UNDERACHIEVEMENT AMONG GIFTED STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF THREE SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract
This case study provides an explanatory account on the underachievement among three gifted students studying social studies in three Nigerian universities. The students' social studies underachievement was diagnosed using SATO's student-problem analysis chart. These students were invited to complete a questionnaire and a follow-up interview in order to understand the association between their academic performance, self-concepts, and support systems, and elicit the pattern of their learning behaviours. Students reported that their self-worthiness was not undermined by their underachievement and they still believed in their own potentials. The study indicated that these students started to encounter academic problems during their tertiary institution school years. The following learning habits resulted in their underachievement: a lack of motivation and not applying self-actualization on subject matters, focusing on memorizing and mastering skills and exercising counterproductive learning strategies, as well as lack of genuine interest in the subject. This study also found that although these students had clear career objectives and generally positive conceptualization of self, their professional development suffered from lack of execution.

Keywords: *Underachievement, Gifted students, Learning habits, Social Studies*

Introduction

Gifted students are individuals who possess exceptional intellectual abilities, creativity, and potentials for achievement that surpasses those of their peers (Agbo, 2021). In Nigeria, universities are expected to provide an enabling environment for these students to excel and reach their full potential. However, despite their innate abilities, some gifted students fail to perform at expected levels, a phenomenon known as underachievement (CCMAS, 2023). Underachievement among gifted students is a pervasive and complex issue that has garnered significant attention from educators, researchers, and policymakers worldwide (Fu & Tsai, 2016). In Nigeria, the problem is particularly concerning, given the country's emphasis on developing human capital to drive national development (Omosule, 2024). The underachievement of gifted students in Nigerian universities undermines the country's efforts to cultivate a pool of highly skilled and innovative professionals. Research has shown that underachievement among gifted students can stem from various factors, including poor motivation, lack of challenge, inadequate support systems, and socio-emotional difficulties (Ritchotte et. al., 2015; Fu & Tsai, 2016; Omosule, 2024). Specifically, in the context of social studies education, underachievement can have far-reaching consequences, such as limiting students' understanding of community / societal issues, thereby hindering critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and undermining their ability to contribute meaningfully to national development (Patton, 2014).

While gifted students tend to be perceived as having a better opportunity to succeed, their underachievement seems to remain a mirage to many researchers. There is no universal definition of a gifted underachiever (Aminudin & Khairul, 2024). Among numerous definitions of underachievers, Reis and McCoach (2000 & APA) probably provide most comprehensive ones: "underachievers are students who exhibit a severe discrepancy between expected achievement (as measured by standardized tests, assessments, etc.) and actual achievement (as measured by grades and teacher evaluations and "underachiever are a pattern of behaviour where an individual consistently performs below their ability, often resulting in frustration, anxiety, or avoidance" respectively. The patterns of underachievement must be in a long term, and not caused exclusively by the presence of a learning disability. As early as 19th

century, Gowan (1955) pointed out the importance of studying underachievement of gifted students. He suggested that the underachievement of gifted children is the largest waste in a society. APA (2018) estimated that in the United States, 15% to 40% of gifted students may face the crises of underachievement or low achievement. As far back as 19th century, Lupart and Pyryt (1996) predicted that at least 21% of the gifted students in elementary school and junior high school in Canada experienced underachievement. The Commonwealth Magazine in Taiwan reported a case that a gifted physics student who was recommended for admission to National Taiwan University suffered from failures in college learning (Fu & Tsai, 2016). The underachievement of gifted students is a global issue and may occur to students at any stage of learning. It appears that despite the growing body of literature on underachievement among gifted students, there is a dearth of research focused on the Nigerian university context, particularly in social studies education. Existing studies have primarily explored underachievement among gifted students in Western contexts, leaving a knowledge gap regarding the experiences and challenges faced by Nigerian students. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the factors contributing to underachievement among gifted social studies students in Nigerian universities. By exploring the experiences of three gifted social studies students, this research seeks to provide insights into the complex interplay of factors that influence underachievement and inform strategies to support these students in reaching their full potential.

