Qur'anic Counseling Services in Optimizing the Potential and Achievements of Gifted Students at SMAN X Garut

Yanti Sam Amir[1], Dewi Fathuljanah[2]
[12]Institut Agama Islam Persatuan Islam Garut, Indonesia
yantisamamir@iaipersisgarut.ac.id. dewifathul@staipersisgarut.ac.id

Corresponding Autor: Yanti Sam Amir	
Article History: Recived: 2025, 09, 01; **Revised:** 2025, 09, 22; **Accepted:** 2025, 10, 20.	

Abstract: The achievement paradox in gifted students occurs when individuals with high intellectual potential show low academic achievement, which is influenced by social pressure, peer exclusion, and lack of environmental support. This study aims to analyze the influence of the social environment on the psychosocial aspects and academic participation of gifted students. The method used is a qualitative case study through semi-structured interviews and observation of social interactions at SMAN X Garut. The results show that before counseling, students had low self-awareness, hid their emotions, had fluctuating learning motivation, and passive class participation. After undergoing Qur'anic Counseling, which combines reflection on verses from the Qur'an, the empty chair technique, and CBT, there was an increase in self-awareness, emotional expression, learning motivation, social interaction, and academic participation. QS. Al-Mujadalah (58:11) emphasizes the importance of knowledge and faith in elevating one's status. These findings emphasize the need for an inclusive school environment and a holistic, spiritually-based educational approach to support gifted students.

Keywords: gifted students, underachieving, Qur'anic counseling, social environment, intrinsic motivation

INTRODUCTION

Every child born on earth has their own talents, and Allah SWT gives them in different ways, including as gifted children. According to (Renzulli, 2021), giftedness is relative and contextual, depending on the situation. He emphasizes the importance of developing gifted behavior in children who have great potential to be optimized through appropriate programs. For Renzulli, giftedness is not something that is entirely innate, but rather flexible and dynamic. Gifted students are generally known to have high intellectual intelligence (IQ) compared to children in general. In addition, they have high creative potential (Karwowski et al., 2013) (Angela & Caterina, 2022). However, some of them do not show optimal performance in the realm of creativity (Jauk et al., 2013). One of the causes is low self-efficacy in the context of creativity or creative self-efficacy. Some children experience an inability to adapt well to their environment. Some of them find it difficult to follow the lesson material, resulting in below-average grades (Ulfa and Aridhona, 2022)

Approximately 50% of gifted students have the potential to experience underachievement at some stage in their educational journey. This makes it an important issue that needs serious attention from parents and educators. This underachievement phenomenon is not limited to certain socioeconomic backgrounds, but can be experienced by children from both high and low-

income families, as well as in urban and rural environments. Learning failure is a phenomenon influenced by various complex factors that differ for each student. Each individual may experience failure for different reasons, so there is no single form of service or strategy that can effectively overcome failure for everyone. As a group, students who experience failure actually show greater differences from one another than the variations found in groups of successful students. (Pfeiffer, 2018)(McCoach & Siegle, 2003).

In the world of education, there is an interesting paradox, namely that students who are intellectually gifted actually show low academic achievement. This phenomenon is known as underachievement. Underachievement is a term given to gifted children who have high intelligence scores. Underachievement refers to students or individuals who have high intelligence levels, but whose academic achievements do not match their capabilities. When viewed from the perspective of their intellectual potential and intellectual status, they fall into the "fair, good, or even very good" categories. Their intelligence is often higher than average. Underachieving students or individuals have a gap between their intelligence test scores and their academic achievement scores at school, which are measured by their grade level and the results of evaluations conducted by teachers (Lesmana, 2022).

Low academic achievement refers to students with high intelligence but low or below-average academic achievement. Emerick (1992) was one of the early researchers to highlight the issue of low achievement in gifted students. He identified six forms of mismatch that can occur, namely: (a) high IQ scores but low achievement test scores, (b) high IQ scores with low academic grades, (c) high achievement test scores but low academic grades, (d) indicators of high intellectual and creative potential accompanied by low creative productivity, (e) high potential indicators but limited access to appropriate intellectual and creative development opportunities, and (f) external and internal factors that influence underachievement, including interests and activities outside of school, parental influence, classroom dynamics, goal orientation related to achievement, the role of teachers, and the characteristics of the students themselves.

