

THE EFFECT OF THE STUDENTS' ETHNICITY  
AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS ON  
TEACHERS' REFERRAL AND  
RECOMMENDATION FOR  
PLACEMENT IN THE  
GIFTED/TALENTED  
PROGRAM

By

HALA MUTWALI ELHOWERIS

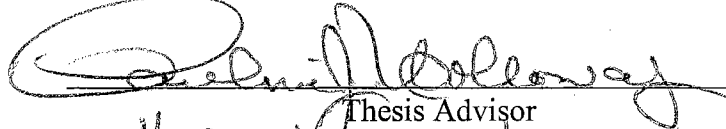
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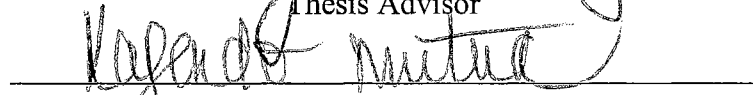
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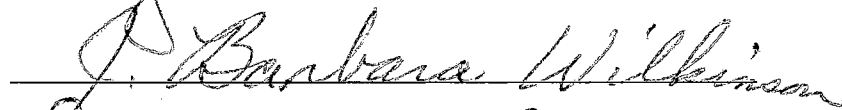
Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
August, 2002

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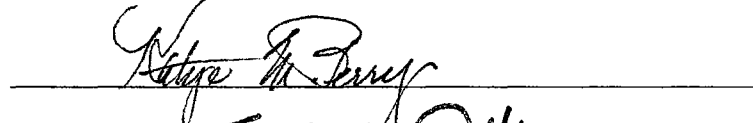
Thesis Approved:


  
Thesis Advisor









  
Dean of the Graduate College

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my committee members for their time, knowledge, and support. I would like to thank Dr. Holloway, the chair of my committee, for her guidance, support, and friendship throughout my graduate program and for her invaluable assistance in my pilot study, Dr. Mutua, the dissertation advisor, for her invaluable assistance and constant encouragement not only on this project but with my responsibilities as student and research assistant during the last three years, Dr. Perry for her kindness and patience in answering my research questions and for her great help in identifying the appropriate sampling procedure for the study, Dr. Davis for his suggestion in formulating my research questions and friendship not only with this project but with my responsibilities as student and teaching assistant, and finally I would like to thank Dr. Wilkinson for her invaluable assistance, friendship and willingness to serve on my committee.

One person who was not on my committee that I am indebted to for his invaluable contributions in the completion of my dissertation is Dr. Fuqua. Dr. Fuqua helped me with the questions that I had in the data analysis and the multivariate assumptions.

The completion of this dissertation and my graduate training could not have been completed without the help and support of my family. I thank my mother, Amna Khidir, who took care of my children to give me an ample time to complete my work on this dissertation and who also helped me with the data entry. And, finally, I especially thank

my husband, Negmeldin Alsheikh, who made many sacrifices over the last six years so that I could return to school. His understanding and support in collecting my data were great help for me to get my Ph.D.

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

Minority children have been plagued by inequities within the educational structure for several decades. Despite advancement in education reform efforts, inequities still exist in programming and instructional practices that negatively affect minority students (Daniels, 1998). For instance, although the year 1994 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954), to this day African American children continue to struggle with the basic issues of justice and equity (Ford & Webb, 1994). The inherent inequities within the educational system have been discussed in different court cases throughout the years; *Brown v. Topeka, Kansas, Board of Education* (1954); *Larry P. v. Riles* (1972, 1979); and *Diana v. California State Board of Education* (1970).

The overrepresentation of minority students in special education programs is not a new phenomenon (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Chinn & Selma, 1987; Dunn, 1968; Kunjufu, 1993; Patton, 1998, Reschly, 1988), nor is the under-representation of minorities in the gifted and talented programs (Ford & Webb, 1994; Maker, 1996). Although the literature has paid enough attention to the issue of the overrepresentation of minorities in special education programs, and to the major factors that contribute to this overrepresentation,

the issue of underrepresentation of minorities in the gifted/talented program has been underplayed in the literature. Given the researcher interest in equity issues the major focus of this study is to examine the factors that could contribute to the underrepresentation of minorities in the gifted/talented program.

An examination of the current statistical data reveals that there is a disproportionate representation of minority students in gifted and special education programs (Harry, 1994). The over-representation of minorities in groups labeled as having disabilities is cause for concern (Hardamn & Drew & Egan, 2002), given that African American children appear more frequently than would be expected in classes for those with serious emotional disturbance and mental retardation, and Hispanic Americans also represent a large group in special education programs (Drew & Hardman, 2000). However, programs for the gifted and talented seem to have fewer than expected students who are African American, Hispanic American, or Native American (Daniels, 1998; Gollnick & Chinn, 1998). According to data from the U. S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, minorities are overrepresented in 40 to 50 percent of special education programs and underrepresented in 30 to 70 percent of gifted and talented programs across the nation (Richert, 1987). In fact, many investigators have reported findings that minority students tended to be over-represented in special education programs (Burke, 1975; Grossman, 1995; Tucker, 1980) and underrepresented in gifted and talented programs (Ford & Harris, 1991; Maker, 1996; Richert, 1987). Minority children with disabilities who live in urban and high-poverty environments are believed to be at particularly high risk for educational failure and poor outcomes because of inappropriate identification, placement, and service (Oswald, Coutinho, Best, & Singh,

1999). Heller, Holtzman, and Messick (1982) stated that “the key issue is not disproportionality per se, but rather the validity of referral and assessment procedures and the quality of instruction received”(pp.5). Anderson (1994) also reported that teacher judgments in the referral process combined with the inherent biases of the assessment process contribute to the disproportionate referral and special education placement of African American students.

In many school districts, even when students’ assessment results were similar, it was not uncommon to place poor and minority students in programs for students with emotional problems, behavior disorders, and developmental disabilities. While white students, especially those from the middle class, on the other hand, were usually placed in programs for students with learning disabilities (Grossman, 1995). Additionally, a number of studies have reported that white American students are less likely to be identified as having a disability or to be placed in restrictive school settings than students from other cultures, particularly African American (Harry, 1992, 1994; Reschly & Ward, 1991; Trent & Artiles, 1995). In fact, prior to the passage of Public Law 94-142, minority students were typically over-represented in programs for students with behavior disorders, serious emotional problems, communication disorders, and developmental disabilities; and under-represented in programs for students with learning disabilities and for gifted and talented students (Grossman, 1995). For instance, Dunn’s (1968) classic article “Special Education for the Mildly Retarded: Is Much of It Justifiable?” sparked several questions regarding the efficacy of special class placement for African American children. Today, these students are still over-represented in special education programs (Grossman, 1995; Patton, 1998; Reschly, 1988) and underrepresented in the gifted and

talented programs (Ford & Webb, 1994; Maker, 1996). As this continues, minority children react by dropping out of school, becoming truant, and exhibiting destructive behavior and social alienation (Pernell, 1987). The dropout rate is 68% percent higher for minorities than for whites (Oswald et al., 1999). Banks (1999) cited school dropout rates for African American youngsters 18 to 24 years of age at 16.3%, and at 33.9% for Hispanic Americans compared with 12.2% for whites in the same age range.

Educators and parents are well aware that the identification of a child, and perhaps particularly a student from a diverse ethnic or cultural background, as disabled, is a significant decision with lifelong implications. Therefore, the individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as reauthorized in 1997 by P.L. 105-17, and many associated judicial decisions require districts to implement nondiscriminatory procedures to ensure that children with disabilities, rather than ethnic or cultural differences, are appropriately identified. IDEA also expanded congressional intent to be more responsive to the “growing needs of an increasingly more diverse society”(Chapter 2, Section 681.7). According to Spencer and Hollmann (1998), African Americans represented approximately 12.3% of the total population in the United States in 1990, but their number is increasing at a more rapid rate than the white population. Baca and Valenzuela (1998) noted that approximately 10 million of school age children spoke language other than English in their home in 1990. Congress found that although the number of children from different backgrounds in the nation’s schools is increasing significantly, many of these children do not receive a free and appropriate public education (Oswald et al., 1999).