Statement of the Problem
Despite their exceptional intellectual abilities, many gifted students in Nigerian universities fail to realize their full academic potential, exhibiting a phenomenon known as underachievement. This issue is particularly concerning in the field of Social Studies, where critical thinking, analytical skills, and knowledge application are essential for addressing Nigeria's socio-economic and political challenges. Research has shown that underachievement among gifted students can lead to wasted talent, decreased motivation, and unfulfilled career aspirations. However, the specific factors contributing to underachievement among gifted Social Studies students in Nigerian universities remain poorly understood.

Purpose of the Study
This study aims to investigate the complex issues surrounding underachievement among gifted Social Studies students in Nigerian universities, providing insights for targeted interventions to support exceptional Social Studies students in reaching their full potentials in the academic setting. Specifically, the aims of the study are to:

i. identify the personal, social, and academic factors contributing to underachievement among gifted Social Studies students in Nigerian universities.
ii. explore the perceptions and experiences of gifted Social Studies students regarding their academic environment.
iii. recommend evidence-based strategies for addressing underachievement and promoting academic excellence among gifted Social Studies students.

Research Questions
The study seeks to investigate the following research questions:

i. What are the personal, social, and academic factors contributing to underachievement among gifted Social Studies students in Nigerian universities?
ii. What are the perceptions and experiences of gifted Social Studies students regarding their academic environment?
iii. What are the evidence-based strategies with which one can address underachievement and promote academic excellence among gifted Social Studies students?

Significance of the Study
This study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on underachievement among gifted students, providing context-specific insights for Nigerian universities. The findings will inform educators, policymakers, and stakeholders on effective strategies to support gifted Social Studies students, ultimately enhancing their academic performance, career prospects, and contributions to Nigeria's socio-economic development.

Scope of the Study
This study focuses on three gifted social studies students in Nigerian universities, exploring their experiences, perceptions, and challenges. The study employed a qualitative case study approach, using in-depth interviews and document analysis to gather data from respondents.

Review of Related Literature
Underachievement is a pervasive issue affecting individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, and educational settings. It

refs to the discrepancy between a person's potential and actual academic performance. This literature review provides an in-depth examination of the concept of underachievement, its causes, consequences, and interventions, for better actualization of human potentials in all ramifications of life.

Concept of Underachievement

Underachievement is a pervasive issue that affects individuals from various backgrounds and contexts, leading to significant consequences on their academic, personal, and professional lives. It involves consistent performance below expected levels, considering factors such as intelligence, ability, and potential (Plucker & Callahan, 2014). Various terms have been used to describe underachievement, including "underachiever," "gifted underachiever," and "academic underachievement" (Omosule, 2024). A complex and multifaceted phenomenon that affects individuals from various backgrounds and contexts, underachievement refers to the discrepancy between an individual's potential or expected performance and their actual achievement. It occurs when a person fails to meet expectations or standards, despite possessing the necessary abilities, skills, or intelligence. The types of underachievement include: academic underachievement, a phenomenon which has to do with an individual's failure to meet academic expectations, such as poor grades or low achievement in specific subjects; career underachievement, a phenomenon which has to do with an individual failing to reach career goals or potential, thereby leading to stagnation or dissatisfaction; social underachievement; a phenomenon which has to do with an individual's difficulty in forming or maintaining relationships, which may end up leading to social isolation; and personal underachievement, which is a phenomenon that has to do with an individual failure to meet personal goals or aspirations, and thereby leading to feelings of non-fulfilment (Ford, 2013). Its causes include: lack of motivation, which includes intrinsic or extrinsic factors, such as low self-efficacy; lack of interest, or inadequate rewards, learning disabilities; which includes undiagnosed or unsupported learning difficulties, such as dyslexia or ADHD; environmental factors, which includes socioeconomic disadvantages, family dynamics, or cultural background; emotional and psychological issues, which includes anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, or perfectionism; poor goal setting, which includes unrealistic or unclear goals, leading to lack of direction; ineffective learning strategies, which includes inadequate study habits, time management,

or organizational skills; teacher-student relationship, which includes poor teacher-student dynamics or inadequate support; and societal expectations, which includes stereotyping, bias, or cultural expectations that limit potential (Plucker & Callahan, 2016). It has such characteristics such as intelligence-potential mismatch, whose attributes are discrepancy between ability and achievement; lack of confidence, whose attributes are self-doubt, fear of failure, or low self-esteem; procrastination, whose attributes are delaying tasks or decisions; avoidance, whose attributes are evading challenges or responsibilities; defensiveness, whose attributes are rationalizing or denying underachievement; and frustration, whose attributes are feeling stuck or unhappy (Hill, 2015).

