

Washington State University

College of Education

Adnan Althobaiti

Will defend the dissertation

Date: October 10, 2019

Time: 1:30 P.M.

Locations: Pullman – Cleveland Hall 353 and Vancouver – VUB 311

Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend.

SAUDI SOCIETAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS GIFTED FEMALES

Chair: Susan Banks

There are a large number of gifted students from minority populations whose educational needs are unmet due to the fact that they are underrepresented in, or not identified for, gifted education programs (Borland, 2004; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Ford, Coleman, & Davis, 2014; McBee, 2006; Skiba et al., 2008). The issue of underrepresentation is gendered because the culture of gifted education is also gendered. For example, gifted females have been underrepresented in gifted summer programs (Petersen, 2013) because their teachers are less likely to refer them to such programs (Bianco, Harris, Garrison-Wade, & Leech, 2011) as some teachers view intelligence as more of a masculine characteristic (Lee, 2002). This work aims to explore Saudi societal attitudes toward gifted females' educational and social experiences by investigating the views and perceptions of teachers, parents, and Saudis in general. The research employed sequential explanatory mixed methods to answer the overarching question: What are Saudi societal attitudes toward gifted women and how do Saudis understand sexism? Two quantitative instruments, the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) and the Three-Profile Scale, were employed and qualitative interviews were conducted to explore seven additional research questions. The results and findings obtained through the use of the two methods were inconsistent, which led to the discovery of significant hidden meaning that might not have been noticed had only one methodology (e.g., either quantitative or qualitative) been utilized. Specifically, the quantitative phase showed that Saudi male participants identified as ambivalent sexist and preferred the benevolent sexist profile. Also, Saudi female participants identified as non-sexist and preferred the benevolent sexist profile. However, the themes of the qualitative phase showed more positive attitudes toward gifted females. This inconsistency stems from the dissimilarities between the cultural reality and societal consciousness of the participants and the epistemological and ontological foundations of the quantitative instruments. This study endeavors to re-conceptualize Saudi gifted women's reality and the societal perceptions in a context that does not involve universalized knowledge, but instead attends to localized meanings, perspectives, and philosophies. Implications and recommendations for future research are also discussed.