In the context of Islamic education, the *Quranic counseling* approach is a relevant alternative for providing psychological and spiritual intervention to gifted students who experience social pressure or underachievement. Quranic counseling is a form of counseling based on Quranic values, which aims to help individuals rediscover the meaning of life, increase gratitude, and recognize their potential as a form of trust from Allah SWT (Abdurrahman, 2019). Allah's words in QS. Al-Mujadalah verse 11 state: "Allah will raise those who believe among you and those who have been given knowledge several degrees." This Al-Qur'an-based counseling can strengthen students' self-confidence and spiritual motivation in facing social pressures, as well as guide them to view academic achievement as part of worship and a form of gratitude for the intellectual gifts they have been given (Masril & Afiat, 2020).

Based on the above description, it can be understood that the phenomenon of gifted students experiencing underachievement is a complex problem influenced by various internal and external factors. This condition requires an approach that not only focuses on academic aspects but also touches on the psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of students. Counseling services are an important strategy in helping gifted students optimize their potential and improve their performance. In the context of Islamic-based schools, the Qur'anic Counseling approach offers an integrative perspective because it not only directs students towards academic achievement but also fosters spiritual awareness, independence, and self-balance. Therefore, this study focuses on the

14

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya
Jl. Jend. A. Yani 117 Surabaya

implementation of Qur'anic Counseling services in optimizing the potential and achievement of gifted students at SMAN X Garut.

METHOD
Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study method. The selection of this method is based on the research objective, which focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of declining academic achievement among gifted students influenced by their social circle at school. The study was conducted at a public high school in Garut Regency from March to June 2025.

The main subject of the study was a gifted student who showed symptoms of underachievement based on IQ test results. The subject was determined through a combination of intelligence test results, academic achievement records, and recommendations from the Guidance and Counseling (BK) teacher. In addition, the study also involved supporting informants consisting of BK teachers, homeroom teachers, and peers, who were considered to have a direct connection with the education process of the research subject.

Research Stages

Data collection was carried out through:

1. Semi-structured interviews were conducted directly with students, guidance counselors, and homeroom teachers. The interviews lasted 45–60 minutes and used interview guidelines that had been tested beforehand.
2. Participatory observation was carried out during teaching and learning activities and the students' social interactions outside the classroom to capture social dynamics naturally.
3. Documentation, including psychological records, IQ test results, and academic reports as supporting data.

The instruments used included interview guidelines, observation sheets, and documentation formats. All data were collected systematically and recorded in a field journal.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed descriptively and qualitatively using an inductive approach. The analysis process included:

1. Categorization of data based on themes that emerged from interviews and observations.
2. Compilation of an analysis matrix to map the relationship between social variables and academic achievement.
3. Compiling interpretive narratives to explain the dynamics found.

Validity and reliability were maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, as well as discussions with key informants to test the consistency of interpretations. The researchers also stated the assumption that social interaction has a significant influence on the motivation and academic achievement of gifted students. The limitations of the study lie in the limited number of subjects and the scope of the study, which only covered one school, so the results cannot be generalized broadly. Research ethics were maintained by obtaining official permission from the school and parents, as well as ensuring the confidentiality of the research subjects' identities.

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya
Jl. Jend. A. Yani 117 Surabaya

15

Figure 1. Individual Counseling Services
Source: Researcher documentation during individual counseling services conducted in the guidance counseling room

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The subject of the study was a student at SMAN X Garut who had been identified as gifted based on the results of a comprehensive psychological diagnostic test covering intelligence, creativity, and academic potential. The test was conducted by the school psychologist and showed that the student had top cognitive abilities with an IQ (score) of 131, high analytical skills, and outstanding academic potential. However, in practice, the student showed low academic achievement, with average report card grades and passive learning participation.

An interview with the student revealed that he felt uncomfortable standing out in class because he was afraid of being considered different by his friends. He preferred to hide his abilities in order to remain socially accepted. The guidance counselor and homeroom teacher stated that the student has critical and imaginative thinking skills, but is often reluctant to contribute to class discussions. The lack of emotional support from the family environment is a contributing factor to the pattern of underachievement.

Observations show that the student tends to be withdrawn, inactive in study groups, and shows little interest in competitive academic activities. Documentation in the form of psychological diagnostic test results and counseling notes reinforce the finding that there is a significant gap between the student's potential and academic achievement.