Gifted students are individuals who possess exceptional abilities, talents, or potential for excellence in one or more domains, such as academics, arts, athletics, or leadership. The concept of giftedness has been studied extensively in various fields, including education, psychology, and sociology. Federal Definition (USA): The US Department of Education defines gifted students as "children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment." (National Association for Gifted Children, 2019). They have characteristics such as Intelligence Quotient (IQ) Tests, which are traditionally used to identify gifted students, though IQ tests have been criticized for cultural bias and limitations in measuring creativity and practical abilities. There is no gainsaying the fact that there are gifted students in every locality of the Nigerian State, no matter how remote it might seem. However, how to identify, and follow them up to the successes of their immediate community, and the entire nation at large, remains an issue of concern in research (Omosule, 2024). Despite that quite a number of societies, the world over run a number of these interventions and more, there still exists the phenomena of underachievement among these ones, hence the reason for this in-depth case study, in that these category of students requires specialized support to reach their full potential, in our social climes.

Socio-Emotional Theory

Underachievement among gifted students is a complex phenomenon that has garnered momentous attention from educators and researchers, the world over. Socio-emotional theory provides a framework for understanding the factors contributing to this issue. The theory further gained significant attention in education, particularly in social studies, as it

emphasizes the interconnectedness of social and emotional factors influencing student learning outcomes, in that it fuses existing studies on socio-emotional theory in social studies, exploring its components, applications, and implications. This theoretical review aims to synthesize existing research on socio-emotional theory as it relates to underachievement among gifted students in social studies.

Socio-emotional theory emphasizes the interplay between social and emotional factors influencing students' learning outcomes (Hurst & Ross, 2013). The key components of socio-emotional theory relevant to social studies include: self-awareness, which involves recognizing one's emotions, values, and strengths (Gresham& Reschly, 2011); self-regulation, which has to do with managing emotions, motivation, and behaviour (Herman, 2011); motivation, which are intrinsic and extrinsic drivers of learning (Hurst & Ross, 2013); empathy, which involves understanding others' perspectives and emotions (Hurst & Ross, 2013); and social skills, which involves skills for effective communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution (Gresham & Reschly, 2011). Several studies (Hill, 2015; Fu & Tsai, 2016; Larson, 2017;Omosule, 2024) have proven that socio-emotional theory has applications in social studies. These include civic engagement, which encompasses socio-emotional skills that foster civic participation and community involvement (Herman, 2011). Succinctly put, this theory provides valuable insights into understanding underachievement among gifted students in social studies. By addresses its socio-emotional factors through targeted interventions, educators can foster a supportive learning environment, promote engagement, motivation, and academic success within our social clime that seems to be divided than we have ever witnessed in the history of mankind.

Methodology

Study Design

The study adopted the use of descriptive cross-sectional research design. It is descriptive cross-sectional study in the sense that the researcher described the study patterns, learning behaviours, and practices adopted by the students in unravelling the reasons for their underachievement in university, using SATO's problem analysis. SATO's problem analysis is a problem-solving framework commonly used in education. It involves breaking down a student's academic or behavioural issues into specific components to better understand and address them. The acronym SATO stands for:

1. **Situation**: Describing the context in which the problem occurs.
2. **Analysis**: Analyzing the problem by identifying its causes, contributing factors, and potential solutions.
3. **Targets**: Setting specific goals or targets for improvement based on the analysis.
4. **Outcomes**: Assessing the effectiveness of the interventions or strategies implemented to address the problem. The SATO chart provides a structured approach to problem-solving in education, helping educators and support staff systematically address students' challenges and enhance their learning experiences.

