

Level of Empowerment of Teachers of Gifted Students in Schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence, Jordan

Burhan M. Hamadneh¹

Abstract

The present study sought to identify the level of empowerment of teachers of gifted students in Jordan, and to detect the statistical differences due to the variables of (gender, years of experience and scientific qualification). The study sample consisted of (80) male and female teachers who were randomly selected from schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence in governorates of Amman, Al-Zarqa and Al-Salt. School Participant Empowerment Scale by Short and Rinehart (1992) was utilized after verifying its validity and reliability to achieve the study objectives. The study resulted that the mean of teacher empowerment was (4.04) with high level of empowerment. The results also showed no statistically significant differences on the empowerment scale and its domains due to the difference of variables (gender, years of experience and scientific qualification). The study recommended that correlation studies should be conducted to identify the relationship between the teacher empowerment for gifted students and some variables such as job satisfaction, creative behavior and job commitment.

Keywords: Teacher empowerment, gifted students, schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence.

1. Introduction

Teachers' Empowerment is considered the cornerstone in most efforts done for contemporary educational reform in many countries of the world. It seeks to reinforce a sense of responsibility and pride in hard work in school, and it is the base on which the teacher can take responsibility and face the developments and challenges in the field of education and learning and impose behavioral patterns that keep in line with the nature of work and decision-making.

Chant, Moes and Ros (2009) indicated that the concept of empowerment of teachers in the educational field has emerged in parallel to the concept of empowerment of staff emerging in the field of organizational management at about the same time in the latter half of the Eighties of the Twentieth Century, and since then many studies and research have emerged about organizational and educational empowerment.

Melhem (2006) pointed that America had begun the movement of educational reform in the mid-eighties and resulted that good schools should respect its teachers and allow them to take decisions in education-related issues, as well as the ones that occur outside the classroom.

Rappaport and his colleagues have described empowerment as a construct that tie personal competencies and abilities to environments that provide opportunities for choice and autonomy in demonstrating those competencies (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988).

Empowerment has been defined as "a process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems. Empowered individuals believe they have the skills and knowledge to act on a situation and improve it. Empowered schools are organizations that create opportunities for competence to be developed and displayed." (Short, 1992, 5)

¹ Assist. Professor of Special Education, College of Education, Najran University, PO box 1988, Najran 61441, KSA.

Trends that have called for educational reform and the empowerment of teachers have been increased, where Onne (2004) confirmed that empowerment helps boost the morale of teachers and demonstrates their abilities and potentials. Al Mahdi (2007) also confirmed that empowerment provides opportunities for teachers to acquire autonomy, responsibility and decision making. Teachers' empowerment highlights to achieve a range of benefits accruing to the school and participants, including: improvement of student performance, lower absence rate for teachers and doing school daily work effectively (Short and Rinehart, 1994), as well as achieving a privileged position for the school in addition to increasing of competitiveness with other schools, increase of cooperation in solving problems and high creative abilities of teachers and students (Thompson, 1999).

Ashiba (2010) conveyed that empowerment satisfies the teacher's needs and self-esteem, high hard work and the high loyalty to the school, and contributes to increasing of job satisfaction and self-motivation, satisfaction with the officials, and the development of a sense of shoulders and caring for the public interest. Al-Balwi (2008) revealed that the empowerment of teacher represents a principal means to overcome the chaotic and bad administrative status and achieves increasingly professional control. Al-Maliki (2010) also confirmed that empowerment of teachers contributes to improving of school organizational effectiveness.

1. Literature review

The importance of teacher empowerment has been handled in many pieces of literature review, where Hung (2005) conducted a study with a sample of (450) teachers in public schools in Taiwan. The study resulted that there was a positive relationship between the empowerment of teachers and job satisfaction, and it showed no statistical differences in teacher empowerment variables (age, scientific qualification and school size).