Table 1. Student's Psychological and Academic Profile

Aspect	Key Findings
Comprehensive Psychological Diagnostic Test Results	High intellectual potential, high creativity
IQ Score	131
Average Report Card Grades	Average KKM (76-80)
Class Participation	Passive
Social Interaction	Low, tends to be withdrawn
Perception of Achievement	Uncomfortable standing out, afraid of being excluded
Peer Support	Minimal, does not have a regular study group
Emotional Support from Family Environment	Lack of emotional support

These findings show that underachievement in gifted students can occur even when intellectual potential is very high, when the social environment does not support the expression of

16

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya
Jl. Jend. A. Yani 117 Surabaya

giftedness. Students in this study experienced a conflict between the desire to achieve and the need to be socially accepted. They chose to suppress their abilities so as not to appear different from their peers.

This phenomenon is in line with the concept of "social masking: excellence versus intimacy" proposed by Miracca U.M. Gross (1989) in her article titled "The Pursuit of Excellence or the Search for Intimacy? *The Forced-Choice Dilemma of Gifted Youth*" published in the journal Roeper Review*, where gifted individuals mask their abilities for the sake of social comfort. An unsupportive social circle and the stigma attached to students who are "too smart" are the main factors in the formation of underachievement patterns.

Table 2. Matrix of Social Dynamics and Academic Achievement Analysis

Social Variables	Key Indicators	Academic Impact	Interpretation of Dynamics
Peer Interaction	Minimal, no study groups	Low Participation	Students suppress their potential for social acceptance
Emotional Support	Lack of support from friends and parents	Fluctuating Motivation	Support is insufficient to balance social pressure
Perception of Achievement	Fear of standing out, fear of being excluded	Suboptimal Performance	Students conceal their abilities to avoid stigma

This statement reinforces the importance of an educational approach that pays attention to the social and emotional aspects of gifted students. An inclusive and empathetic learning environment can help students develop their potential without feeling pressured by social norms or external expectations.

Based on the findings that gifted students at SMAN X Garut experience underachievement due to social pressure, personal intervention through individual counseling services is the appropriate approach.

Table 3. Individual Counseling Process

Counseling Stage	Main Objectives	Approach/ Technique	Intervention Description
Identification and Initial Assessment	Identify the needs and background of underachievement through psychological data and interviews.	Comprehensive Psychological Diagnostic Tests, Observation, Interviews	The counselor analyzes IQ (INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT), creativity, and social pressure that encourages *social masking*.
Determination of Counseling Goals	Help students accept their talents, overcome social fears, and increase motivation to learn.	Humanistic	Build awareness that talent is a strength that should be expressed without shame or fear.
Primary Intervention (Spiritual)	Instill spiritual meaning in the	*Qur'anic Counseling*	Using verses such as QS. Al-Baqarah: 155–156 as a reflection of self-

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya
Jl. Jend. A. Yani 117 Surabaya

17

	potential of talent as a gift from Allah SWT.		resilience, gratitude, and spiritual motivation in the face of social pressure.
Psychological Intervention	Facilitate the expression of emotions and reconciliation of inner conflicts related to social pressure.	*Empty Chair TechnIQ (Intelligence Quotient)ue* (Gestalt)	Students engage in imaginative dialogue with the part of themselves or social figures that cause pressure, to reveal and release suppressed emotions.
Cognitive Restructuring	Change negative mindsets and cognitive distortions that reduce academic participation.	*Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)*	Help students identify negative thoughts, replace them with rational thoughts, and develop positive behaviors through homework and emotional exercises.
Social Support and Collaboration	Provide support from the school and family to maintain positive change.	Collaborative Counseling	Counselors work with guidance counselors, homeroom teachers, and parents to create an inclusive, supportive, and stigma-free environment for giftedness.
Evaluation and Follow-up	Review progress and ensure that interventions continue consistently.	Periodic Monitoring and Follow-up Sessions	Counselors monitor student participation in class, social interactions, and learning motivation, and provide additional sessions if social pressure continues to be an issue.

The initial stage of counseling is conducted through psychological assessments and interviews that reveal the conflict between students' desire to achieve and their need for social acceptance. The counseling objectives focus on accepting giftedness, increasing motivation to learn, and building self-confidence. The approaches used include humanistic and Qur'anic counseling for spiritual strengthening and understanding giftedness as a trust.