This design is considered appropriate in that it has been proven beyond every reasonable doubts (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Mat, et al., 2021; Aminudin & Khairul, 2024) to describe the actions, attitudes, and traits of stakeholders / society of participants in executing a task.

Jacob (2015) defines population in research as the total number of people under investigation, while sample is considered as one of the components of the entire population. Thus, this study population consists of three Nigerian university social studies students, who were considered geniuses right from secondary school, but were found to perform below expectation (underperform or underachieve) at the university level. Since it is crucial to choose a study location with the appropriate sample characteristics as stated by Mat, et. al., (2021), a random (purposive / judgemental) selection of 2 female students and a male student were sampled, in order to have an in-depth knowledge of the students' situation, being a case study.

This sample comprises three university social studies students, who were selected using purposive sampling technique. The researcher interviewed the students, and used observation techniques, and SATO's problem-solving analysis in eliciting facts from them, with a view on their behavioural pattern, and more, during the data collection sessions.

The instruments used for this study were interview, and observation techniques. This was employed to investigate the causes of the students' underachievement, as they attend to the items on the checklist. In addition to their demographic information,the five sections of the observation checklist comprise 30 items drawn from the observed SATO's pattern of analysing the situation. A Likert scale was employed in ranking the respondents' self-efficacy, locus of control and competence because, according to Bond & Fox, (2015), this method is easy to use, grounded on empirical data, and is capable of increases the reliability and validity of a research.

Sida, (2019) opined that the validity of an instrument is crucial to every research, in order to establish the precision of the tool engaged in measuring the issue of concern in the subject-matter. With this in mind, the research proposal alongside the instrument used was submitted to authorities in Social Studies research, for validation. In addition to this, Peer Debriefing was carried out, having colleagues review the research observation process and instruments to ensure objectivity. It was discovered that the items in the instrument had a high degree of reliability for the purpose they were constructed.

Data for this study were collected, using face-to-face oral interview. In calculating the mean weigh, the frequency in each option were multiplied by the weight assigned to each item and was summed over each item before dividing by the total number responding to the item. Four point Likert scale was used.

This study selected three junior gifted students who take the course, Social-Cultural Pattern in Social Studies at the university. The participants were denoted A, B, and C, respectively. The basic information of participants is as follows:

Code	Gender	Level	Status At Secondary	Status at University
A	Male	300	Genius	Underachiever
B	Female	300	Genius	Underachiever
C	Female	400	Genius	Underachiever

i. **Researchers** - This study used researchers as a research tool. Therefore, the reliability and validity of this study were significantly correlated with the research methodology, skills, sensitivity, and honesty of the researchers (Patton, 2014). The researchers authentically played their own role based on the research foundation of gifted education and science education.

ii. **Student-problem score table, S-P chart** - The method provided item caution index and student caution index, and was able to concurrently analyze the test items and correct answer pattern of individual students to effectively diagnose the learning difficulties experienced by three students.

iii. **Questionnaire on Self-concept and External Support System for Underachieving Gifted Students** – This questionnaire was revised from the "Questionnaire on the Self-Concept and External Support System for Senior High School Students Failing to Overcome Underachievement" developed by Omosule, (2024). The content of the 48 items were completely identical, and only the descriptions for different learning stages of respondents were slightly modified. Items 1 to 22 investigated respondents' self-concept, including self-understanding (e.g. intelligence, self-expectation, self-confidence, sense of inferiority, self-evaluation, etc.) learning attitude (e.g. efforts made in schoolwork, learning attitude, fear for examination, etc.), and interpersonal relationship. Items 23 to 38 investigated respondents' "family support system," including parents' parenting attitude, communication method, family atmosphere, expectation attitude, and support for children' continuing study during their underachievement. Items 39 to 48 investigated "school support system," including the aspect of teachers (positive attitude, expectation, teaching method, and school examination method) and the aspect of peer group (including peer identification and support, study atmosphere in class, etc.)

iv. **Interview outlines for learning behaviour performance of underachieving gifted students -** The interview outlines included eight items, and were developed by the researchers. The last item was a multiple answer question where respondents were requested to verbally answer it. Before the formal interviews were conducted, a university student with similar background was invited to participate in the pre-test to determine whether the content of items was adequate. The interview process was audio recorded with participants' consent.

