all, and achieving balanced and comprehensive growth for these students (Jarwan, 2013). In addition to these students possessing a set of distinctive traits, which gained the attention of researchers and educationalists, and they became aware of its importance, as the subject of the behavioral traits of gifted students became a prominent topic in books on the psychology of giftedness, and it was considered an effective means of detecting the gifted, so they prepared various lists of the traits of the gifted, such as: (Terman, 1925) and (Hollingworth, 1926) are among the first to pay attention to and study the traits and characteristics of the gifted and their needs (Al-Zoubi, 2010).

The importance of knowing the characteristics of gifted students appears in educational research in the field of gifted education as one of the most important criteria in the process of identifying gifted students and detecting

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<sup>1</sup> University of Tabuk, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia E-mail: [Karab@ut.edu.sa](mailto:Karab@ut.edu.sa)

them in order to enroll them in educational programs for the gifted, in addition to the strong relationship between these characteristics and the needs of the gifted, and thus building the appropriate educational program for them. The successful program is the one who links these characteristics with the needs and the service provided that meets them. It is not necessary for the student to possess all of these characteristics. He may possess some of them and not possess others. Some characteristics may appear in a certain situation and not appear in another situation, and this should be taken into account when dealing with these students (Ayasra & Ismail, 2012).

Saadeh (2010) classified the characteristics of gifted people into cognitive, academic, physical, behavioral and communication characteristics as follows:

First: cognitive characteristics: Their cognitive characteristics are represented in quickly comprehending concepts, generalizations, and complex relationships between things, and understanding abstract symbols and the relationships between them. They also have an excellent memory and learn facts related to abstract concepts such as justice, right, and democracy. They also have the ability to be creative, even if it is limited to some of them.

Second: Academic characteristics: Gifted people often have high achievement in one or more academic subjects. However, not all gifted people perform well in school. Their high mental abilities may create a lot of problems for them in their relationships with their peers, which makes them refuse to be different from them. This may lead to their withdrawal from school, and this withdrawal may be due to inappropriate teaching methods used by teachers, or the type of curriculum provided to them.

Third: Physical characteristics: The growth rate of gifted students is usually better than that of other students.

Fourth: Behavioral characteristics: Gifted students usually do not have social relationships with their peers in the classroom, and a large percentage of them are popular on the social level. However, problems sometimes arise resulting from the nature of their needs, interests, and high abilities, which should be taken into account by teachers and parents, and trained to accept their roles as producers of knowledge. For creative works, developing their research habits, and providing activities that help them adapt socially.

Fifth: Characteristics of communication with others: They have an excellent ability to communicate with peers of the same age, tend to bond and communicate with adult children, have high-level conversations, and enjoy these discussions with adults, which influences their formation of groups within the classroom.

Folse (2004) also presented characteristics of gifted students as follows:

- Developmentally advanced development, such as walking and speaking earlier than their peers, and having a more developed vocabulary than their peers.
- Early cultural ability: They have excellent memories and are eager to learn mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects.
- The thirst for knowledge, as gifted people have a real thirst for knowledge and a strong drive to explore.
- A very high level of activity: He is very active and has little need for sleep. This activity is purposeful and not like hyperactivity.
- Cautious or deliberate: He delays making decisions and participating in new social situations and requests more details about topics.
- Sensitivity: Some gifted young people may be characterized by anger and criticism, which takes on a personality trait, and they feel with others, even with animals.
- Uneven development: They have high overall ability, but sometimes there is a discrepancy between their emotional, physical and cultural development. They have the ability to think abstractly and comprehend concepts before being able to deal with them emotionally.
- Early ability to distinguish between fact and fiction.

- They have the power of ideas and the ability to manipulate them.
- They have social skills that enable them to deal well with others and demonstrate leadership abilities. Their high abilities may lead them to face rejection from their peers.
- Perfectionism: They set high levels of expectations for themselves, and feel frustrated when they feel unable to complete work.

The researcher wonders about academic passion among gifted people. Is passion considered one of their characteristics? Is it harmonious passion or obsessive passion? This is what will be discussed in this study.

A strong inclination towards an educational activity that the student loves and in which he invests his energy and time on a regular basis is the goal and goal of all educational institutions. This is what is called Academic Passion. The concept of passion in general can enhance the student's quality of life and increase his perseverance towards achieve its goal (Zhao et al., 2015).

