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Perfectionism and Academic Self-Handicapped among Gifted Students: An Explanatory Model

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the relationship between perfectionism and academic self-handicapping strategies among gifted students in Jordan. This study used a mixed-method approach to explore the relationship as well as exploring any other factors associated with using such strategies. The Revised Almost Perfect Scale (APS-R) and the Academic Self-Handicapping Strategies Scale were used to measure perfectionism and academic self-handicapping among 242 gifted students on a high school for gifted learners. Subsequently, the researchers conducted four focus group discussions with 23 gifted students to identify the factors that may lead those students to use self-handicapping strategies. The results showed that Self-handicapped students were 4.58 times more likely to be maladaptive perfectionists than non-self-handicapped students. The results also revealed a combination of environmental, personal, and cultural factors that contributed to the use of these strategies by gifted students. This study has proposed an explanatory model to illustrate the relationship between perfectionism, academic self-handicapping, and factors that might be related. Finally, this study provided a range of educational implications that can be used in the field of gifted education.

Keywords: perfectionism, self-handicapping, maladaptive behaviors, gifted students, Jordan

Perfeccionismo y Auto-Discapacidad Académica entre Estudiantes Superdotados: Un Modelo Explicativo

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Resumen

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo examinar la relación entre el perfeccionismo y las estrategias de auto-discapacidad académica entre los estudiantes superdotados en Jordania. Este estudio utilizó un enfoque de método mixto para examinar la relación, así como otros factores asociados con el uso de tales estrategias. Se utilizaron las escalas Revised Almost Perfect Scale (APS-R) y la Academic Self-Handicapping Strategies Scale con 242 estudiantes en una escuela secundaria para estudiantes superdotados. Posteriormente, los investigadores llevaron a cabo cuatro grupos focales con 23 estudiantes para identificar los factores que pueden llevar a usar estrategias. Los resultados indicaron que los estudiantes con auto-discapacidad tenían 4.58 veces más probabilidades de ser perfeccionistas que los estudiantes sin ella. Los resultados también revelaron una combinación de factores ambientales, personales y culturales que contribuyeron al uso de estas estrategias por parte de los estudiantes. Este estudio ha propuesto un modelo explicativo para ilustrar la relación entre el perfeccionismo, la discapacidad académica y los factores que podrían estar relacionados. Finalmente, este estudio proporcionó una serie de implicaciones educativas que se pueden aplicar en el campo de la educación de superdotados.

Palabras clave: perfeccionismo, self-handicapping, conductas desadaptativas, estudiantes superdotados, Jordania



Students sometimes feel a fear of failure in educational tasks or important exams that may affect their self-concept and lead them to use some academic self-handicapping strategies (Schwinger, Wirthwein, Lemmer, & Steinmayr, 2014; Thomas & Gadbois, 2007). Self-handicapping involves any action, choice, or performance that enhances the opportunity to excuse failure and accept credit for the success (Antony, 2016; Coudevylle, Ginis, Famose, & Gernigon, 2008), such as claiming test anxiety, illness, procrastination, not reading the recommended texts, or any other forms of excuses (Ganda & Boruchovitch, 2015; Schwinger et al., 2014). On the other hand, perfectionism is considered as one of the most common characteristics among gifted students, especially in academia (Mofield & Parker Peters, 2015; Mofield, Parker Peters, & Chakraborti-Ghosh, 2016; Rimm, 2007; Neumeister, Fletcher, & Burney, 2015; Stoeber, 2017). Perfectionism has been linked to many other gifted students' characteristics, such as achievement motivation and self-efficacy (Chan, 2007; Neumeister, 2004; Neumeister & Finch, 2006; Neumeister et al., 2015; Stornelli, Flett, & Hewitt, 2009).