1. **To perform statistical analyses on student-problem score, S-P Chart (SATO, 1980)** – This study used S-P chart to perform analyses on the performance of three participants in this study, as well as that of other students concurrently taking the course of modern physics, in order to find out the correct answer rate, stability, and learning pattern of the three participants.

2. **To transcribe the interview content into texts** –The study engaged experts in this area, for accurate transcription.

3. **Data coding and analysis** – This study analyzed the transcripts of the interview data and identified the main themes, while focusing of the three respondents based on their conversations and answers. Contextual information associated with the theme were also collected and analyzed. During the consecutive interview conversation process, the interview Questions and Answers sometimes included one to two sentences and sometimes included several sentences (Jacob, 2015).

After examining the three transcripts, the researchers established categories based on the content and then gradually sifted the main themes, in order to reach conclusions in the end (Bond& Fox, 2015).

Results and Discussion of Findings

For the researcher to take an in-depth study of the samples, only three (3) underachievers were engage in the study, and for this reason, the two (66.7%) of the samples were female, while one, (33.3%) of the respondents belongs to the male gender. consequently, the sampled students had more than two (2) years of university teaching / learning experience. Furthermore, a diagrammatic explanation of the information obtained from the respondent's profile is given in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1
Demographic Information / Characteristics of Participants

Institution of Sampled Student	Gender	State	Number	Percentage
Adeyemi University of Education, Ondo	Male	Ondo	1	33.33
Olabisi Onabanjo University,Ago-Iwoye	Male	Ogun	1	33.33
Tai - Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode	Female	Ogun	1	33.33
Total			**3**	**100%**

Source: *Field Survey, 2024*

Table 4.2
Distribution of Respondents' According to Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
- - -	Nil	0.00
16 – 20	1	33.33
21 – 25	1	33.33
26 – 30	1	33.33

Source: *Field Survey, 2024.*

Socio-Cultural Problem-Solving Performance and Patterns of the Three Underachieving Gifted Students in Learning of "Socio-Cultural Patterns in Social Studies"

Table 4.3
Students' Socio-Cultural Performance Results Assessment Summary Table

Category	Students' Performance (two way classification Cross Interaction of Student and Caution Index	Scope of Correct Answer Rate	Scope of Student Caution Index	No. of Students	(%)
1	Inadequate learning ability	0 – 0.50	0 – 0.50	98	28.4
2	Stable learning	0.50 – 0.75	0 – 0.50	64	18.6
3	Smart learning style	0.75 – 1.00	0 – 0.50	29	8.4
4	Extremely unstable learning, careless studying habit, and insufficient preparation for course content	0 – 0.50	0.50 – 1.00	35	10.1
5	Occasional negligence, insufficient preparation, where studying harder is required	0.50 – 0.75	0.50 – 1.00	38	11.0
6	Mistakes caused by student's inability to co-exist with people of diverse cultural background	0.75 – 1.00	0.50 – 1.00	81	23.5
	Total		**0.50 – 1.00**	**345**	**100**

Table 4.3 shows the common two-way classification of students' correct answer rate and caution index (Yu, 1996). The correct answer rate is divided into three

levels based on the values of 0.75 and 0.50. Caution index is divided into two levels based on the value of 0.50. The results of cross-interaction are divided into 6 categories: good learning and high stability; stable learning and studying harder is required; lack of learning ability, insufficient learning and studying harder is required; mistakes are caused by carelessness; occasional carelessness, insufficient preparation, and studying harder is required; extremely unstable learning, arbitrary studying habit, inability to co-exist with people of diverse cultural background, and insufficient preparation for test content.

The students taking the same course with three participants exhibited a total of six performances. The correct answer rate of participant A in problems where memorization was required was better. Therefore, participant A belonged to category 2. Both participant B and participant C belonged to category 1. The Socio-cultural problem-solving performance of 3 participants are shown in Table 4.4 below. The level of difficulty started to gradually increase from C3, where both memorization and understanding were required. Almost none of them provided the correct answers.