The presence of passion in the learner leads to a feeling of psychological happiness. Those who have a passion for doing an activity are characterized by perseverance in performing the activity, even if it lasts for hours, without feeling bored, and they carry out the activity while feeling comfortable with what they are doing, which makes them feel happy (Vallerand, 2010). Passion is also a necessary human experience for the student that makes his life meaningful, as it provides positive psychological energy that prompts him to participate and engage in activities that have value for him, and it results in a group of positive feelings such as pleasure, excitement, and enthusiasm (Curran et al., 2015).

Ryan & Deci (2000) defined passion as: a strong desire to engage in activity that remains under the control of the individual, and is the result of control, control, and absorption of the activity by the individual. While Vallerand and his colleagues (Vallerand et al., 2003) defined passion as: a strong inclination towards a self-defined activity, thing, concept, or person that one loves or appreciates greatly, and invests a large amount of time and energy in it. Based on this concept, it is believed that passion represents potential energy. Beyond sustained engagement, i.e. in fact an individual is passionate about an activity that leads him to devote himself completely to doing that activity, thus allowing him to persist even in the face of obstacles, and ultimately reach excellence. However, while passion may ensure dedication towards the activity, and ultimately performance, it may also be associated with positive or negative subjective well-being depending on the type of passion involved.

Academic passion is defined as “the learner’s arrival to the stage of passion and love for his field of study, so he becomes enthusiastic about the educational subjects he studies, and makes every effort to achieve success and excellence in them, which increases his integration into learning, and his motivation increases, which reflects positively on his academic performance (Belnger & Ratelle, 2020).

Vallerand and his colleagues (Vallerand et al, 2003; 2007) developed a model of passion consisting of two dimensions of academic passion: harmonious passion and compulsive passion, as follows:

First: Harmonious passion: It is represented by students integrating the activity into their self-identity without coercion, and it leads to adaptive results. When students are harmoniously passionate, they participate freely in the activity, and they see that the activity is consistent with their values and other aspects of their lives, and they experience positive emotion, and levels of High in focus, flow, and energy, harmonious passion particularly affects cognitive processes. Harmoniously motivated students engage more in activities they love, are more aware and attentive, fully engage in the activity with conscious attention, and are more likely to think about activities that involve... Academic passion, which confirms that harmonious passion positively affects various cognitive processes such as attention and focus during the task, mental toughness, and others (Vallerand et al, 2007).

Secondly, obsessive passion: In contrast to harmonious passion, the integration of activity into the student’s identity results from pressure, whether the pressure is internal, stemming from the individual’s motives, or external, resulting from the influence of others. They experience negative feelings while doing this, and they show difficulties in experiencing flow and fully focusing on it. This type of passion also leads students to feel

that the activity they love conflicts with other aspects of their lives (Vallerand et al, 2003). This passion also arises from personal pressure or pressure among students, either because some emergency is associated with the activities, such as a feeling of social acceptance or self-esteem, or because the feeling of excitement resulting from participating in the activity becomes out of control, for example, even though the teacher He truly enjoys his profession, but he may experience an inner desire to teach because it is the only activity that may allow him to maintain a sense of self-worth. In such a case, teaching is no longer truly a voluntary choice but rather an activity that this teacher feels he must do. Individuals who experience compulsive passion through their activity; As the activity becomes beyond their control (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

## **PREVIOUS STUDIES**

In a study conducted by (Fredricks et al., 2009) to explore how passion was manifested among gifted and talent youth selected from a larger longitudinal study of child and adolescent development. The gifted sample included 25 high school and college students who were selected because they were in a gifted program in elementary school. The talent sample included 41 high school students who were selected because they were highly involved in athletics and the arts in middle childhood. The authors found that passion was more characteristic of participation in nonacademic activities (i.e., sports and the arts). Talented youth were more likely to talk about wanting to do their activity all the time, experiencing flow, getting emotional release from participation, and internalizing the activity into their identity. The authors also found that school settings, and especially regular classrooms as compared with gifted and advanced classes, appeared to undermine rather than support passion. The authors discuss implications of their findings for creating school environments that can foster passion.

Vallerand (2015) presented a study that aimed to build a theoretical model of the causal relationship between perfectionism, academic adaptation, and the two dimensions of passion (harmonious and obsessive), and to verify the influence of the variables on each other through analyzing the path between them. The study sample consisted of (298) male and female students from the University of Montreal (Montréal) in Canada, distributed into (169 females, 129 males). The results showed the positive effect of harmonious passion on both personality traits on the one hand, and academic adjustment on the other hand, and the negative effect of obsessive passion on academic adjustment and perfectionism.