The concept of Giftedness has a wide range of definitions; some of these definitions, such as Lewis Terman, defines gifted students based on their intellectual abilities (Burnett, 2004) while other definitions focus on a combination of special abilities and skills, such as Renzulli and Marland definitions (Marland, 1971, p. 1; Renzulli, 2011). However, there are two significant hypotheses that illustrated the gifted individuals' behaviors compared to their intellectual abilities. The harmony hypothesis argues that gifted students have high mental and social skills; in contrast, the disharmony hypothesis claims that intellectual ability for the gifted could be associated with social and emotional difficulties (Preckel, Baudson, Krolak-Schwerdt, & Glock, 2015). Based on that, gifted students may tend to use academic self-handicapping strategies to protect the gifted label and self-worth (Snyder & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2013). Therefore, gifted students may mainly use maladaptive behaviors that associated with their beliefs of academic success, which is correlated to their concept of giftedness (Snyder, Malin, Dent, & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014).

Similarly, the maladaptive behaviors of gifted students are linked to their high expectations of themselves, their successful image, and their pursuit of

perfectionism in the academic, social, and personal domains (Kiamanesh, Dieserud, Dyregrov, & Haavind, 2015; Tan & Chun, 2014). Hence, this study tries to identify to what extent the self-handicapping strategies are linked to gifted students' high expectations and perfectionism level. In other words, this study seeks to explore whether gifted students are conducting academic self-handicapping strategies as an attempt to be perfect, or these strategies are related to other factors, such as self-image and academic achievement.

Self-Handicapping

Self-handicapping defined as a strategy that people use to keep and raise positive self-image in their own eyes as well as others' eyes (Hobden & Pliner, 1995; Lotar, 2005). Self-handicapping is also placing obstacles in the path of academic performance that students may use to enhance the opportunity of excusing failure or accepting credit for the success (Berglas & Jones, 1978; Lotar, 2005; Want & Kleitman, 2006). Self-handicapping is usually used to draw the attention of others from low performance toward other reasons such as lack of prior study, illness, lack of attention, or any other behavioral and claimed self-handicapping strategies (Berglas & Jones, 1978; Ganda & Boruchovitch, 2015; Harris & Snyder, 1986; Midgley & Urdan, 2001; Urdan, Midgley, & Anderman, 1998).

Even though self-handicapping is used to enhance individuals' self-esteem by providing a real or imagined excuse for low performance (Covington, 2000; Ferradás, Freire, Rodríguez-Martínez, & Piñeiro-Aguín, 2018), chronic self-handicapping is considered as a maladaptive strategy that over time, negatively impact the self-concept and self-efficacy (Gadbois & Sturgeon, 2011; Määttä, Stattin, & Nurmi, 2002; Martin & Brawley, 2002; Stewart & De George-Walker, 2014; Thomas & Gadbois, 2007). In like manner, self-handicapping has been associated with a wide range of adverse outcomes, such as poor adjustment, negative coping strategies, and poor study habits (Knee & Zuckerman, 1998).

Several studies claimed that academic self-handicapping is associated with underachievement among gifted students (Mofield & Parker Peters, 2019; Snyder & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2013; Snyder et al., 2014). Other studies have

linked the challenge-avoidant beliefs and behaviors among gifted students to other factors, such as gifted labeling and mindset beliefs about intelligence (Mofield & Parker Peters, 2018a). On the other side, some studies have indicated the relationship between culture, gender, and learning model and using self-handicapping strategies by gifted students (Freeman, 2004; Thompson & Richardson, 2001).

Perfectionism

Perfectionism is a common and misunderstood behavior among gifted students (Mofield & Peters, 2015; Silverman, 2007). Perfectionism is generally defined as the tendency to set excessively high standards of performance and rigorous self-evaluation where only total success or total failure exist as outcomes (Curran & Hill, 2019; Gong, Fletcher, & Paulson, 2017; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Oxtoby, 2018; Sotardi & Dubien, 2019). Adaptive perfectionism is associated with a realistic striving for high standards without psychological maladjustment or distress (Ozbilir, Day, & Catano, 2015; Suddarth & Slaney, 2001), whereas maladaptive perfectionism is predominately linked to unhealthy evaluation concerns, frequent doubts about actions, and preoccupation with avoiding mistakes (Hong et al., 2017; Stoeber & Otto, 2006; Suddarth & Slaney, 2001). Gifted students may turn adaptive (healthy or positive) perfectionism, into achieving excellence performance, but maladaptive (unhealthy or negative) perfectionism may breed dissatisfaction, anxiety, poor mental health, and social difficulties (Mofield & Parker Peters, 2018a; Zeidner & Shani-Zinovich, 2011).