One of the most serious problems plaguing in the field of Gifted education is the need for the development of appropriate identification procedures for gifted and talented minority students (Ford & Harris, 1991; Maker, 1996). Indeed McKenzie, in 1986 study, showed that significant relationships existed between participation in gifted and talented programs and the variables of race, per-pupil expenditures, and socio-economic status. Most educators agree that gifted children can be found in all economic strata, and in all racial and ethnic groups (Clark, 1983; Kitano & Kirby, 1986; Marland, 1972). Some even hypothesized that the percentage of gifted people in these groups is the same as the percentage of gifted people from middle class, majority culture families (Maker, 1987). However, in actual practice, a very small percentage of children from poor families or minority groups are found in the gifted and talented programs. For instance, researchers (Ford, 1993; Ford & Harris, 1991) pointed out that only about 63, or less than 2 percent of more than 4, 000 articles written about gifted and talented students since 1924, were about minority talented youth. Therefore, recently, there have been increased attention and efforts devoted to the identification and placement of minority students in gifted and talented programs. The need to recognize and develop the giftedness of African Americans was a concern of two African-American leaders who were early agents of change. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20 centuries, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois espoused philosophies, which placed emphases on developing the talents and gifts of African American students. These responses reflect the unfortunate reality that minority children, particularly African American children are severely underrepresented in gifted and talented programs (Alamprese & Erlanger, 1988; Ford & Harris, 1991; Richert, 1987; U.S. Department of Education, 1990). According to Ford and Webb

(1994), abundant data suggested that gifted and talented programs are perhaps the most segregated educational programs in this nation, and that more efforts should be taken to ensure that minority students, poor students, as well as underachievers receive the education to which they are ethically and legally entitled. Policy concerning the treatment of gifted and talented children in schools has fluctuated widely over the years (Whitmore, 1980).

Perceptions of giftedness and beliefs about the kinds of abilities and talents needed for the survival and advancement of American society have changed drastically over the years (Feldman, 1991). The cultural and linguistic makeup of the population also has changed. In 1900, four out of five foreign-born people in the United States were from European countries. Currently, only one in five is of European descent (Waggoner, 1993). Despite these major changes in demographics, many educators continue to rely on instruments designed to measure giftedness that were designed earlier in this century when the demographics of the population were obviously different. According to Ford and Harris (1991), identifying gifted and talented African American students has been difficult for several reasons: (1) lack of agreement on the definition of the term gifted and talented; (2) IQ-based definition of gifted and talented; (3) over reliance on intelligence tests; and (4) lack of attention to the influence of cultural factors on intelligence.

Additionally, several factors named as hindrances in the identification of African American students included the use of definitions of gifted that reflect middle class, majority culture values and perceptions (Maker, 1983); the use of standardized tests that do not reflect the exceptional abilities of minority students (Kitano & Kirby, 1986); and

the low referral rates for gifted and talented assessment from parents and teachers (Clark, 1983; Kitano & Kirby, 1986).

Many studies have criticized current identification practices, noting limitations such as the inappropriate and biased use of assessment procedures (McKenzie, 1986; Renzulli & Reis & Smith, 1981). According to Baldwin (1987), the over-reliance on standardized tests to make decisions about actual or potential giftedness has led to discriminatory tracking, with children from different cultural backgrounds being identified less often as gifted and talented than mainstream students. Yet, the reasons for this underrepresentation are many and varied. It is not clear whether this underrepresentation is due to the failure of current methods in identifying and serving minority children or due to other factors.

Mary Frasier (1991) stated that over the years many solutions have been tried and found wanting. Among these were nominations besides teacher nominations, using special checklists, modifying traditional procedures, using weighted matrices, and teaching to the tests and “none of these solutions has solved the problem”(p. 236). Additionally, Mathew, Colin, Moore, and Baker (1992) stated that despite the continuing concern with finding alternative identification procedures that will increase the representation of minority students in gifted and talented programs, little progress has been made.

Teacher nomination is one of the main means of identification for gifted and talented programs (Coleman & Gallagher, 1992; Fraiser, 1987). In most gifted and talented programs teacher nomination is used, either as part of the larger identification process, or as the primary source of means for screening (High & Udall, 1983). With

culturally and linguistically diverse students, teacher nomination may not accurately reflect potentially gifted/talented students and they may prove very unreliable (High & Udall, 1983). Teachers sometimes have negative attitudes and/or expectations of children from different cultural backgrounds, without adequate knowledge of the impact of culture on behavior. Thus, they often do not understand the motivation behind the actions of minority students and therefore, overlook minority children for gifted and talented programs (Woods & Achey, 1990). Additionally, Hadaway and Marek-Schroer (1992) stated, “teachers may assume a student is not gifted based on a child’s language proficiency in their first and second language, their use of “nonstandard” English, accent, differing values, aspirations, and levels of motivation” (p.74). Whether or not teachers are qualified to identify gifted and talented students has been the topic of much debate throughout the years (Gagné, 1994; Hoge & Cudmore, 1986; Pagnato & Birch, 1959). For instance, early research by Pagnato and Birch (1959) found that junior high school teachers failed to nominate over 50% of the gifted and talented students in their school; moreover, the teachers in their study sample identified many average students as gifted. Jacobs (1971) found that elementary school teachers in his study were able to identify only 10% of the gifted/talented students who scored highly on an individual IQ test. Additionally, Cox Daniels, and Boston (1985) reported that approximately 40% of the teachers in the Richardson study misidentified gifted/talented students in their third and fourth grade classrooms, the grades at which gifted and talented programs tend to begin. On the other hand, in a more recent study Rohrer (1995) stated that “teachers were able to recognize intellectual potential in students who were not the stereotypical White, fit, well-adjusted, high-achieving students” (p.279).



The findings from studies designed to investigate the effectiveness of teachers' referral in the identification of gifted and talented children are inconsistent. Therefore, the particular focus of this study is to examine the effect of the child's ethnicity and SES on teachers' referral and placement recommendation in the gifted and talented program. In a three-year study, Rist (1970), found that the student's achievement was closely tied to the student's social background because teacher's expectations for the child's academic potential, as early as the first year in school, were based almost entirely on racial and socio-economic facts about the child. Jensen and Rosenfield (1974) found that not only do society stereotypes influence teachers' expectations for student achievement and classroom behavior, but they also influence their evaluation of students. For instance, Yessledyke and Algozzine (1980) demonstrated that classification decisions are more a function of naturally occurring pupil characteristics (sex, SES, type of referral problem, and physical appearance). Given the apparent bias operating in these studies, this study examines whether this phenomenon is still operating in deciding gifted and talented program placements.

### *Problem Statement*

Although the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Act of 1988 provides financial assistance to state and local educational agencies and gives highest priority to minorities, economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient, and disabled students, the under-representation of minority students in gifted and talented program still persists (Ford & Webb, 1994). A disproportionately low number of minority students in general

and African Americans in particular have been identified and placed in programs for gifted and talented students (Ford & Webb, 1994). The realities of this situation relates to the attitudes of teachers, the identification process itself, and an inadequate picture of how a program should be designed (Baldwin, 1987). According to Kitano and Kirby (1986), the low referral rates for gifted and talented assessment from teachers hinder the identification of African American students for gifted and talented programs. Rist (1970), in a three-year study, concluded that a student's achievement is closely tied to his social background because teachers' expectations for children's academic potential, as early as their first year in school, were based almost entirely on racial and socio-economic facts about the children. Additionally, Yessledyke and Algozzine (1980) demonstrated that classification decisions are more a function of naturally occurring pupil characteristics (sex, SES, type of referral problem, and physical appearance). In addition, teachers were found to be more likely to refer poor and non-European American students for evaluation for possible placement in special education programs for students with disabilities and less likely to refer them for programs for gifted and talented students (Grossman, 1995).

