Chapter 4
Effects of Software on Gifted Students Achievement and Activities in Elementary Education:
Cross–Cultural Investigation

Ali Sharaf Al-Musawi
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6893-3216
Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

Sahar Ahmed El Shourbagi
Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

Balqees Khalfan Al Saddi
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9307-2270
Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to compare the ways that teachers in both countries, Oman and Canada, respond to the needs of gifted students and deal with them in elementary schools, with a focus on the use of instructional software and their impacts on gifted students' achievement and activities. It reviews the literature in this field, explains and analyzes the collected data and findings of a small-scale study conducted with teachers of gifted students in the two countries. The chapter then presents the schoolteachers' perceptions about the impacts of instructional software on gifted students. Conclusions are drawn and future prospectives are pointed out.
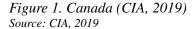
INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to compare the sociocultural perspectives of teachers about giftedness among students in a Mid-Eastern and North American countries, namely, Oman and Canada. It focuses on the ways that both educational societies look at the use of instructional software to teach gifted students and specifies how it reflects on their achievement and activities in elementary classrooms.

The first sections of the chapter start by introducing the profiles of both countries, concentrating on the sociocultural and educational structures. Then, the subsequent sections explain the instructional treatments of giftedness in elementary classrooms, followed by the technological advances with a special emphasis on software programs. The latter sections also review current literature exploring software effects on gifted students' achievement and activities. Next, a small-scale comparative study is discussed and the data collected through interviews with teachers of gifted students are analyzed qualitatively. Final sections draw the schoolteachers' perceptions and conclude with whether these software programs really affect gifted students' learning and the extent to which they should be used in the elementary classrooms.

COUNTRIES (OMAN AND CANADA) PROFILES

Canada is recognized as the second largest country in the world, covering most of the vast area of North America with a landscape that occupies 9,984,670 km², enjoying diverse geographical regions, natural resources and sceneries (Nations Online, 2019). Canada became independent in 1867 to form its own constitution. The capital city of Canada is Ottawa (see Fig. 1). Toronto and Montreal are respectively the first two large cities in Canada in terms of their economic status, population as well as the educational importance. Vancouver is the largest city in trading with the Pacific Rim countries and is considered the main western gateway center of trade (Bercuson, Nicholson, Morton, Hall & Krueger, 2019). The Canadian culture has been influenced by western traditions and its own native cultures. Canada continuously welcomes an increasing number of immigrants from European, Asian and Latin American countries, which makes Canada a multicultural country. There are two official languages spoken in Canada; English and French (Nations Online, 2019)

Figure 1. Canada (CIA, 2019)
Source: CIA, 2019

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