Many studies have indicated that gifted students are academic perfectionists, who set high personal standards for themselves, especially in the classroom (Fletcher & Neumeister, 2012; Fong & Yuen, 2014; Margot & Rinn, 2016; Neumeister, Williams, & Cross, 2007; Wang, Fu, & Rice, 2012). There are many reasons behind perfectionist behaviors among gifted students, which might be family or environmental factors (Neumeister, Williams, & Cross, 2009). However, these behaviors in academia could be appeared in the form of overcompensating behaviors, such as excessive checking and rechecking (Mofield & Parker Peters, 2018a), concern over mistakes, doubts about actions, and discrepancy (Fletcher & Neumeister, 2012).

Perfectionism and self-handicapping are similar in many ways, such as reaching a specific standard, concern about others' perception in case of failure, and self-image that rely on achievements and recognition; therefore, this similarity justifies the number of studies that found a relationship between perfectionism and self-handicapping (Akça, Uçak-Azboy, & Tadık, 2017; Kearns, Forbes, Gardiner, & Marshall, 2008; Kearns, Forbes, & Gardiner, 2007). However, other studies argue that perfectionism and self-handicapping are two different constructs, but perfectionist characteristic may lead to outcomes in the form of self-handicapping strategies, such as procrastination, overcommitting, or not putting in the effort (Akça, Uçak-Azboy, & Tadık, 2017; Kearns, Forbes, Gardiner, & Marshall, 2008). However, the relationship between perfectionism, especially maladaptive type and self-handicapping among gifted students, has not been addressed in the researchers, and it still needs further investigation (Akça et al., 2017).

Relationship between Self-Handicapped and Perfectionism

Previous studies did not identify the relationship between perfectionism and academic self-handicapping among gifted students (Akça et al., 2017). Specifically, most of the studies examined the relationship between perfectionism and academic self-handicapping among students at the university level. For example, Kearns, Forbes, Gardiner, and Marshall (2008) proposed a model that explains this relationship among perfectionist college students, but they did not specify this model to explain the relationship among gifted students. Additionally, Stewart and De George-Walker (2014) studied self-handicapping as a performance-debilitating characteristic that linked underachievement, perfectionism, locus of control, and self-efficacy among university students. Karner-Huțuleac (2014) also examined the relationship between perfectionism and self-handicapping among university students with high standards while Hobden and Pliner (1995) linked self-handicapping among university students to perfectionism dimensions, which were self-Presentation and self-Protection. On the other hand, Shih (2011) conducted a study on perfectionist Taiwanese high school students, not identified as gifted, and the researcher found that adaptive perfectionism behaviors were

associated with positive emotions and self-regulation while maladaptive perfectionism behaviors were associated with negative emotions and self-handicapping.

As for the studies that investigated self-handicapping among gifted students, these studies did not directly link self-handicapping to perfectionism, yet they studied the relationship between self-handicapping and other variables, such as achievement motivation, personal self-esteem, and self-orientation (Akça et al., 2017). For example, Neumeister (2004) studied the relationship between perfectionism and achievement motivation among gifted university students. However, gifted students may use maladaptive academic behaviors to protect the giftedness image (Snyder et al., 2014), while these maladaptive behaviors could be a defensive mechanism to justify the low achievement of these students (Snyder & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2013). On the other hand, Mofield and Parker Peters (2018b) argued the differences between gifted, advanced, and typical students in the level of mindset, perfectionism, and achievement attitudes where the study findings showed that there was a positive association between perfectionism and achievement attitudes among gifted students.

Purpose of the Study

This study has two main objectives. The first objective was to identify the relationship between academic self-handicapping and perfectionism among gifted students in Jordan. Based on the lack of studies that investigate the relationship between academic self-handicapping and perfectionism among gifted students in general, this study mainly focused on a sample of gifted students in high school. This study attempted to find the correlative relationship between perfectionism (adaptive and maladaptive) with self-handicapping by using reliable scales. The second objective was to determine the fundamental reasons for using self-handicapping strategies among perfectionist gifted students by using the focus group discussion method. Overall, this study used a mixed-method approach to examine the relationship between academic self-handicapping and perfectionism among gifted students and any other factors associated with the use of these strategies.