Table 4.4 Socio-Cultural Problem-Solving Performance of the Three Underachieved Students

Adequate Socio-Cultural Problem-Solving Concept	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C
Cultural Competence: understanding and appreciating diverse cultural perspectives, values, and practices	✔	✔	✔
Empathy: Ability to understand and share the feelings of individuals from diverse background	✔	x	x
Critical Thinking: Analyzing complex socio-cultural issues, evaluating information, and developing well-supported conclusions	✔	x	x
Global Awareness: Knowledge of global issues, trends, and interconnectedness	✔	x	x
Communication: Effective verbal, and non -verbal communication across cultural boundaries	x	✔	✔
Conflict Resolution: Managing and resolving conflicts arising from cultural differences	x	x	x
Social Justice: Recognizing and addressing issues relating to inequality, discrimination, and human rights	✔	x	x
Community Engagement: Collaborating with communities to identify and address social issues	x	x	x
Historical Contextualization: Understanding historical events' impact on contemporary socio cultural dynamics	x	✔	✔
Analytical Thinking: Examining complex socio-cultural data, identifying patterns, and drawing meaningful conclusions	x	✔	✔
Correct Answer Rate	**0.50**	**0.40**	**0.40**
Student's Caution Index	**0.28**	**0.39**	**0.46**
Student's Performance Pattern	**2**	**1**	**1**

Keys:
✔ represents correct answer to item
x represents incorrect answer to item
1 represents lack of learning ability, insufficient

learning and studying harder and smarter is required **2** represents that there is learning but unstable, and that stability and smarter study is required

The "Questionnaire on Self-Concept and External Support System for Underachieving Gifted Students" Scores

Respondents' Self-Identification for the Causes of Underachievement and Self-Perception When Facing Underachievement

Participant A had the highest level of agreement with Item 6 "I do not often have conflicts with other people," Item 16 "I do not consider that my self-esteem is hurt in the face of underachievement," Item 18 "No other person will despise me due to my underachievement," and Item 20 "I do not feel that I am worthless due to my underachievement."

Participant B had the highest level of agreement with Item 1 "I think that my intelligence is not inferior to that of my classmates," Item 3 "I think that my creativity performance is better than that of my colleagues," Item 4 "I think I have a very high expectation towards myself," Item 11 "I will not experience a sense of inferiority when I discuss with my classmates about our schoolwork," Item 13 "I understand the true causes of my underachievement," Item 19 "I think that I have an active learning attitude," Item 20 "I do not feel that I am worthless due to my underachievement," Item 21 "I still believe that my potential is unlimited in terms of my current status," and Item 22 "I did not care about my ranking in class in the past."

Participant C had the highest level of agreement with only one item in the aspect of self-concept of the questionnaire: Item 13 "I understand the true causes of my underachievement."

To sum up, it appears that the self-concept of three participants was not affected by their underachievement and did not become negative. Two participants strongly agreed with Item 20 "I do not feel that I am worthless due to my underachievement" (4 points; the highest score), and one participant somewhat agreed (3 points) with it. Moreover, the three participants strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with Item 21 "I still believe that my potential is unlimited in terms of my current status" (4 points, 3 point, and 3 points).

Support from Family, Peer Group, and Teacher when Facing Underachievement
Family Support System

Participant A had the highest level of disagreement with Item 23 "My parents will not blame me for my

underachievement" and Item 33 "My parents will not compare the performance of my siblings, relatives, or classmates with mine to form pressure for me," followed by Item 24 "My parents will not worry about my future owing to my underachievement," Item 25 "My academic performance will not affect my communication with my parents," Item 26 "The harmonious family atmosphere will not be affected by my academic performance," and Item 31 "My parents hold an adequate expectation towards my academic performance." Participant A indicated that his parents hoped that he could graduate from the school smoothly. He even confided in the researcher that his parents will not be able to afford his study bills in the finalyear, even as he was certain that he failed the required courses, suggesting that he did not feel any pressure from family expectation.

Participant B had the highest level of disagreement with only one item: Item 30 "My parents' expectation towards my academic performance is consistent." There was no significant difference in the rest of the items.

The items with which participant C had the highest level of agreement were similar to those of participant A, such as Item 24 "My parents will not worry about my future owing to my underachievement" and Item 26 "The harmonious family atmosphere will not be affected by my academic performance."