Individual counseling interventions primarily use the Qur'anic counseling approach as a central technique. This approach was chosen because it is able to provide a deep spiritual dimension to help students interpret their talents as a trust from Allah SWT, not a threat to social acceptance. Through reflection on verses QS. *Al-Baqarah* (2):155–156, which emphasize patience, sincerity, and the belief that every test is part of Allah's plan, students began to internalize spiritual meaning in their learning experiences. This reflection process is deepened by the practice of spiritual journaling,

18

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya
Jl. Jend. A. Yani 117 Surabaya

which serves as a means to express feelings, organize experiences, and connect academic achievement with religious values. As a result, there was a change in students' perceptions of the meaning of achievement, from being oriented towards external assessment to being more focused on intrinsic motivation, namely the drive to learn as a form of self-devotion and gratitude to Allah. Furthermore, students also showed a tendency to share knowledge inclusively with their peers, so that academic achievement was no longer seen solely as a competition, but also as a social and spiritual contribution.

To support the effectiveness of this intervention, the *Empty Chair* technique from the Gestalt approach was used, which allowed students to express emotional pressure and engage in dialogue with social figures imaginatively. This technique helps the process of inner reconciliation, which has been hampered by fear of stigma. On the other hand, the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) technique is involved to restructure negative mindsets, such as the belief that abilities must be hidden in order to be socially accepted. CBT guides students to replace cognitive distortions with rational thoughts and build adaptive behaviors through emotional exercises and independent tasks. The counseling process is supported by collaboration between counselors, teachers, and parents, followed by periodic evaluations and follow-ups to maintain positive changes in students.

Table 4. Individual Counseling Results

Aspects	Before Counseling	After Counseling
Self-Awareness	Low self-esteem, feels giftedness is a social burden.	Improved, began to accept his talents as strengths and gifts.
Emotional Expression	Hides feelings, afraid of being ostracized.	More open in expressing feelings, through the empty chair technique and Qur'anic reflection.
Motivation to Learn	Fluctuating, tended to be passive in academic participation.	Began to actively ask questions and show interest in subjects he liked.
Social Interaction	Kept to himself, did not have a regular study group.	Began to try to interact with two friends, although still limited.
Negative Mindset	"I had to hide my abilities in order to be accepted."	"My potential can be useful and still make me accepted," the result of CBT restructuring.
Class Participation	Passive, reluctant to speak or contribute to discussions.	Begin to show minimal participation in small group discussions.
Response to Social Pressure	Suppressed himself, avoided competitive activities.	Begin to voluntarily participate in one academic extracurricular activity.
Spiritual Support	Not yet aware of the spiritual meaning of giftedness.	Feel motivated after reflecting on QS. Al-Baqarah: 155–156 and writing a reflective journal.

Based on the table above, students showed an increase in self-awareness and began to accept their talents as strengths. Through a humanistic approach and Qur'anic counseling, motivation to learn began to grow and spirituality became a source of self-empowerment. The empty chair technique helped students release pent-up emotions, while CBT successfully changed negative thoughts into more adaptive ones. Academic participation and social interaction began to increase, albeit still limited. The combination of these three techniques—Qur'anic counseling, Empty Chair, and CBT—synergistically produces positive results, reflected in increased self-awareness, academic

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya
Jl. Jend. A. Yani 117 Surabaya

19

participation, social interaction, and students' ability to cope with social pressure without suppressing their talents. The spiritual approach as the main foundation provides inner strength, while psychological support through Gestalt and CBT techniques strengthens resilience and sustainable behavioral change.

This progress indicates that counseling has a positive impact, but follow-up and ongoing support from the school and family environment are still needed. These results are an initial indication of the counseling process. The changes are still gradual and need to be followed up through further counseling sessions, daily progress observations, and support from the school system and family. The Qur'anic counseling approach provides a framework for gifted students to understand and manage the social influences and internal pressures they experienced before counseling.

Before the intervention, students showed low self-awareness, felt that their giftedness was a social burden, hid their emotions for fear of being ostracized, and had fluctuating motivation to learn. Their social interactions were limited, negative mindsets developed ("*I have to hide my abilities to be accepted*"), and class participation was very passive. Students also suppressed themselves in the face of social pressure and were not yet aware of the spiritual meaning of giftedness.