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study is to assess the role of certain student characteristics on teachers' referral and placement recommendations in the gifted and talented program. More specifically, the characteristics that will be investigated in this study are ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The second purpose of this study is to see whether the

teachers' cultural backgrounds and the schools' different levels of socioeconomic status could make a differential effect of referring and placing students in G/T programs.

### *Significance of the Study*

Whether or not teachers are qualified to identify gifted and talented students has been the topic of much debate throughout the years (Gagné, 1994; Hoge & Cudmore, 1986; Pegnato & Birch, 1959; Renzulli, 1979). While research appears to support the use of teachers' ratings of student behaviors (Renzulli, 1979; Rohrer, 1995), there is also a body of research that suggests that certain biases exist when rating students (Gagné, 1993; Powell & Siegle, 2000). Previous studies have shown that educators and the general public have negative stereotypes and inaccurate perceptions of the abilities of children from ethnic, cultural, and linguistic minority groups (Ogbu, 1992; Ruiz, 1989; Udall, 1989). Although there is a large number of studies which examined the impact of ethnicity and socioeconomic status on teachers' referral and placement recommendations decisions in the special education programs (for example, Pernell, 1987; Prieto & Zucker, 1981; Rist, 1971). No study has been found that investigated the effect of the child's ethnicity and socioeconomic status on teachers' referral and recommendation for placement in the gifted and talented program. It has been recommended that to reduce the inappropriate and biased referrals to programs for students with disabilities and to increase the number of appropriate referrals to programs for gifted and talented students, regular educators' knowledge of the contextual, cultural, gender, and socioeconomic factors should be increased (Grossman, 1995). Thus, the need of this study is self-

evident. Educators need to increase their knowledge of other cultures, to broaden their perspectives of personal values, and to become aware of how their own personal values can affect the identification of the minority gifted and talented child.

### *Research Question*

Rist (1970) found that teacher expectations for academic potential were based almost entirely on racial and socio-economic facts about the children. Additionally, Yessledyke and Algozzine (1980) demonstrated that classification and placement decisions in special education are more a function of naturally occurring pupil characteristics (sex, SES, type of referral problem, and physical appearance). Clearly then, additional research to examine these factors (ethnicity and SES) and its affect on teachers' referral and placement decisions in the gifted and talented program is needed.

This study, therefore, will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What effect does the student's ethnicity have on teachers' referral and recommendations for placement in the gifted/talented program?
2. What effect does the student's socioeconomic status have on teachers' referral and recommendations for placement in the gifted/talented program?

### *Definition of Terms*

Gifted and Talented – According to Section 904. Education of Gifted and Talented Children, "Gifted and talented children" means those children identified at the

preschool, elementary and secondary level as having demonstrated potential abilities of high performance capability, and needing differentiated or accelerated education or services. For the purpose of this definition, "demonstrated abilities of high performance capability" means those identified students who score in the top three percent (3%) on any national standardized test of intellectual ability. This definition may also include students who excel in one or more of the following areas:

- a. creative thinking ability
- b. leadership ability
- c. visual performing arts ability, and
- d. specific academic ability.

Minority- this term includes non-European Americans such as African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American.

#### *Assumptions*

Based on the chosen statistical analyses (Multivariate Analyses of Variance), certain assumption was drawn. The assumption is that the interrelationships among dependent variables are linear within each group (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1983). Based on the chosen sampling procedure (cluster sampling) to be utilized in this study, it was assumed that every school building includes 20 elementary teachers.

### *Limitations of the Study*

An important point that should be noted is that students should not be referred or recommended for placement in gifted and talented programs based on limited information contained in the vignette. The survey instrument contained a brief vignette of a child's background so more descriptive information about students could have influenced the results significantly.

### *Organization of the Study*

Compilation of the current study will be presented in five chapters. The first chapter explains how the problem was initiated and why it was significant to conduct this study. The second chapter includes the review of literature that attempts to explain the factors that contribute to the under-representation of minority children and children from low-income families in programs for the gifted and talented. The third chapter contains information on the method: participants, instrument, design, pilot study, procedures, and how the data was analyzed. Chapter four includes a discussion of the results from this study and the last chapter offers some conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER II

### Review of the Literature

#### *Introduction*

Many theories are presented in this chapter as an explanation of the inappropriate procedures used with the minority gifted and talented children and of how these procedures reinforce social inequalities.

This section starts by discussing the theoretical framework that attempts to explain factors that contribute to the under-representation of minority children and children from low-income families in programs for the gifted and talented. Then there will be a discussion about the definition of gifted and talented; the shortcomings of the traditional identification procedures; the accuracy of teachers' nomination; and finally there will be a discussion about the effect of the child's characteristics on the referral and placement decisions. This section concludes with the summary of the literature review.

### *Theoretical Framework*

Various theories have attributed the high percentage of failure among poor and non-European American students; their overrepresentation in special education programs for students with disabilities and their underrepresentation in programs for gifted and talented students to two different sets of factors; intrinsic and extrinsic. The intrinsic factors blame the students themselves and the extrinsic factors blame other factors that lie outside the student. Advocates of the intrinsic factors are the meritocracy theory and cultural disadvantage theory. On the other hand, advocates of the extrinsic factors that will be discussed in this section are the social reproduction theory and Ogbu theory. In the following section each theory will be discussed separately.

#### *Meritocracy Theory*

According to the meritocracy theory, the American society is a meritocracy society in which all people have an equal opportunity to succeed and those who do not succeed lack either the ability or the motivation to do so (Blatt, 1981). Blatt (1981) suggested that there are many people in the working class with what he and others call cultural familial retardation. He believes that these individuals suffer from two related problems. First, they inherit limited intellectual ability from their parents and second, their parents are unable to provide them with the kind of support that they need to acquire and maintain a reasonable standard of living. So the meritocracy theory offers an explanation for why poor students, especially those who come from poor families, tend to



have lower IQ scores than middle- and upper class students. Moreover, Herrnstein (1973) has stated, “1. If differences in mental abilities are inherited, and 2. if success requires these abilities, and 3. if earning and prestige depend on success, 4. then social standing (which reflects earnings and prestige) will be based to some extent on inherited differences among people” (p.58-59).

The view of this theory has been supported in the literature by the work of Jensen who believed that African Americans occupy a lower social and economic position because they have low IQs which prevent them from doing well in school and thereby from moving into the more desirable social and economic roles (Jensen, 1969). Moreover, the lack of representation of African American gifted/talented children in educational programs for the gifted and talented was attributed to heritability reasons by Eysenck (1973). Additionally, Clark (1983) stated, “a major problem encountered in providing for gifted students among the disadvantaged is the attitude shared by teachers, and parents alike, that giftedness could not exist in lower class populations” (p. 333).

### *The Theory of Cultural Deprivation*

In the 1960s, at the same time that the genetic explanation of the low rates of success among minorities and poor students and their disproportionate enrollment in special education programs was rejected by large numbers of educators the theory of cultural deprivation gained a great deal of acceptance (Bacon & Child & Barry, 1963). According to this theory, children are culturally deprived when they come from home and neighborhood environments that do not provide them with adequately stimulation for

normal development. Consequently they become retarded in linguistic, cognitive, and social development, which cause their school failure (Bloom & Davis & Hess, 1965). “According to the cultural deprivation theory, the disadvantaged and advantaged students differ in terms of their cognitive skills, linguistic ability, self-concepts, levels of educational aspiration, locus of control, and social behavior” (Grossman, 1995, p 34).