School Support System
The three participants all indicated that "I spend too much time playing around with secondary school friends who studied other courses or on extracurricular activities" (participant B's response was 4; participant A and C's response was 3). They all disagreed with Item 46 "Most of my friends are those who attach high importance to academic performance." The fact showed that their friends were not those who enjoy studying in class. In terms of school teachers and learning environment, the participants all agreed that they perceived the support from the school and teachers. Participant A used to pay attention to his academic performance for a while owing to the instruction from the teacher. Consequently, his response for Item 43 "I will consult with teacher or classmate when encountering academic problems" was 4 points. Participant B' response was 4 as well. The score of Item 39 "School teacher usually encourages me" was high as well. It is interesting that all 3 participants responded that the place where they do their schoolwork most frequently was "school.". The moment they go out of school premises, they become disconnected with their studies.

Thoughts and Reflections of Underachieving Gifted Students on Their Own Learning Performance

Causes of Underachievement in Senior High School Learning

Participant A- Lack of interest in academic study
As a matter of fact, my academic performance began to fall behind since the second semester of first year in the university. To be more specific, my ranking started to fall down since the first examination in freshman year and was never improved...because I did not think about studying in university after going to senior high school. I intended to become learn a trade...In fact, my underachievement is also associated with my physical status. My memory was poor at that time...I just memorized concepts without understanding them. I did not understand what exactly my lecturers were saying in the class.

Participant B- Having a dislike for a certain teacher or certain learning methods
I did not like the some of our social studies teachers in the university at that time...I think that my hatred for them do have a significant impact on me. In fact, many students are also affected by their lectures...I hated learning anything by memorizing it. I think that the best way to learn is to understand it. For example, it is necessary to explain the morale behind every concept in social studies for me. I did not dislike lecturers of other courses. I was too lazy to memorize vocabularies. At that time, I thought that it was not necessary to learn English well as long as I can communicate with people in English.

Participant C- My Emotional Quotient was very poor since my childhood.
I cannot manage my emotion well. Most times, I tend to get angry or burst into tears among my peers. I tend to isolate myself from my classmates...I was assigned to the class of poorer level among my colleagues in the university, so my learning habit naturally worsened. However, somehow my desire to go to school become stronger ...even though I do not care about whether I am in first place or not.

Causes of the Continuous Underachievement of University Learning
Participant A: "*I almost did not study at all in the second semester of my first year in the university and during the first semester of the second year...I was not motivated to learn and did not find it relevant to be in first place. I thought that poor academic performance does not matter at all. I just desire to pass the required courses, and not have carry-over.*"

Participant B: "*In general, I would concentrate on the content in the first few classes, and then even never attended the class. I would be interested in the course that I did not take. However, I would not like to learn anything in the course I took. I hate to learn due to being criticized or stressed. I dance happily because no one forces me to dance.*"

Participant C: "*I just played around in the first and second years. I started to study since the junior and senior years...As a matter of fact, I did study many subjects until in the first semester of the first year. Compared with other gifted students in the past, I became just a mediocre student. I knew that it was necessary to study hard in the freshman year. I kept taking notes in class and reviewing the notes before the next lecture. However, when I got the exam paper, I found that I could not answer any question. The reason was that the test questions were the practice questions in the textbook. I could not afford to buy the textbook, and had no idea that the test questions would be the practice question. I felt that I was pranked, and gave up studying. When there were more advanced and professional courses to be taken, it was difficult to get good grades in these subjects. My mind began to decline, growing with the attitude that studying in the university is just to get every subject passed. I was busy handling the matters concerning the student association in 00 level and 200 levels of my university years. Half of my time was dedicated to student association*".