The study of Attari and Gubran (2007) was conducted on a sample of (155) teachers from the Governorate of Irbid in Jordan. It showed that the level of empowerment for the participant was moderate, and "status" was the only domain ranked high level, and the results showed statistical differences in the averages of the participants in three domains: decision-making, autonomy and influence due to the variable of age and experience in favor of the elder and more experienced. Attari and Shanfari (2007) conducted a study consisting of a sample of (341) participants. It showed that the participants was of moderate empowerment, where the dimension of status was in first place, followed by the belief in self-efficacy, professional growth, autonomy, and impact and finally decision-making.

Al-Mahdi (2007) was conducted on a sample of (821) teachers in Egypt. It showed that the level of teacher empowerment was moderate, and revealed that there were statistical differences in the level of empowerment of teachers due to the variable of gender in favor of males, and years of experience in favor of those who are more experienced, while there were no differences for teacher empowerment due to the variable of scientific qualification. The study of Prawit (2008) aimed at improving the quality of learning through the management of teacher empowerment. The study sample consisted of (160) teachers selected from schools of Thailand. It showed that teacher empowerment contributes to quality assurance of education and enhances confidence between the school and house.

Pollak(2009) conducted a study that has been applied to a sample of (36) teachers from high school teachers in the United States of America. It showed that the level of perceived empowerment of teachers was low, and that there are no statistical differences due to the variables of gender and years of experience in the level of perceived empowerment among teachers. The study of Muhammad (2012), which was conducted on a sample of (504) teachers of public schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, showed that the level of teacher empowerment was high. Orit, Izhak and Elite (2014) conducted a study that has been applied to a sample of (64) teachers in high schools in the United States of America. It showed that the level of perceived empowerment of teachers was moderate. The results showed that there were statistical differences in the level of perceived empowerment of teachers due to the variable of gender in favor of males.

2. Statement of the problem

Based on the significance of the teacher's key role in the success of schooling, the empowerment of teachers contributes to their autonomy and progress in the aspects of creativity, problem solving, and performance that assuredly reflected in the academic level of students.

Therefore, the author conducted such a study to identify the level teacher empowerment for gifted students at Schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence in Jordan, and the statistical differences according to gender, years of experience and scientific qualification. The current study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of empowerment of teachers of gifted students at Schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence in Jordan?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha= 0.05$) for the level of empowerment of teachers of gifted students at Schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence in Jordan due to variables of gender, years of experience, and scientific qualification?

3. Significance of the study

The significance of the study is indicated as follows:

- Schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence benefited from this study by taking necessary measures to empower the teachers and how to maintain this empowerment, which helps teachers achieve the objectives of the school and has a significant impact on running the educational institutions and maintains the scientific competencies of teachers.
- The current study tries to attract the attention of principals to adopt leadership styles that contribute to the development of empowering the teachers of gifted students.
- Creating good working environment, such as providing appropriate teacher empowerment, which enables the principals to detect the teachers 'competencies, talents, and skills to develop creativity within the educational institution.
- This study could be a key entrance for conducting other future studies.

4. Methodology

5.1 Approach

The descriptive survey approach was utilized in the current study.

5.2 Study population and sample

The study population consisted of (450) teachers of gifted students in schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence in Jordan, for the academic year 2015/2016. The study sample consisted of (80) teachers, rated (18%) of the original study population, who were randomly selected from Schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence in the regions of (Amman, Al-Zarqa and Al-Salt). The study sample was distributed according to the variables of gender, years of experience and scientific qualification as shown in table(1).

Table (1): Frequencies and percentages for the study sample according to the study variables

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	40	50.0%
	Female	40	50.0%
Years of experience	Less than 5 years	22	27.5%
	(5-10)	30	37.5%
	More than 10 years	28	35.0%
Scientific qualification	Bachelor	42	52.5%
	Post-graduate studies	38	47.5%
Total		80	100.0%

5.3 Instrument

Teacher empowerment was measured by the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) after localizing it by Al-Mahdi (2007). This 34-item instrument measured teacher empowerment distributed to six domains: 1) decision-making, (2) professional growth, (3) status, (4) self-efficacy, (5) autonomy, and (6) impact. The SPES used a five-point Likert-type rating scale for each of the 34 items (1=very low, 2=low, 3=moderate, 4= high, 5=very high). The scale scores ranged from (34) as the lowest score to (170) as the highest score in the scale.