Method

Participants

Participants of this study included 242 gifted students (105 females, 137 males) from the Jubilee High School for Giftedness in Amman, Jordan, during the second semester of the 2018/2019 academic year. For the first phase of the study (quantitative phase), the participants were randomly selected from grades 9-12 (9th= 63, 10th= 64, 11th= 64, and 12ve= 51) and their ages ranged from 15-18 years old with a mean of 16.04 (Std. = 5.66). For the second phase of the study (qualitative phase), the participants were purposely selected based on the quantitative phase's results, where students who had a higher correlation between perfectionism and self-handicapping were invited to four different focus group discussions. These discussions included six students from 9th grade (4 females, 2 males), six students from 10th grade (4 females, 2 males), six students from 11th grade (3 females, 3 males), and five students from 12ve grade (2 females, 3 males).

Data Collocation and Analysis

To identify the level of perfectionism and academic self-handicapping among the participants, the Revised Almost Perfect Scale (APS-R) (Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi, & Ashby, 2001) and the Academic Self-Handicapping Strategies Scale (Midgley, Maehr, Hruda, Anderman, Anderman, Freeman, & Urdan, 2000) were used. Both of the scales have been shown strong psychometric properties across different cultures (Dever & Kim, 2016; Mobley, Slaney, & Rice, 2005; Ulu, Tezer, & Slaney, 2012). However, the researchers conducted a set of procedures to verify the psychometric properties of the scales by using back-translation and content validity methods. For the back-translation procedures, the scales were translated from English into Arabic by the researchers and then back-translated from Arabic to English by an expert in both languages to ensure the stability of the scales' items. The Arabic translated scales were compared with the original scales to

verify the accuracy of language. In general, the back-translated scales were matched with the original scales except for slight differences in some vocabularies. Moreover, the researchers gave the translated scales to a group of experts in educational measurement and giftedness to determine the appropriateness of using these scales with the Jordanian culture. The results showed that the scales are valid to use in the Jordanian environment.

APS-R scale consisted of a 23-item, which were scored using a 5-point Likert scale. The 23 items of APS-R used to measure three dimensions of perfectionism: discrepancy, high standards, and order. Slaney et al. (2001) reported acceptable reliability of the APS-R subscales (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$ for high stander, 0.86 for order, and 0.92 for the discrepancy). The Academic self-handicapping strategies scale consist of 6 items that were scored using a 5-point Likert scale, as well. This scale was used to measure students' self-handicapping tendencies. Midgley et al. (2000) reported acceptable reliability of the scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.84$). Written consents were obtained from all students to complete a paper-pencil scale, which took between 25-30 minutes.

The researchers developed four focus group discussions based on the quantitative phase results to probe for factors that may lead the gifted students to use self-handicapping strategies. The focus group sessions aimed to discuss the following questions: How do you feel if you have not achieved the expected accomplishment in the school, such as exams or assignments? What are the possible strategies that you would use to justify any expected failure? What are the reasons for using these strategies? Can you describe any strategies that you had used to justify any failure of not meeting your expectations? What are the possible strategies that you would use to justify any expected failure outside the academic life? The focus group sessions were conducted by the researchers, who lead these open discussions by encouraging participants to express their thoughts. The focus group discussions took place in the library at Jubilee High School. Each focus group discussion was audio-recorded and verbatim transcribed manually. The researchers coded each focus group discussion independently; thereafter, the researchers discussed themes emerging from the codes. Written consents were obtained from students to participate and audio-recording the focus group discussions, which took between 110-140 minutes.

This study complied with the ethics code of scientific research at the university where the numerical system was used in the quantitative stage, and the names used in the qualitative stage are pseudonyms.