Al-Dabaa's study (2019) aimed to reveal the level of academic passion in light of the dual model among students of the Master's program in Special Education at King Khalid University according to the gender variable. Its primary sample consisted of (86) male and female students. Among the results revealed by the study are the presence of statistically significant differences in harmonious passion in favor of females, and the absence of statistically significant differences in obsessive passion according to gender.

Al-Zahrani and Khalifa (2022) also conducted a study to identify the relationship between passion and exploratory behavior in a sample of talented middle and secondary students in Jeddah, and to identify the differences between averages of passion scores and exploratory behavior depending on the variable (sex and the study stage), and the sample of the study consisted of (300) talented and talented in two different educational stages (middle and high school), the study relied on the comparative correlation descriptive approach, the study showed the following results: a positive statistically significant relationship between passion and exploratory behavior in the study sample, and no statistically significant differences between average passion scores in the study sample according to sex, as well as no statistically significant differences among the averages of passion (harmony and compulsive) grades in the study sample according to the study stage, as well as the existence of significant differences in statistics between averages of exploratory behavior scores in the study sample according to gender in favor of females.

## **The Study Problem and Its Questions**

Based on previous studies that the researcher reviewed, such as the study by (Fredricks et al., 2009) which explore how passion was manifested among gifted and talent youth, the result found that passion was more characteristic of participation in nonacademic activities (i.e., sports and the arts). Also it found that school settings, and especially regular classrooms as compared with gifted and advanced classes, appeared to

undermine rather than support passion, and the result of Vallerand (2015) study revealed the positive effect of harmonious passion on both personality traits on the one hand, and academic adjustment on the other hand, and the negative effect of obsessive passion on academic adjustment and perfectionism. And the study of Al-Zahrani and Khalifa (2022) which showed that there is a positive statistically significant relationship between passion and exploratory behavior in the study sample, and no statistically significant differences between average passion scores in the study sample according to sex, as well as no statistically significant differences among the averages of passion (harmony and compulsive). The researcher also noticed, through his dealings with the gifted group and his review of the programs offered to them, that some students enjoy and spend a lot of time implementing academic activities, and that some students feel bored and prefer to withdraw from the gifted classes, which raised the researcher to question the degree of passion they have and whether it differs according to gender and what. It is their dominant type of passion. The aim of the study was represented by the main question:

What is the degree of academic passion among gifted students in gifted schools in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

What type of academic passion prevails among gifted students in gifted schools in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

Are there statistically significant differences between the degree of academic passion among gifted students in gifted schools in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia due to the gender variable?

### **Objectives Of the Study**

The study aimed to the following:

Detecting the degree of academic passion among gifted students in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia region schools.

Detecting the type of academic passion prevails among gifted students in gifted schools in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Investigate the statistically significant differences between the degrees of academic passion of gifted students in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia region attributed to the gender variable.

## **METHODS AND MATERIALS**

### **Participants**

The study sample consisted of 214 students, (112) males and (102) females, from two schools in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

### **Study Tool (academic passion)**

To measure academic passion, the researcher used the form translated into Arabic and adapted to the Jordanian environment from the Academic Passion Scale built by Vallerand and his colleagues (Vallerand et al, 2003), which was translated by Husban (2021). The scale, in its initial form, consisted of (14) items, distributed along two dimensions. They are: harmonious passion, measured by paragraphs (7-1), and compulsive passion, measured by paragraphs (14-8).

### **Validity of the Tool**

Validity of the arbitrators: The scale was presented to eight specialized arbitrators to ensure the soundness of the linguistic structure, the suitability of the items for the age group of the sample, and the item's belonging to the domain. Their observations were taken into account by adopting an agreement of six arbitrators at a rate of (75%).

Construct validity: The scale was applied to a sample of the study population and from outside its sample of (30) students (male and female), where the correlation coefficients (0.79) which is acceptable for the purposes of this study.

## Reliability

The reliability was found in two ways: Cronbach's alpha equation, and the Spearman and Brown equation, and the results of these procedures are shown in Table (1), where the reliability ranged (0.82 - 0.79), which are high reliability coefficients.