Many studies in the literature supported the theory of cultural deprivation. For instance, Bloom et al. (1965) indicated that certain minority students (African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and the children of poor parents) are brought up in inferior cultural environments that deprive them of the appropriate skills, attitudes, and acceptable behaviors. As a result they are ill prepared to succeed in school either academically or behaviorally. Additionally, Smith’s study (1989) findings indicated that teachers attributed African American students’ underachievement to cultural deprivation and lack of parental interest.

### *The Reproduction Theory*

According to the social reproduction theory, society tends to conceptualize the role of schooling in terms of continuing or reinforcing the status quo (Giroux, 1983). Neo-Marxist reproduction theory suggests that schools provide children from different cultural backgrounds, poor and female students with the kinds of educational experiences that maintain them as a source of cheap. On the other hand, more affluent European-American males are trained to be leaders of the society (Grossman, 1995). According to this theory, poor and minority students are exposed to an educational structure that

reproduces the ethnic and socioeconomic-class disparities in outcomes (Giroux, 1983). This theory argues that schools are organized so as to replicate the hierarchical structure of the society. In another words school structure mirror society's structure, and prepares lower class students for lower class jobs (Bowles & Gintis, 1977). Bowles and Gintis (1977) stated "Thus Black and other minorities are concentrated in schools whose repressive, arbitrary generally chaotic internal order, coercive authority structures, and minimal possibilities for advancement mirror the characteristics of inferior job situation" (p. 132).

The view of the reproduction theory has been discussed extensively in the literature. It also supports the work of Kozol (1991) regarding the conditions of schooling for poor urban students.

### *Ogbu Theory*

Ogbu's (1978) theory of differential psych-social development among minority peoples presents the interaction between "caste-like" minorities and the society. Ogbu argued that it is not the fact of cultural discontinuity that militates against success, but a combination of discriminatory practice and the reaction of minorities to these practices (Ogbu, 1978). According to this theory, society and schools are not equally biased against all non-European students. The European American dominant class differentiates between voluntarily immigrants (e.g., Jewish) and involuntarily involuntary immigrants such as African Americans, Native Americans, Puerto Rican Americans, and Mexican Americans. Voluntary immigrants are likely to be accepted into society equals once they

have assimilated. Involuntary groups, however, are unlikely to be accepted as equals, regardless of what they do for three reasons: 1) the history of their relationship with the dominant European Americans; 2) the myths that European Americans have created about their innate inferiority in order to justify the conquest of their land and the enslavement of their ancestors; and 3) the fact that they do not look like European Americans (Grossman, 1995). Indeed, Ogbu (1992) stated that school personnel are more willing to accept and tolerate the cultural differences of voluntary immigrants. However, the cultural differences of involuntary immigrants are devalued, disliked, and squashed by school faculty because these groups have been considered inferior for hundred of years.

Minow work also supports Ogbu's view. According to Minow (1990), minority people are seen as "different" in the American society. Minow (1990) also stated that the dilemma of difference exists because it has traditionally rested on the assumption that difference means abnormality or stigma. Thus, it has been assumed that "to be equal one must be the same, [and] to be different is to be unequal or even deviant" (Minow, 1990, p. 50). An unstated assumption of dilemma of difference is that the source of difference is within the individual (Artiles, 1998). However, Minow (1990) indicated to us that difference is a comparative term. Heath (1995) stated that European-American culture represents the norm against which comparisons are made in the American society. In fact, sociological perception research suggests that little change has been found in the last 30 years in European-American adults' views of minority people. Indeed, Garcia (1993) stated that minorities continue to be viewed as less intelligent, lazy, and of lower moral character. The deficit view of minority people might often mediate European-Americans'

cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions to minorities' phenotypes, interactive styles, language proficiency, and worldviews (Grossman, 1995).

### *Definitions of Gifted/Talented*

Traditionally, student's intelligence was considered in very narrow terms, defined by only those abilities measured by an IQ test (Schwartz, 1997). If the definition of gifted and talented is not a useful one, it can lead to unfavorable consequences of various kinds, both for society and its individuals (Ford & Harris, 1991). As with concepts of intelligence and under-achievement, gifted is a highly debated and much discussed term (Hadaway & Mareak-Schroer, 1992). In general, theorists and social scientists tend to focus on the definition of gifted and talented in the dominant culture (Ford & Harris, 1991). While few investigation definitions, theories, or identification procedures have been applied specifically toward African American children who are either gifted/talented or potentially gifted/talented (Ford & Harris, 1991). Traditional definitions of gifted was based on Terman's definition who defined gifted as the top one percent in general intelligence ability on the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test (Ford & Harris, 1991). Since that time traditional definitions of gifted have been defined primarily by either high scores on IQ tests, or high scores on achievement tests (Bernal, 1981). Because minority children tend, on the average, not to perform well on standardized tests, the probability that minority children will perform poorly when assessed for gifted and talented programs increases (Ford & Harris, 1991). The literature presents criticism indicating that because such tests are standardized on white middle-class norms, they are biased in favor

of whites (Baldwin, 1987). Definitions of the gifted and giftedness abound. Across generations and cultures, the nature of giftedness has been examined, its defining features deliberated, and its origin (Barkan & Bernal, 1991). The continuing debate lie critical issues, particularly with respect to determining who is gifted and talented (Hadaway & Mareak-Schroer, 1992). It has been stated that gifted and talented children can be found in every ethnic and racial group and at all socio-economic levels (Maker, 1987). However, the number of minority students identified as gifted and/or talented remains small. In fact, an examination of the relevant literature since 1924 reveals that of many articles found on the gifted and talented, less than two percent addressed minority group members (Ford & Harris, 1991). Current definitions of Giftedness are often elitist based on restrictive, sometimes culturally biases criteria (Woods & Achey, 1990).

In fact, traditional identification procedures have failed to identify many gifted and talented minority students (Fraiser, 1987). “The over-reliance on, misuse of, and sometimes abuse of standardized tests are confounded by inattention to the influence of one’s culture and environment upon the development and manifestation of giftedness and talent in different racial groups” (Ford & Haris, 1991, p.28). In fact, Renzulli (1978) indicated that, “more creative persons come from below the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile than above it, and if such cut-off scores are needed to determine entrance into special programs, we may be guilty of actually discriminating against persons who have the highest potential for high levels of accomplishment” (p. 182). The traditional measures of intelligence typically yield small numbers of minority students among the highest scorers and the minority groups most commonly underrepresented are often the most economically disadvantaged children such as African American, Native American, and Chicanos (Kerr

& Colangelo & Maxey & Christensen, 1992). Seldom does one find a gifted and talented program in which the percentage of minority students equals the percentage of children from that minority group in the general school population (Maker, 1987). In fact there is usually an extremely large discrepancy between these percentages. For example, High and Udall (1983) report that the school district they studied had a total minority population of 42.6% (including Mexican-American, African American, Native American, and Asian), but only 11% of the students in the gifted and talented program were from minority groups.

The definition of gifted underachiever is another problem in the field of gifted education. Although more than 50% of gifted and talented students have been identified as underachievers (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), the term “gifted underachiever” lacks consensus over its definition (Ford & Webb, 1994).

Although the lack of consensus over the term “gifted underachiever,” the primary criteria for intelligence and ability are test scores. Moreover, depending upon identification procedures of a state or school district, a student can be labeled gifted and talented in one district but not in another (Ford & Webb, 1994). Ford and Webb (1994) also stated that identifying the underachievement among African American students is complicated by the fact that identified characteristics of underachievement are usually established on white, middle-class students. And, therefore, do not necessarily fit characteristics common among African American youth.