Results

Quantitative Phase

The results of the quantitative phase of the study showed a higher correlation between maladaptive perfectionism and academic self-handicapping. The results showed that there was a correlation between the maladaptive perfectionism and academic self-handicapping among 172 students of the study sample ($r = .71$), while the correlation with adaptive perfectionism was among 70 students of the sample ($r = .29$). A simple logistic regression was performed to ascertain the effect of self-handicapping on the likelihood that students have maladaptive perfectionism, as shown in Table (1).

Table 1.

Logistic Regression Analysis of Self-handicapping Effect on Maladaptive Perfectionism

Included	B (SE)	95% CI for Odds Ratio		
		Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
Constant	-0.225 (0.434)			
Self-handicapping	0.074 (0.027) *	1.021	1.077	1.136

Note: $R^2 = .03$ (Hosmer & Lemeshow), $.03$ (Cox & Snell), $.046$ (Nagelkerke). Model $\chi^2(1)$

$= 7.827, p < .01$. *, $p < .01$.

As it could be seen from Table (1), the simple logistic regression model was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 7.827, p < .01$. The model explained 4.6% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in maladaptive perfectionism among students and correctly classified 71.5% of cases. Self-handicapped students were 4.58

times more likely to be maladaptive perfectionists than non-self-handicapped students.

Quantitative Phase

The researchers grouped the codes, and the analysis of the focus data showed four emerged themes, which were: feelings, factors and reasons, relation with perfectionism, and strategies. The researchers discussed data in each group of coding in order to discover all factors associated with using self-handicapping strategies by gifted students and possible reasons behind using such strategies. Table 2 shows the main themes and codes emerged from analyzing the focus groups discussion.

Table 2.
Themes and Categories of Focus Group Discussions

Themes	Codes
Feelings	Emotion, Expectation, Jealous, Justification, Sadness, Understanding.
Environmental Factors	Competition with class, School environment, School effect, School requirements, Parental style.
Personal and Cultural Factors	Gifted characteristics, Self-concept, Self-esteem, Self-image, Social-image, Gifted classification.
Self-handicapping Patterns	Motivations, Strategies.

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Feelings. Students in the discussion groups showed a mixed set of feelings and emotions regarding their high expectations and their inability to meet these expectations. During the discussions, gifted students expressed their feelings of sadness and frustration as a result of their inability to achieve their goals. Table 3 shows a range of emotions that students have mentioned in the discussions.

Table 3.
Codes and Supporting Quotes for the Feeling Theme

Feelings	Supporting quotes
Emotion	[Sarah, 11 th grade] "maybe I will cry if I did not get this mark."
Expectation	[Ahmad, 9 th grade] "I studied hard and got unexpected marks."
Jealous	[Ahlam, 9 th grade] "if someone gets a higher mark than mine, I will be sad and upset"
Justification	[Muna, 9 th grade] "it is not a big deal that I did not get a full mark."
Sadness	[Alaa, 12 th grade] "sometimes I became very sad and blamed myself"
Understanding	[Maha, 10 th grade] "I deserve this mark."

Environmental factors. During the discussion, students presented a range of reasons and environmental factors that contributed to their use of the academic self-

handicapping strategies. The students showed several critical environmental factors that lead them to justify low academic performance. Among these factors, students mentioned school, parents, and a highly competitive environment. Table 4 shows the main environmental factors that were discussed in the focus groups.

Table 4.
Codes and Supporting Quotes for the Environmental Factors Theme

Environmental Factors	Supporting quotes
Competition with class	[Roaa, 10 th grade] "I do not want my friends to feel that I am less than them."
School environment	[Hanan, 12 th grade] "there are a lot of excellent students here, and you start to compare yourself with them."
School effect	[Khaled, 10 th grade] "we have to keep our average because of our scholarships."
School requirements	[Sana, 9 th grade] "I am really careful to get high marks to reach the wanted average here in this school more."
Parental style	[Rana, 9 th grade] "every time I got a bad mark, I think about what I want to say to my parents."

Personal and cultural factors. In addition to environmental factors, students in the discussion groups added a range of personal and cultural factors that contribute to their use of academic self-handicapping strategies. These factors are no less important than environmental factors, but often during the debate, they have emerged as more

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important factors for students. The most important personal and cultural factor that emerged in the debate was the social image of students as "talented" in front of others. Table 5 shows the most important personal and cultural factors that have emerged in the discussion groups.