After undergoing counseling that integrated reflection on verses from the Qur'an, the empty chair technique, and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), significant changes occurred. Self-awareness increased, and students began to accept their giftedness as a strength and a gift. Emotional expression became more open, learning motivation increased, and students began to actively participate in lessons that interested them. Social interactions also improved, with students beginning to try to socialize with their peers to a limited extent. Negative mindsets were successfully restructured into "My potential can be useful and still make me accepted," while class participation began to be seen in small group discussions. Responses to social pressure became more adaptive, marked by the courage to voluntarily participate in extracurricular activities. Spiritual support increased through reflection on QS. Al-Baqarah (2:155–156) and reflective journal writing, which fostered intrinsic motivation and an understanding that academic achievement can go hand in hand with spiritual responsibility.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that giftedness identified through psychological tests does not automatically correlate with high academic achievement, especially when the student's social environment is not supportive. In this case study, gifted students experienced underachievement due to social pressure, lack of peer support, and demands not to stand out in class. High expectations from teachers and families actually intensified psychological pressure, thereby reducing their motivation to learn.

As a form of intervention, individual counseling services were provided, combining a humanistic approach, *Qur'anic counseling*, the *empty chair* technique, and *cognitive behavior therapy* (CBT). This counseling approach successfully helped students improve their self-acceptance, manage their emotions more adaptively, and demonstrate better academic participation. Collaborative support from counselors, guidance counselors, and parents helped create a more inclusive learning environment. The preliminary counseling results showed positive changes in the students' psychosocial and academic aspects, confirming that underachievement needs to be addressed holistically, covering academic, social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

However, this study has limitations because it only involved one subject, so the findings cannot be generalized widely. In addition, the theoretical and scientific approaches used still need to be reviewed and expanded through further research in order to provide a stronger foundation for the application of Qur'anic counseling in handling cases of underachievement in gifted students.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

FUNDING

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTEREST

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

REFERENCES

Abdurrahman, A. (2019). Fungsi dan Peran Konseling Islam Dalam Pendidikan. *Islamic Counseling: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam*, *3*(1), 33. https://doi.org/10.29240/jbk.v3i1.799

Angela, F. R., & Caterina, B. (2022). Creativity, emotional intelligence and coping style in intellectually gifted adults. *Current Psychology*, *41*(3), 1191–1197. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-00651-1

Emerick, L. J. (1992). Academic Underachievement Among the Gifted : Students ' Perceptions of Factors that Reverse the Pattern Underachievement among the gifted has been a focus of research for over 35 years . With few exceptions , studies of interventions for gifted underachie. *Gifted and Talented International*, *36*(3), 140–146.

Jauk, E., Benedek, M., Dunst, B., & Neubauer, A. C. (2013). The relationship between intelligence and creativity: New support for the threshold hypothesis by means of empirical breakpoint detection. *Intelligence*, *41*(4), 212–221. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intell.2013.03.003

Karwowski, M., Lebuda, I., Wisniewska, E., & Gralewski, J. (2013). Big five personality traits as the predictors of creative self-efficacy and creative personal identity: Does gender matter? *Journal of Creative Behavior*, *47*(3), 215–232. https://doi.org/10.1002/jocb.32

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya
Jl. Jend. A. Yani 117 Surabaya

21

Masril, M., & Afiat, Y. (2020). Solution Focus Brief Counseling Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an Sebagai Manifestasi Pendidikan Masa Kini. *Hisbah: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Dan Dakwah Islam*, *17*(1), 17–32. https://doi.org/10.14421/hisbah.2020.171-02

McCoach, D. B., & Siegle, D. (2003). Factors that differentiate underachieving gifted students from high-achieving gifted students. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *47*(2), 144–154. https://doi.org/10.1177/001698620304700205

Pfeiffer, S. I. (2018). Handbook of giftedness in children: Psychoeducational theory, research, and best practices. *Handbook of Giftedness in Children: Psychoeducational Theory, Research, and Best Practices*, *January*, 1–374. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77004-8

Renzulli, J. S. (2021). The Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness: A Developmental Model for Promoting Creative Productivity 4. *Reflections on Gifted Education: Critical Works by Joseph S. Renzulli and Colleagues*, 55–90. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003237693-3

Al-Qur'an al-Karim. (2004). Terjemahan Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia. Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia.

22

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya
Jl. Jend. A. Yani 117 Surabaya