Numerous definitions of gifted abound, and there is little consensus regarding how best to define the term (Ford & Harris, 1991). As Sternberg (1988) and Cassidy and Hossler (1992) believed, most states continue to support a 16-year-old or older definition

of who is gifted. In 1992, Cassidy and colleagues found that the 1978 federal definition was the definition most widely utilized by most states. The majority of states, they reported, used some modification of this definition and no states utilized the contemporary theories of intelligence and giftedness developed by Sternberg and Gardner. Further, 30 states had not made any revisions of their definitions in a decade, and only 15 had made revisions within the last five years. Additionally, Ford and Webb (1994) indicated that many states abuse or misuse the federal definition by limiting their services to the aforementioned four or five categories. And they also reported that one of the major shortcomings of the federal definition is that students who are gifted and talented in areas other than those, which are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, may be overlooked for placement in gifted and talented programs. For instance, Gardner's (1983) theory of "multiple intelligences" proposes that there are at least seven types of intelligence, five of which cannot be measured by traditional, standardized, or norm-referenced tests. Two of these intelligences (logical-mathematical and linguistic) are measured by such tests; while the other five (interpersonal, intrapersonal, bodily kinesthetic, spatial, and musical intelligences) are not. Moreover, most states using the U.S. Department of education definition place a priority for placement on gifted students who display their gifts in the intellectual and specific academic abilities areas versus those whose strengths are in the creative, visual and performing arts, and leadership areas (Ford & Webb, 1994). According to Haensly, Reynolds, and Nash (1986) and Sternberg (1988) the educational needs of many gifted and talented students are not met because most states continue to define the term gifted from a unidimensional perspective. According to Ford and Webb (1994), the



unidimensional assessment may identify some students as gifted and talented, but miss the remaining ones because this definition also ignores those students who consistently perform poorly on paper-and-pencil tasks and tests.

Increasingly, educators are moving toward an expanded definition of giftedness that sees intelligence as multifaceted and talent development (Gardner, 1983; Renzulli & Reis, 1985). Piirto also indicated (1999) that educators now are more likely to use the term “talent” instead of “intelligence,” and to describe it as an indication of future achievement and a potential to be nurtured and developed, not a demonstrated, immutable ability. In particular, the research and work of Howard Gardner, Joseph Renzulli, and Robert Sternberg have been instrumental in guiding the educators toward an expanded view of intelligence and ability. Early in the 1980s, experts in the field of gifted education recommended use of several instruments when assessing children from disadvantage populations, including culturally and linguistically diverse students (Richert, Alvino, & McDonnell, 1982). Some of the instruments they recommended have remained in use, including Progressive Matrices Standard (Raven, 1980); SOI Screening Form for Gifted (Meeker & Meeker, 1979); System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment (Mercer & Lewis, 1978); and Culture Fair Intelligence Test, Scale 1 (Cattell & Cattell, 1969). Despite the use of all these alternative instruments children from different cultural backgrounds continue to be underrepresented in programs for the gifted and talented (Fraiser, 1987).

In the following section, there will be a discussion about the current identification methods that include intelligence and achievement tests, nominations, grades, and

checklists. In fact, each of these options has drawbacks in assessing minority children (Hadaway & Marek-Schroer, 1992).

### *Shortcomings of the Traditional Identification Procedures*

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid and efforts devoted to the identification and placement of minority students in gifted and talented programs. This response reflects the unfortunate reality that minority children, particularly African American children, are severely underrepresented in gifted and talented programs (Ford & Harris, 1991; Richert, 1987; U.S. Department of Education, 1990). This discrepancy reaches 50% nationally, but may be even higher in some school districts and states (Ford, Webb, 1994).

One of the many factors that contribute to the under-representation of minority groups and children from low-income families in programs for the gifted and talented is the traditional identification procedure (Ford & Harris, 1991; Maker, 1996). Standardized group intelligence/achievement tests are most widely utilized screening measures for gifted and talented programs. However, controversy continues on two major issues regarding their use with minorities, limited English proficient (LEP) students and the culturally diverse students (Ford & Harris, 1991). Research by Baldwin (1977), Hilliard (1976), and Torrance (1971) shows that IQ and achievements tests cannot be depended upon to assess the capabilities of minority gifted/talented children.

In fact, exclusive reliance on standardized test scores for gifted and talented identification has drawn increased criticism because of the belief that large numbers of

potentially gifted and talented individuals may be overlooked and thus, excluded from gifted and talented programs (Bernal, 1990). Generally, tests are highly ethnocentric; what is of value to one culture may be ignored or overlooked by another (Gordon & Miller & Rollock, 1990). Additionally, most tests rely on either oral or written language skills. Minority language students who are not considered gifted maybe they are very gifted and talented but unable to express themselves in English (Cohen, 1988). In general, most definitions of gifted underachievement assume that a gifted underachievement child must have high test scores. This ignores the well-supported findings, which indicate that because of the inherent bias found in standardized tests, many gifted and talented African American students do not perform well on these measures (Ford & Harris, 1991). Test results cannot accurately reflect the ability of many gifted and talented African American students and this makes identifying underachievement even more difficult (Ford & Webb, 1994). According to Grossman (1995), the child's cultural, personal, socio-economic, and family backgrounds are factors that need to be considered when screening children for admission into gifted/talented programs. A study by Van Tassel-Baska, Patton, and Prillman (1989) revealed that the vast majority of states rely primarily on standardized, norm-referenced tests to identify gifted and talented students, including those from racially and economically diverse groups. Less often are multidimensional, multimodal assessment strategies utilized, although numerous researchers have emphasized the importance of these assessments strategy with racially and economically diverse groups (Ford & Harris, 1991; Patton, 1992).

Traditional measures of intellectual ability typically yield small numbers of minority students among the highest scores (Ford & Harris, 1991). Most educators agree

that gifted and talented children can be found in all economic strata and in all racial and ethnic groups. Some even hypothesized that the percentage of gifted individuals in these groups is the same as the percentage of gifted and talented people from middle class and majority culture families (Maker, 1987). However, in actual practice, very small percentages of children from low-income families or minority groups are found in programs for the gifted and talented (Ford & Harris, 1991; Hunsaker, 1994). Gifted is not a trait inherent to native speakers of English; however, there is a lack of instruments that can detect giftedness in minority language students (Gallagher, 1979; Renzulli, Reis, & Smith, 1981).

A second means of screening measures for gifted and talented programs is through nominations by teachers, parents, peers, and students themselves. In fact, nominations are often determined by student's grades, classroom performance and motivation (Schack & Starko, 1990). When classroom performance does not reflect abilities, teacher nomination may not accurately reflect potentially gifted and talented students (Hadaway & Marek-Schorer, 1992). In addition to teacher nominations, parents' nomination is another mean of screening measures for gifted and talented programs. Parents provide useful information in the identification of the gifted and talented child (Hadaway & Marek-Schorer, 1992). However, many parents may not have the knowledge about assessment procedures and special programs in the schools to become an advocate for their children (Woods & Achey, 1990). Another option used for identification and placement into gifted/talented programs is grades. Low grades do not necessarily indicate lack of or limited ability however; it may indicate a lack of motivation or heavy emphasis by the grader on other factors that are not related to

academic such as attitude or class attendance (Hadaway & Marek-Schorer, 1992).

Inventories and checklists are other screening options. Several researchers have noted that some children from culturally different backgrounds demonstrate their high abilities in different ways from majority cultural children (Fraisier, 1987). Therefore, checklist and ratings scales have been developed to accommodate these cultural variations.

Several educators have stated that the identification process produces an under-representation of minorities in the gifted and talented programs (Richert, 1987). According to the data published by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, minorities are underrepresented in 30 to 70 percent of gifted programs across the nation (Richert, 1987). In summary, the difficulty of defining and identifying gifted and talented minority students can be attributed, in part to the current over-reliance upon standardized tests and the use of uni-dimensional instruments to assess intelligence a multi-dimensional construct (Ford & Harris, 1991). Many studies have criticized current identification practices noting limitations such as the inappropriate and biased use of assessment procedures (Alvino & McDonnel, & Richert, 1981). According to Baldwin (1977, 1987), the over-reliance on standardized tests to make decisions about actual or potential giftedness has led to discriminatory tracking, with minorities being identified less often as gifted and talented than mainstream students. Therefore, new standardized tests have been developed to replace traditional instruments that determined to be culturally biased (Schwartz, 1997). They include Mercer's System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment (SOMPA), Renzulli and Hartman's Scale for Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students, the PADI diagnostic battery, and Bruch's Abbreviated Binet for the Disadvantaged (ABDA). Moreover different assessment tools

have been recommended to use to ensure that all students receive fair consideration (Duncan & Dougherty, 1991; Shaklee, 1992; Passow, 1993). In an effort to provide better profiles for the identification of all gifted and talented children, current research suggests use of both qualitative measures and quantitative instruments (Piirto, 1999).