Decision-making relates to the participation of teachers in critical decisions that directly affect their work. In many cases, this means participation in decisions involving budgets, teacher selection, scheduling, curriculum, and other programmatic areas.

Professional Growth refers to teachers' perceptions that the school in which they work provides them with opportunities to grow and develop as professionals, to learn continuously, and to expand one's own knowledge and skills through the work life of the school.

Status refers to teachers' perceptions that they have professional respect and admiration from colleagues. Teachers feel that others respect their knowledge and expertise.

Self-Efficacy refers to teachers' perceptions that they have the skills and ability to help students learn, are competent in building effective programs for students, and can effect changes in student learning.

Autonomy refers to the teachers' sense of freedom to make certain decisions that control certain aspects of their work life. These aspects may be scheduling, curriculum, textbooks, and instructional planning.

Impact refers to the teachers' sense that they have an effect and influence on school life. They feel that what they are doing is worthwhile, they are doing it in a competent manner, and they are recognized for their accomplishments (Klecker & Loadman, 1996)

5.4 Validity and reliability

1. Validity: The author verified the validity of the scale content when (15) reviewers and referees in special education, and measurement and evaluation in Najran University in Saudi Arabia evaluated the scale. They assured the appropriateness of the scale to achieve the objectives of the study.

2. Reliability: To make sure of the reliability of the scale, test-retest method was conducted through applying the test and re-applying it after two weeks on a sample consisted of (25) teachers. Then, Pearson correlation coefficient conducted to calculate the overall reliability coefficient that was (0.87). Reliability coefficient was also calculated in accordance with the internal consistency of Cronbach's Alpha of the scale, where the total reliability coefficient was (0.81). The reliability coefficients were calculated by two ways to measure the domains as indicated in table (2).

Table (2): Reliability coefficient for retest and internal consistency "Cronbach Alpha" for the domains of teacher empowerment scale

Domain	Pearson correlation coefficient	Cronbach's Alpha
Decision-making	0.94	0.87
Professional growth	0.78	0.84
Status	0.91	0.89
Impact	0.85	0.92
Self-efficacy	0.88	0.80
Autonomy	0.83	0.86

Table (2) shows that reliability coefficients for the scale at the domains and the total scale were of high values; therefore these values were considered appropriate for achieving the objectives of the current study.

The author used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences System (SPSS) in analyzing the data and concluded the results that were discussed, and then some recommendations have been made.

5. Results

Results of the first question: *What is the level of empowerment of teachers of gifted students at Schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence in Jordan?* To answer this question, means and standard deviations of the level of teacher empowerment were calculated among teachers of gifted students in Schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence in Jordan. To evaluate the level of teacher empowerment among the participants, the statistical criterion utilized in the following equation: (1.00 - 2.33): low level, (2.34 - 3.67): moderate level, and (3.68 - 5.00): high level, as shown in table (3):

Table (3): Means and standard deviations to the level of teacher empowerment of gifted students at the schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence in Jordan in descending order due to means

Rank	No.	Domain	Mean	St. D	Level
1	3	Status	4.43	0.62	High
2	2	Professional growth	4.29	0.71	High
3	4	Impact	4.23	0.63	High
4	5	Self-efficacy	4.17	0.56	High
5	6	Autonomy	4.17	0.64	High
6	1	Decision-making	3.53	0.79	Moderate
Total			4.04	0.53	High

Table (3) shows that the means for the domains of the scale of the level of teacher empowerment have ranged from (3.53) to (4.43) with standard deviations (0.56-0.79), where the domain of (status) ranked the first with a mean (4.43) and a standard deviation (0.62) and high level of empowerment. The domain (professional growth) was in the second place with a mean (4.29) and a standard deviation (0.71) and a high level of empowerment, while the domain (participation in decision-making) ranked in the sixth place with a mean (3.53) and a standard deviation (0.79) with moderate level of empowerment. The mean of the total scale was (4.04) and a standard deviation (0.53) with high level of empowerment.