Table 5.
Codes and Supporting Quotes for the Personal and Cultural Factors Theme

Personal and Cultural Factors	Supporting quotes
Gifted characteristics	[Raad, 9 th grade] "every one of us wants to be perfect."
Self-concept	[Ahmad, 9 th grade] "I will make it for myself because I think other students will say I am lazy."
Self-esteem	[Farah, 12 th grade] "I know myself."
Self-image	[Zainb, 12 th grade] "Instead of hearing everybody blaming me."
Social image	[Ali, 11 th grade] "everybody expects a full mark from you."
Gifted classification	[Tasnim, 12 th grade] "I am between lions, all of them are excellent."

Self-handicapping patterns. On the other hand, the students discussed a set of strategies they use when providing excuses for low academic performance, which

varied from not studying well, blaming teachers, preoccupation with other work, and other strategies. The students also discussed the motivations behind the use of such strategies, most notably self-satisfaction. Table 6 shows some of the strategies and motivations cited by the students.

Table 6.
Codes and Supporting Quotes for the Self-handicapping Patterns Theme

Self-handicapping Patterns	Supporting quotes
Motivations	<p>[Mayson, 11th grade] "I would make any excuses up to feel satisfied."</p> <p>[Alaa, 12th grade] "I will not ever let my parents down. I will do anything to make sure that will not happen"</p> <p>[Roaa, 10th grade] "There is a big challenge in this school; I mean, competitive classmates."</p>
Strategies	<p>[Noor, 10th grade] "When I have an exam, I go out with my friends."</p> <p>[Ahmad, 9th grade] "I don't know; I might pretend that I am sick."</p> <p>[Sarah, 11th grade] "In this school, we always have something to do. We have many outside activities, initiatives, and competitions."</p>

Explanatory Model

The quantitative results of the study showed that there was a correlation between maladaptive perfectionism and academic self-handicapping among gifted students. On the other hand, the qualitative results of this study explained the nature of this correlation and the factors that contributed to developing such strategies by gifted students. This model suggests that there are two sets of factors that determine the use of academic self-handicapping strategies by gifted students. These factors are environmental and cultural factors, which are strictly related to the development of perfectionism tendency among gifted students. In other words, the academic self-handicapping strategies used by gifted students, such as preoccupation, illness, or blaming others, occur because of a range of environmental and cultural factors, but the ultimate goal of using these strategies is to achieve the perfectionist image.

This model, as shown in Figure 1, links the existence of a competitive environment in the school and the parental style pattern to the social image of the gifted student, who must be undefeatable. This situation leads the gifted student to develop academic self-handicapping strategies to reach this perfectionist personality, while factors that cause the use of these strategies considered as assistance indications rather than the main objectives.

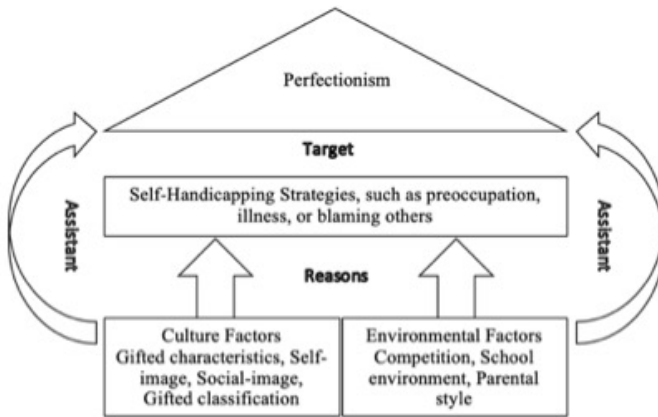


Figure 1. An Explanatory Model of the Relationship between Perfectionism and Self-Handicapping among Gifted Students

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between perfectionism and academic self-handicapping among a Jordanian gifted students' sample, which could be considered as one of the first studies that investigated this topic among gifted students, especially in high school. This study used a mixed approach method to discover the correlation between adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism and self-handicapping strategies, as well as the related reasons that may contribute to using such strategies by gifted students. The quantitative results of this study showed a higher correlation between maladaptive perfectionism and academic self-handicapping. This finding is aligned with previous literature that referred to the relationship between maladaptive behavior and self-handicapping strategies among perfectionists' students, such as gifted students, to the high personal standards for themselves, especially in school (Fletcher & Neumeister, 2012; Fong & Yuen, 2014; Margot & Rinn, 2016; Neumeister, Williams, & Cross, 2007; Wang, Fu, & Rice, 2012).