Despite the progress that has been made in identifying students for participation in programs for the gifted/talented and the development of new bilingual special education programs for limited-English-proficient gifted and talented students, minority students continue to be underrepresented in programs for the gifted and talented (Grossman, 1995).

In the following section, I am going to elaborate more on the accuracy of teachers' nominations in the gifted and talented programs.

### *Accuracy of Teacher Nominations*

Although standardized achievement tests and intelligence tests play an important role in the identification of gifted and talented students, many school districts include teachers' nomination as part of their selection criteria (Siegle, 2001). In fact, many identification systems involve teachers in making nominations and/or providing feedback about students who have been nominated (Alvino et al., 1981). Hoge and Cudmore (1986) found in their review that "studies employing nomination procedures show variability in the way in which the nomination category is defined for the teacher" (p.186). Overall, teacher nomination is one of the main means of screening for gifted and talented programs (Silverman, 1986). Teachers are often the primary source of referrals,

the gatekeepers of gifted and talented programs (Ford & Webb, 1994). Surveys of past screening practices indicate frequent reliance on teacher referrals in the identification of gifted and talented children (Marland, 1972; Renzulli & Vassar, 1967). Involving teachers in the identification process seems inherently practical. Teachers are familiar with the work and behavior of their students. Nevertheless, the questions that emerged in the literature were: How accurate is teachers' judgment? How many gifted/talented children are overlooked (effectiveness)? How many children who are nominated fail to achieve the criteria in the gifted and talented program (efficiency)? (Gear, 1976; Jacobs, 1971; Pagnato & Birch, 1959; Powell & Siegle, 2000).

Nominations as outlined earlier, are often determined by student's grades, classroom performance, and motivation (Schack & Starko, 1990). If classroom achievement does not reflect the student's true abilities, teacher nominations may not accurately reflect potentially gifted and talented students. With minority students, teachers' nominations may not accurately reflect potentially gifted and talented students and it may prove very unreliable (Hadaway & Marek-Schroer, 1992). Teachers sometimes have negative attitudes and/or expectations of children from different cultural backgrounds, without an adequate knowledge of the impact of culture on behavior; they often do not understand the motivation behind the actions of minority students, and therefore, overlook minority children for gifted/talented programs (Woods & Achey, 1990). Additionally, "Teachers may assume a student is not gifted and talented based on a child's language proficiency in first and second language, use of "nonstandard" English, accent, differing values, aspirations, and levels of motivation" (Hadaway & Marek-Schroer, 1992, p. 74). Grossman (1995) also indicated that in the not too distant

past, many teachers did not expect minority students to be gifted and talented and therefore they did not nominate them for gifted/talented programs. “Today, since theories of genetic inferiority and cultural deprivation are much less influential, educators tend to reject the notion that these students are unlikely to be gifted. Nevertheless, teachers tend to look for behaviors and personality characteristics to identify possibly gifted and talented students that do not always apply to African American, Hispanic American, Native American, and poor gifted and talented students” (Grossman, 1995, p.256).

Historically, the identification of gifted/talented children was greatly dependent of the subjective judgment of teachers (Gear, 1976). Teacher reliability in the referral of gifted/talented students was frequently challenged during the early years of gifted and talented child education. As early as the 1900’s Stern (1911) objected to this “arbitrary nature of selection”. In fact, whether or not teachers are qualified to identify gifted and talented students has been the topic of much debate for several years (Gagné, 1994; Hoge & Cudmore, 1986; Pagnato & Birch, 1959). For the past 40 years, there has been a general perception that teachers are poor at identifying gifted and talented students (Siegle, 2001). For example, Pagnato and Birch (1959) reported that teachers were poor at identifying students who had IQ scores over 130 and they found that teachers in their study sample identified many average students as gifted and talented. Their work has been frequently cited to support the opinion that classroom teachers are not reliable at identifying the gifted and talented students in their classrooms. Additionally, Walton (1961) reported one of the earliest attempts that investigate teacher accuracy at the kindergarten level. This study involved 26 classes drawn from schools serving middle- and upper-socioeconomic suburban communities. Walton reported that teachers



recognized 38 percent of the confirmed gifted and talented children. Cornish (1968) found that teachers identified only five out of sixty of the confirmed gifted and talented through nomination, and Jacobs (1971) also found that elementary school teachers in his study were able to identify only 10% of the gifted and talented students who had scored highly on an individual IQ test. While teachers' nomination of gifted and talented children is used more extensively than any other approach, it is successful only about 45% of the time in identifying gifted/talented children (Sattler, 1982). According to Cox, et al. (1985), approximately 40% of the teachers in the Richardson study misidentified gifted and talented students in their third and fourth grade classrooms, the grades at which gifted programs tend to begin. Cox et al. (1985) found that teachers frequently emphasize such behavioral characteristics as cooperation, answering correctly, punctuality, and neatness when identifying gifted and talented students. However, according to Ford and Webb (1994), these are not necessarily the characteristics of gifted and talented African American and other minority learners. In a more recent study, Guskin, Peng, and Simon (1992) found that teachers tend to focus on skills related to academic performance when nominating students to gifted and talented programs and less on creativity, leadership, and motor skills. This may be because of the perception that services for gifted/talented programs are limited to academic skills (Siegle, 2001). Moreover, according to Archambault, Westberg, Brown, Hallmark, Zhang, and Emmons (1993), many states do not have certification laws for teachers of the gifted and most states required the minimum of a bachelor's degree to teach gifted and talented students. Accordingly, teachers may not be the most reliable source for identifying gifted/talented students, especially minority students, or for referring them for gifted/talented programs

(Ford & Webb, 1994). On the other hand, in a more recent research Hoge and Cudmore (1986) suggested that there are very little empirical foundations for the negative evaluation so often associated with teacher judgment measures. In Rohrer's (1995) study, Rohrer stated that "teachers were able to recognize intellectual potential in students who were not the stereotypical White, fit, well-adjusted, high-achieving students" (p.279). Moreover, Hunsaker, Finley, and Frank (1997) reported that teachers were able to successfully identify gifted and talented students' talents when they used the Scale for Ratings the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students that developed by Renzulli, 1976, and later revised in 1997 (SRBCSS) and other rating scales. While research appears to support the role of teachers in rating their students, there is also a body of research that suggests that certain biases exist when rating students.

In fact, several researchers have noted differences in learning styles between African American and white students (Dunn & Griggs, 1990, Hilliard, 1992). These differences have many implications for identification and teaching practices (Ford & Webb, 1994). The extent to which students are global versus analytical learners, visual versus auditory, very mobile versus less mobile, or less peer oriented versus more peer oriented, may affect their learning, achievement, motivation, and school performance (Dunn & Griggs, 1990). Additionally, according to Ford and Webb (1994), the lack of knowledge base about the students' cultural backgrounds and learning styles decreases the likelihood that teachers will adequately identify, or recommend for identification and assessment, African American students. Indeed, if stereotypes do influence teachers' expectations for students' achievement and classroom behavior then it follows that teachers will devalue minority children in line with their ethnic stereotypes (Jensen &

Rosenfield, 1974). And when teacher nominations are relied upon to identify the pool from whom participants are selected, minority students are often at a disadvantage (Maker, 1987).