Results of the second question: Are there any statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) for the level of empowerment of teachers of gifted students at Schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence in Jordan due to variables of gender, years of experience, and scientific qualification? To answer this question, means and standard deviations of the respondents were calculated for the level empowerment of teachers of gifted students at Schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence in Jordan, according to the variables of gender, years of experience and scientific qualification as indicated in table (4).

Table (4): means and standard deviations of the level empowerment of teachers of gifted students at Schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence in Jordan, according to the variables of gender, years of experience and scientific qualification

Variables	Category		Decisi on- makin g	Profess ional growth	Status	Impact	Self- efficacy	Autonomy	Total
Gender	Male	M	3.71	4.33	4.44	4.32	4.21	4.24	4.13
		St. D	.834	.593	.506	.508	.527	.610	.483
	Female	M	3.35	4.25	4.43	4.14	4.13	4.10	3.95
		St. D	.711	.820	.728	.726	.588	.673	.571
Experience	Less than 5 yaesr	M	3.55	4.34	4.32	4.17	4.07	4.06	4.00
		St. D	.754	.646	.464	.459	.524	.701	.469
	(5-10) years	M	3.67	4.29	4.47	4.33	4.28	4.23	4.12
		St. D	.826	.582	.528	.513	.503	.551	.483
	More than 10 years	M	3.37	4.24	4.48	4.16	4.13	4.19	3.98
		St. D	.781	.890	.808	.832	.629	.695	.630
Qualifications	Bachelor	M	3.45	4.29	4.46	4.21	4.11	4.16	4.01
		St. D	.795	.692	.475	.501	.519	.622	.479
	Post- graduate studies	M	3.62	4.29	4.40	4.24	4.24	4.18	4.07
		St. D	.788	.744	.759	.753	.595	.670	.592

Table (4) indicates that there is a variance in means and standard deviations of the responses of teachers due to differences in variables of gender, years of experience and scientific qualification. To illustrate the significance of statistical differences between the means, multiple-analysis of variance was conducted on the domains as in Table (5) and the tool scale as shown in Table (6).

Table (5): Multi-analysis of variance for the impact of gender, years of experience and scientific qualification on the domains of the level of teacher empowerment

Source of variance	Domains	Sum of squares	Degree of freedoms	Mean squares	F-value	Statistical significance
Gender	Decision-making	1.053	1	1.053	1.673	.200
Hotelling=0.31	Professional growth	.127	1	.127	.238	.627
H=.906	Status	.001	1	.001	.003	.957
	Impact	.093	1	.093	.228	.635
	Self-efficacy	.001	1	.001	.004	.949
	Autonomy	.224	1	.224	.529	.469
Years of experience	Decision-making	.041	2	.020	.032	.968
Wilks=.924	Professional growth	.095	2	.048	.089	.915
H=.935	Status	.533	2	.266	.670	.515
	Impact	.153	2	.076	.186	.830
	Self-efficacy	.409	2	.204	.643	.529
	Autonomy	.519	2	.259	.613	.545
Scientific qualifications	Decision-making	.498	1	.498	.791	.377
Hotelling=.057	Professional growth	.150	1	.150	.281	.597
H=.691	Status	.009	1	.009	.022	.883
	Impact	.073	1	.073	.177	.675
	Self-efficacy	.457	1	.457	1.438	.234
	Autonomy	.042	1	.042	.100	.752
Error	Decision-making	45.929	73	.629		
	Professional growth	38.954	73	.534		
	Status	29.014	73	.397		
	Impact	29.889	73	.409		
	Self-efficacy	23.209	73	.318		
	Autonomy	30.908	73	.423		
Total	Decision-making	49.512	79			
	Professional growth	40.067	79			
	Status	30.622	79			
	Impact	31.260	79			
	Self-efficacy	24.449	79			
	Autonomy	32.527	79			

Table (5) reveals that there are no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) on all domains of the level teacher empowerment due to the impact of the variables of gender, years of experience and scientific qualification. Table (6): Multi-variation analysis of the impact of gender, years of experience and scientific qualification at the total level of teacher empowerment