The qualitative phase of this study aimed to identify the underlying reasons behind the use of academic self-handicapping strategies by gifted students. The discussion groups' results indicated a range of environmental factors contributing to the use of such strategies as parental style and school competition. This finding is consistent with the study of Neumeister, Williams, and Cross (2009), in which the authors pointed out some environmental and parental factors. On the other hand, the results showed a range of personal and cultural factors that contribute to the students' use of the strategies of academic self-handicapping strategies, such as social image and self-concept, and this finding is consistent with Kearns, Forbes, and Gardiner (2007). Hence, it is necessary to mention the singularity of Jordanian society in the form of strict parental care on the academic side, especially for outstanding students. On the other hand, the Jubilee School for gifted students is one of the most prestigious schools that has a high reputation in Jordan, where the students have a respectful social image. The above factors contribute to the use of gifted students to strategies of academic self-handicapping, but this study differed from other studies in the interpretation of the relationship between perfectionism and academic self-handicapping and other factors. The authors proposed a model to illustrate the contribution of the environmental, personal, and social factors and the use of academic self-handicapping strategies in achieving the perfectionist personality among gifted students. This model shows the contribution of the enviro-social factors in the achievement of the personal perfectionism of gifted students using academic self-handicapping strategies.

The results of this study are essential for teachers, parents, schools, and students themselves. The results of this study could help teachers, parents, and schools to fully understand the personalities of gifted students, who are profoundly affected by the high standers and goals that they set for themselves. Thus, they may transform the factors that cause maladaptive behaviors, such as family care and competition to a motivation to use adaptive behaviors away from academic self-handicapping strategies. This transforming in the school and family environments from competition to the realistic standards could help the gifted students to get rid of the psychological maladjustment that is associated with maladaptive behaviors (Ozibilir, Day, &

Catano, 2015; Suddarth & Slaney, 2001), which may lead students to stop the using of academic self-handicapping strategies and replace them with motivations towards the achievement.

As for the cultural factors contributing to using the academic self-handicapping strategies by gifted students in Jordan, this is mainly due to the social image of gifted schools' students in Jordan, especially the Jubilee School. Hence, educational decision-makers in Jordan must pay attention to the effect of such a type of school in Jordan and replace it with other educational alternatives such as the inclusive education settings. On the other hand, labeling gifted students have adverse effects, such as boredom, isolation, nonconformity, and resentment, just like its positive effects on gifted students (Hickey & Toth, 1990). In Jordan, using such labels in addition to the educational settings of gifted students contributed to the development of maladaptive behaviors and, thus, the use of self-handicapping strategies. Hence, this study describes the cultural and personal factors that prompt gifted students in Jordan to use these strategies. The results of this study could help teachers, schools, and society to change their attitudes and methods of dealing with these students to reach a positive adjustment.

The proposed model in this study may help teachers and schools in educational planning for gifted students. On the one hand, teachers can use this model to fully understand the relationship between perfectionism and academic self-handicapping among gifted students in Jordan and to identify the factors that contribute to strengthening this relationship. On the other hand, teachers and schools can adjust all relevant variables such as competitiveness and challenging instruction to be cooperative and motivational strategies. This understanding may lead to control of these factors that were contributing to the emergence of maladaptive behaviors, which may reduce students' use of self-handicapping strategies.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include that this study was conducted with gifted students in one school in Jordan, which may affect the results' generalizability. Moreover, the results of this study are affected by the Jordanian cultural context and the extent of representation of the study sample. Therefore, these

factors must be taken into consideration when generalizing the results of this study.

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