In many classrooms, initial social class and race stereotypes may be influential in teacher expectancies was suggested earlier by Clark (1963) and by Rist (1970), who reported that the expectations of the child's initial teacher, in this case the kindergarten teacher, resulted in the child remaining in the same expectancy group in the first and second Grades. Moreover, Rist (1970) went on to suggest, as did Clark (1963), that teacher expectancies may be influenced by the child's home background and social class standing and that these expectancies cause the teacher to interact with lower- and middle-class students differently. This latter argument is discussed by a study conducted by Friedman (1976) who found that middle-class students received more nonverbal reinforcement than the lower-class students, with no social class difference for verbal reinforcements. Moreover Weinstein and Middlestadt (1979) demonstrated that students perceived the types of reinforcement and interactions teachers use as being different for low and high achievers. They point out that the perceptions of the students regarding teachers' differential treatment of high-and low-achievers may reflect teachers' use of reinforcement strategies that act to fulfill prophecies about student academic achievement. Yet, Good and Brophy (1978) presents a five-step model to explain how teacher's expectations for students often can lead, via differential treatments, to the fulfillment of these expectations:

Step 1: Teacher Forms Expectations

Step 2: Based Upon These Expectations, the Teacher Acts in a Differential Manner

Step 3: The Teacher's Treatment Tells Each Student What Behavior and Achievement the Teacher Expects

Step 4: If This Treatment is Consistent Over Time, and if the Student Does Not Actively Resist, It Will Tend to Shape His or Her Behavior and Achievement

Step 5: With Time, The Student's Behavior and Achievement Will Conform More Closely to That Expected of Him or Her.

Reviewing the literature that concerned with teacher identification of gifted and talented students, very few studies included culturally different students (Ford & Harris, 1991). One impediment to good teacher judgment about potentially gifted and talented, culturally different students may very well be negative teacher attitudes about minority and poor children (High & Udall, 1983). A persisting attitude is that gifted characteristics cannot exist in lower populations or that students are incapable of learning if they are African-American and poor (Fraiser, 1987). However, there is a recognition that a great diversity exists among the gifted and talented, and, particularly that different cultures express themselves differently. The result is that evidence of giftedness may be overlooked by evaluators unfamiliar with a child's home culture (Fraiser, 1992).

In many classrooms, initial expectations for students' classroom behavior may result from social stereotypes (Maker, 1996). According to Siegle (2001), since teachers' ratings of students play an important role in identifying gifted and talented students, teachers' beliefs, stereotypes, biases, and expectations can influence whether students are included or excluded from gifted and talented programs. Therefore, the following section discusses the empirical studies that focus on the effect of the child's characteristics on teachers' educational decision-making.

*The Effect of the Child's Characteristics on Referral/Placement Decisions*

Various studies have attempted to explain factors associated with the teachers' negative attitude and behavior toward poor students and students of different cultural backgrounds. The results of several empirical studies established that factors affecting teacher expectancy and behavior are ethnic background (Ford & Webb, 1994; Jackson & Cosca, 1974; Prieto & Zucker, 1981), cognitive styles (DiStafano, 1970; Dunn & Griggs, 1990), the child's race (Jackson & Cosca, 1974; Prieto & Zucker, 1981), socioeconomic status (Guskin, et al., 1992; Rist, 1971) and sex (Zucker & Prieto, 1977). For instance, Rist (1970), in a three-year study, concluded that a student's achievement was closely tied to his social background because teachers' expectations for children's academic potential, as early as their first year in school, were based almost entirely on racial and socio-economic facts about the children. Jensen and Rosenfield (1974) found that not only do society stereotypes influence teachers' expectations for student achievement and classroom behavior, but they also influence teachers' evaluation of students. Additionally, Yessledyke and Algozzine (1980) demonstrated that classification decisions in special education are more a function of naturally occurring pupil characteristics (sex, SES, type of referral problem, and physical appearance). In a study of the decision making process in special education for students with disabilities, Yessledyke, Algozzine, Richey, and Garden (1982) also found that the school team did not use specific criteria (or formal) when making eligibility decisions for special education placements, however, they use informal information. Additionally, Powell and

Siegle (2000) and Gagné (1993) reported that when teachers were asked to nominate students for gifted and talented programs based on hypothetical student profiles, teachers were more likely to select profiles where the students' behavior did not match expected gender stereotypes.

In experiments in which teachers were given the exact same information about students except for their ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds, the teachers attributed higher academic achievement and intellectual potential to European American students than to African American students (Bennet, 1979; Dusek & Joseph 1983; Grant, 1984; Smith, 1979; Wilkerson, 1980). According to Ogbu (1978) the teachers had the same prejudicial expectations for middle class students in comparison to poor students. Moreover, when educators were given the exact same information about students except ethnic or sex, to decide whether or not these children should be placed in special class placements. Teachers felt that special class placement was more appropriate for Mexican-American children than for white children (Zucker & Prieto, 1977; Prieto & Zucker, 1981). One investigator studied the effect of skin color on teachers' opinion of student future achievements (Smith, 1976). Four levels of skin color employed, White, Yellow, Brown, and Black. Skin color was found to be more important than reading and classroom behaviors. Race as a factor influencing teacher recommendations for special education placement for minority students appears in general and for African American in particular to have unequivocal empirical support (Pernell, 1987). In another experiment in which educators were seeing, hearing, or seeing and hearing videotapes of middle and lower-class European American, African American, and Chicano students, teachers rated more favorably European American than lower-class European American

and African American students (Jensen & Rosenfield, 1974). Jensen and Rosenfield (1974) also stated, “if stereotypes do influence teachers’ expectations for student achievement and classroom behavior, then it follows that teachers will devalue Black and Chicano students in line with their ethnic stereotypes.”(p. 540). In fact, this idea was supported by a number of studies (e.g., Whithead & Miller, 1972). In Oswald, Coutinho, Best, and Singh’s study (1999) that intended to investigate the influence of a set of school-related demographic and fiscal variables on disproportionate representation, their results indicated that African American students were more about 2.4 times more likely to be identified as MMR and about 1.5 times more likely to be identified as SED than their non-African American peers. On the other hand, Matuszek and Oakland (1979) investigated recommendations for special services made by 76 teachers and 53 psychologists using fictitious case histories of 106 children. They found that teachers and school psychologists did not consider racial or ethnic characteristics as important factors when making recommendations for placement in special classes or to special schools. Giesbrecht and Routh (1979) found tendencies in the opposite direction; that is, elementary school teachers expected more favorable educational progress and less need for special help for African American children and for children of less educated parents than for white children and children of well educated parents. Tobias, Cole, Zibrin, and Bodlakova (1981) also investigated the influence of student and teacher ethnicity on recommendations for referral to special educational services. Their results indicated that there was no evidence for differences in referral recommendations by the student’s ethnic background. Teachers also were found to refer less frequently students whose ethnic background was identical to their own. Beady and Hansell (1981) studied whether the

race of teachers in African American elementary schools was associated with teachers' expectations of student achievement and they reported that African American teachers had significantly greater expectations that their students would enter and complete college than white teachers.