Sticking to the wrong learning strategies
Participant A: "*Because I did not intend to be the overall best graduating student, I simply look forward to have every subject passed. It was more embarrassing that I found that I could understand the concepts of the course, when reading the book or asking someone a question. During my practice, I found it easy to provide answers to questions. Besides, I could even explain the concepts to other classmates for one or two hours without feeling anything strange. After writing down the concepts twice, I could extend them to some questions. However, I could not smoothly apply the concepts to problem-solving in the examinations. I used the learning strategies recommended by my lecturers. However, I did not find it as smooth as that in study socio-cultural concepts / pattern. Honestly speaking, I did not do anything else. I even thought it was acceptable to give up studying hard*"

Participant B: "*I have the ability to study well. However, I do not have the motivation...I hate keeping studying hard. I found that I am really anticlimactic at times. I did not study well. I think that*

my values are more important than academic learning."

Participant C: *"I did not find it hard to stay concentrated in class. However, I would not like to review the course content after class. I could learn and understand something rapidly. However, I was unwilling to spend time on it. It is hard to request me to get a high score unless I am willing to keep studying without taking a rest. I think that I just wanted to be happy. I did not care about the academic performance of other classmates. The only difference between the first place and other places is just a little more scholarship. It really means nothing, to me."*

Excuses and Concept of Cost-Efficiency

Participant A: *"I originally intended to apply for a less demanding / tasking school during the application for admission. However, after thinking about it, I found that it might be risky. However, I hate to take the examination. Compared with other classmates in gifted class in the past, my academic performance was poorer. I have never heard that any of them may have any difficulty in getting graduated. Now, I think that the objective of learning is to get employed in the future. Because I have heard many people say that what they have learnt is not useful to them at all at work. To make money, many people will learn the investment skills about stocks, futures, etc. Some people will take the examination of certified public accountant or actuary, and others will take senior civil servant examination, in order to become public officials. I have never heard anyone engaging in occupations concerning social studies."*

Participant B: *"I was not afraid of doing badly. I thought that I could always take the makeup course later. As a result, I almost cannot even get graduated now. In secondary school years, I was too young to develop a wide perspective. My teacher said that I have to study hard to have a more promising future, therefore, I used to study hard in the past. However, I do not think that studying is the most important thing now. I really do not like the education system in Nigeria. Students will be criticized for doing things (e.g. studying social studies, Yoruba, and other education courses) other than studying professional courses like medicine and surgery, engineering, pharmacy, and law. Only when you become a super star will you be praised as the honour of Nigeria. The academic world in this part of the world seems to reflect such a value."*

Participant C: "*My parents never asked me to study hard for better academic performance. They always show respect for my choices. Getting a high score*

does not represent that you completely understand a subject. In addition, being able to understand a subject does not represent that you have to get a high score. The situation in my second year repeated in the third year. Although I did not suffer from the pressure from students' association in the senior year, there was another pressure – graduate school."

Strong in Persistence for Career- Planning, but Weak in Execution

Participant A: "*I would like to start to use my time to buy some books and prepare for civil service examination, during my alternative service. I would not go to cram school because going to cram school requires specific period of time. I would not prepare for graduate school admission examination. If I would like to go to graduate school in the future, I will plan, and plan it well."*

Participant B: "*I would like to become a secondary school social studies teacher, though, I failed the examination. I am more negative recently, and tend to be absent from the class. It will be hard for me to tell my family about the projected delay in graduation. I think it is not important to study because experiences are more valuable. Experiences are more important than knowledge. I really think that academic performance does not mean anything, since I have not concluded my career planning. I found it difficult for me to study hard now."*

Participant C: "*I think that I am still the same person. I still will do the same thing without any change. I will neither buy textbooks nor care about the ranking…I just want to be happy"*

Summary of Findings

Findings from this study revealed the following as causes of underachievement among gifted students**:**
Lack of Motivation: Participants cited boredom, loss of interest, and inadequate challenge.
Poor Study Habits: Inefficient time management, inadequate note-taking, and ineffective learning strategies were common.
Inadequate Support: Participants felt teachers and parents failed to provide sufficient guidance.
Personal Issues: Self-doubt, anxiety, and fear of failure hindered participants' performance.

Conclusion

From the findings, it can be concluded that lack of motivation, poor study habits, inadequate support and personal issues were factors responsible for underachievement among gifted students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore recommended that educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to pay special attention to the gifted students in terms of making adequate provision for sufficient guidance, motivation, encouraging them to develop positive study habits and helping them to solve personal issues affecting their learning so as to promote academic excellence.

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