**Table (1): academic passion reliability**

Reliability parameter name	Amount of reliability coefficient
Alpha Cronbach	0.82
Spearman Brown	0.79

## RESULTS

Results related to the first question: What is the degree of academic passion among gifted students in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia region schools?

To determine the degree of academic passion among gifted students in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from the point of view of the study sample, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of their responses were calculated as in Table (2)

**Table (2): Arithmetic means and standard deviations for academic passion**

Domain	Arithmetic means	standard deviations
Harmonious passion	3.72	8.099
Obsessive passion	3.25	7.473
Total	3.69	116.42

It is noted from Table (2) that the averages of the overall average of academic passion scale (3.69), at a high level, where the Harmonious passion came in first place with an arithmetic average of (3.72) and a standard deviation of (8.099) in a high level, and Obsessive passion with an arithmetic average of (3.25) and a standard deviation of (7.473) in medium level.

The researcher attributes these results to the characteristics of gifted students, such as their high mental abilities, and their love of knowledge and their interest in it are driven by internal motivation, and their ability to obtain high levels of achievement increases their self-confidence and pushes them to love studying and become attached to it to the point of passion. This passion is often harmonious.

Results related to the second question: What type of academic passion prevails among gifted students in gifted schools in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

Table (2) provided the answer to the second question, which showed that harmonious passion came in first place with an arithmetic mean (3.72) and a high level, while obsessive passion came in second place with an arithmetic mean (3.25) and a moderate level.

The researcher attributes these result to the Gifted students possess an internal motivation to advance in their studies, a love of knowledge and a curiosity for exploration that makes their passion harmonious and controlled, and they are not affected by external pressures from parents, teachers and peers. They are motivated to carry out activities out of love of knowledge and the desire to excel, and the existence of competition between them and other gifted students. Also, the activities that It is offered to gifted students that stimulates their thinking and challenges their abilities. They are among the students who accept challenges and competition.

In addition, gifted students receive support from parents and teachers, which makes them face the pressure resulting from the social environment. Parents have confidence in the abilities of their gifted children and feel confident in their abilities to achieve their ambitions. This reduces the pressure on them, so they carry out activities with harmonious passion and not obsessiveness.

Results related to the third question: Are there statistically significant differences between the degree of academic passion among gifted students in gifted schools in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia due to the gender variable?

To answer this question, the researcher extracted the arithmetic means and standard deviation of the study variable according to gender, then conducted a T-test to reveal the effect of gender on the study variable. The effect of gender on academic passion was explained as follows table (3):

**Table (3): T-test to detect the effect of gender on academic passion**

Domain	gender	Number	Arithmetic means	standard deviations	DF	T	Sig
Harmonious passion	Male	112	2.36	1.76	212	1.34	0.09
	Female	102	3.76	2.04			
Obsessive passion	Male	112	2.92	1.28	212	0.26	0.75
	Female	102	3.18	1.16			
Total	Male	112	3.11	5.13	212	0.82	0.34
	Female	102	3.82	4.23			

It is noted from Table (3) that the value of (t) for total academic passion reached (0.82) with a statistical significance of (0.34) which is greater than ( $\alpha=0.05$ ), and this indicates that there are no statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for the gender variable on academic passion, and that the value of (t) for the Harmonious passion domain reached (1.34) with a statistical significance of (0.09) which is greater than ( $\alpha=0.05$ ), and this indicates that there are no statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ), and that the value of (t) for Obsessive passion reached (0.26) with a statistical significance of (0.75) which is greater than ( $\alpha=0.05$ ), and this indicates that there are no statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ).

The researcher attributes this result to the fact that gifted students, male and female, have the same characteristics as gifted students, which makes them have similar reactions, especially with regard to their academic passion. In addition, the study sample is taken from the same social and cultural context, meaning that they are exposed to the same treatment from their social surroundings.

These students are also exposed to the same curricula, and receive education from teachers who have the same training and use similar teaching strategies that make them possess similar abilities. In addition, teachers and school administrations receive the same instructions and directives from the education department responsible for caring for the gifted, and they are exposed to educational guidance in similar ways and on topics that improve their social relationships. And ways to face the challenges they may face.

This result is consistent with the result of the study of (Al-Zahrani & Khalifa, 2022).

Based on the results shown by the current study, the researcher recommends paying attention to the harmonious passion of gifted students by supporting them psychologically and socially and providing guidance programs that support this passion.

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