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean squares	F-value	Statistical significance
Gender	0.241	1	0.241	0.824	0.367
Years of experience	0.087	2	0.043	0.148	0.862
Scientific qualification	0.113	1	0.113	0.387	0.536
Error	21.350	73	0.292		
Total	22.456	79			

Table (6) shows that there are no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) on the total score of the level of empowerment of teachers of gifted students in Schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence in Jordan due to the impact of variable of gender, where F-value = (0.824) and statistically significant at (0.367), and the variable of years of experience, where F-value= (0.148) and statistically significant at the level of (0.862) and the variable of scientific qualification, where F-value=(0.387) and statistically significant at the level of (0.536).

6. Discussion and conclusion

First, the results of the current study showed that the mean of the total scale of teacher empowerment was (4.04) with high level of empowerment; the study concluded that empowerment is important for teachers of gifted students. This result, at the total level, was due to the new trends adopted by the Ministry of Education in Jordan that encourage the empowerment of teachers in general and teachers of gifted students in particular. The ministry has also focused on developing of specific criteria and principles for the selection of school principals who have the expertise and competence in the knowledge of leadership styles that reinforce teacher empowerment.

The results of the current study are consistent with the results of Muhammad (2012), which showed that the level of teacher empowerment was in a high level. The current results differed from the results of Al-Mahdi (2007), Attari and Gubran (2007), the study of Attari and Shanfari (2007), as well as the study of Orit, et al (2014), whose results showed that the level of teacher empowerment was moderate. The current study is inconsistent with the study of Pollak(2009), which showed that empowerment of teachers was low.

Secondly: The results of the current study showed that the domain of (status) ranked the first place with the highest mean= (4.43) and high level of empowerment. This is due to the appreciation and caring received by teachers of gifted students through their work and their relationship with members of the community. This result is consistent with the results of Attari and Gubran (2007),Attari and Shanfari (2007), which showed that the domain of (status)ranked the first with high level of empowerment. In this regard, the domain (professional growth) was in the second place with a mean= (4.29) and high level of empowerment. This is due to the keenness of the Ministry of Education on urging the teachers for professional growth and development as a result of their association with gifted students who are the builders of the future and the mainstay of the nation's overall progress and prosperity; therefore the duty of the teacher is to keep pace with the latest updates and developments of knowledge and technology.

Thirdly: The results showed that there were no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) on all domains of the level empowerment of teachers of gifted students at schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence in Jordan and on the total scale due to the impact of the variables of gender, years of experience and scientific qualification. The lack of statistically significant differences according to gender, years of experience and scientific qualification is due to the perceptions and competencies owned by participants of the study for empowerment, so their means were very close. This may be attributed to the academic conditions in Schools of King Abdullah II for Excellence, which is subject to regulations and instructions issued by Ministry of Education in Jordan.

The current results are consistent with the results of Hung (2005), which showed no statistical differences in teacher empowerment due to the variables of age and scientific qualification, the results of Al-Mahdi (2007), which showed no statistical differences in empowerment of teachers due to the scientific qualification, as well as the study of Pollak (2009), which showed a lack of statistical differences due to the variables of gender, years of experience in the level of perceived empowerment among teachers.

The current results are inconsistent with the results of Al-Mahdi (2007), which revealed the existence of statistical differences in the level of empowerment of teachers due to the variable of gender in favor of males, and years of experience in favor of the most experienced, the study of Attari and Gubran (2007), which indicated that there were statistically significant differences in teacher empowerment in favor of those who were most experienced, and the study of Orit, et al (2014), which showed statistically significant differences in the level of perceived empowerment of teachers due to the variable of gender in favor of males.

7. Recommendations

1. The need to sensitize school administrations to the importance of maintaining a high level of teacher empowerment in all fields by holding training workshops, seminars and meetings; because of its role in raising their level of job performance.
2. The need of involving the teachers of gifted students in various training courses in order to upgrade the empowerment, which contributes to the development of their job performance.
3. Conducting of correlation studies that seek to identify the relationship between the empowerment of teachers of gifted students and some variables such as job satisfaction, creative behavior, and job commitment.

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