A number of researchers have investigated the role of teachers in the referral process in an attempt to explain the overrepresentation of minority in special education programs. Although some studies have not found teacher bias (Heller, 1985; Wiley & Eskilson, 1978), a body of studies indicated that teachers tend to evaluate African American (Pernell, 1987), Hispanic American, and poor students' academic performance and behavior in a biased manner (Haller & Davis, 1980; Zucker & Prieto, 1977; Prieto & Zucker, 1981). For instance, educators expect European American middle class students to be more intelligent, even when students' achievement test scores, grades, school histories would predict otherwise (Grossman, 1995). Grossman (1995) also stated that some teachers evaluate African American students' behavior in a biased manner. When these teachers evaluate the severity or deviancy of students' behavior problems, they judge the exact same transgressions as more severe or deviant when African American male students commit them. And he also stated that teachers evaluate European American females higher than they evaluate African American females in the following areas: responsibility, compliance, persistence, performance, ability, and relationships with others. In fact, being poor and African American may place students at even greater risk to be on the receiving end of teacher bias. For example, teachers are 3.5 times more likely to identify poor African American students as developmentally disabled than their European American peers (Matute-Bianchi, 1986). Additionally, Bennett and Harris



(1982) cited the following results of their survey of the attitude of a group of European American teachers to support their conclusion that the European American faculty of the school they studied was rife with prejudice against African American students: “Many of the teachers would not live in a desegregated neighborhood, did not favor mandatory school desegregation, felt the civil rights movement had done more harm than good, and felt that the problem of prejudice were exaggerated. One-third believed that Blacks and whites should not be allowed to intermarry. Furthermore, the majority of the teachers perceived their white students to be superior intellectually, socially, and in other characteristics related to school achievement” (pp. 420-421). Earlier Sizemore stated that (1978) the status of African Americans population in the U.S. social order results from the internal contradiction of American democracy, political ideology, and institutional inaccessibility. The U.S. Department of Education’s (1990) 12<sup>th</sup> annual report to Congress notes that African American males are disproportionately placed in Special Education programs compared to students of any other racial, ethnic, or gender group. Moreover Grossman (1995) indicated that the Carnegie Corporation reported that African American males in particular were three times more likely than white males to be in classes for the mentally retarded and only one-half are likely to be in classes for the gifted and talented. The type of misrepresentation minorities experience in special education programs differs from state to state and from school district to school district (Grossman, 1995). Overall, African Americans experience the greatest overrepresentation in special education programs (Grossman, 1995; U.S. department of Education, 1990) and the greatest underrepresentation in the gifted and talented programs (Ford & Webb, 1994). Therefore, this study focuses on African American students.

Social class, like ethnicity, may also serve as basis for stereotyping and numerous investigations have documented the negative stereotypes, which portray lower-class students (Miller, 1972). Low SES males were seen as less attentive and low SES students overall were seen as less confident (Guskin et al., 1992). In fact as early as 1984, Birch found that when the students' social, cultural, and personal interests are not considered, educators fail to recognize and react to the students' individual strengths (Siegle, 2001). Working-class non-European students often are treated in an even more discriminatory manner than their middle-class peers (Grossman, 1995). For example, Rist (1971) found, in his classical study that comparing the way teachers treated African American students from different socioeconomic-class backgrounds, that teachers have prejudice against poor students. Additionally, Cooper (1989) stated, "teachers' expectations of students' performance may vary as a function of students' social class"(p. 1763). In a most recent study, Boyce (1990) concluded that teachers in high SES schools had higher or greater expectations for student academic achievement than did their counterparts in low SES schools.

### *Summary*

It is apparent from this review of the relevant literature that biases do exist relative to the child's characteristics that, in turn, influence teachers' judgment (Haller & Davis, 1980; Prieto & Zucker, 1981; Zucker & Prieto, 1977 ). Specifically, the child's characteristics that have been discussed in the literature as the source of bias are socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Although there is a large number of studies examined

the impact of ethnicity and socioeconomic status on teachers' referral and recommendations for placement in the special education programs. No study has been found that investigate the effect of the child's ethnicity and socioeconomic status on teachers' referral and recommendation for placement in the gifted and talented program. Additionally, whether or not teachers qualified to identify gifted and talented students has been the topic of much debate throughout the years (Gagné, 1994; Pegnato & Birch, 1959; Renzulli, 1979). While research appears to support the role of teachers in ratings the student behaviors (Renzulli, 1979; Rohrer, 1995), there is also a body of research that suggests certain biases exist when rating students (Gagné, 1993; Powell & Siegle, 2000). Since social class and racial stereotypes have been described as sources of bias in prior research on teachers' expectancies, the two variables were of interest in this study. Wong's (1980) findings suggest that if SES is a basis of teacher expectancies, it may be so only for elementary school teachers. Therefore, this study focuses on elementary school teachers.

More research is needed to examine the effect of the child's characteristics on teachers' referral and recommendation for placement in a gifted and talented program. The present study investigated the effect of the child's ethnicity and socioeconomic status on teachers' referral and recommendation for placement in gifted and talented programs by focusing mainly on Ogbu's theory.

## CHAPTER III

### Method

#### *Introduction*

This section describes methodology and includes a description of participants included in the sample, methodology instrument utilized in the study, the research design, the pilot study, and the procedure. This chapter concludes with an explanation of the statistical techniques used for data analyses.

#### *Participants*

Identification of subjects followed the guidelines of the stratified cluster sampling technique. The sample included 16 elementary schools from three geographical areas of large metropolitan midwestern city school districts (Northeast, Northwest, and Southwest). The sample included a total of 207 elementary teachers from elementary schools across large metropolitan midwestern city. It included four elementary schools from the Northeast quadrant (A, B, C, D), five elementary schools from the Northwest quadrant (E, F, G, H, I), and seven from the Southwest quadrant (J, K, L, M, N, O, P).

The number of teachers per school taking part in the study ranged from 6 to 23. From A: 20 out of 35, B: 8 out of 12, C: 6 out of 15, D: 9 out of 15, E: 19 out of 25, F: 11 out of 17, G: 20 out of 22, H: 9 out of 15, I: 16 out of 19, J: 12 out of 17, K: 18 out of 25, L: 7 out of 17, M: 8 out of 23, N: 12 out of 12, O: 9 out of 9, and P: 23 out of 29 teachers agreed to participate in this study. The percentage of the response rate was 67%. In term of the geographic, the numbers of teachers per geographical area taking part in this study were 34 teachers from the Northeast quadrant, 84 teachers from the Northwest quadrant, and 89 teachers from the Southwest quadrant.

The sample consisted of 16 males (8%) and 191 females (92%). The majority of the sample (41%) was 46 years old or older, 64 (30.9%) participants were between 36-45 years old, 45 (21.7%) participants were between 26-35 years old, and 13 (6.3%) reported that they were either 25 or less years old. These data are reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Age Range of Participating Teachers

Age Range	Number	Percent
25 or less	13	6.3
26-35	45	21.7
36-45	64	30.9
46 or more	85	41.1

The sample was predominately white 172 (83.1%), 23 (11.1%) participants were Black, 5 (2.4%) were Native American, 2 (1%) were Hispanic, 2 (1%) were international, 2 (1%) classified themselves as multi-racial, and 1 (.5%) is Asian American. These data are reported in Table 2.

Table 2

## Ethnic Origin of Participating Teachers

Origin	Number	Percent
White	172	83.1
Black	23	11.1
Hispanic	2	1.0
Native American	5	2.4
Asian American	1	.5
International	2	1.0
Multi-racial	2	1.0

Teachers were distributed across the academic degree attainment levels as follows: 1 (.5%) with a doctorate degree, 69 (33.3%) with master's degree, 130 (62.8%) with bachelor degree, and 7 (3.4%) with high school diploma. These data are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

## The Highest Degree Completed by Participating Teachers

Highest Degree	Number	Percent
Doctorate	1	.5
Master's	69	33.3
Bachelors	130	62.8
High School Diploma	7	3.4

One hundred and thirty-six (65.7%) participants have at least 7 years of teaching experience, 9 (4.3%) have 5-6 years of teaching experience, 34 (16.4%) have 3-4 years of

teaching experience, and 28 (13.5%) have 1-2 years of teaching experience. These data are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Teaching Experience of Participating Teachers

Years	Number	Percent
1-2	28	13.5
3-4	34	16.4
5-6	9	4.3
7 and Up	136	65.7

Participants were distributed across area of specializations as follows: 175 (84.6%) regular elementary teachers, 23 (11.1%) special education teachers, and 9 (4.3%) gifted education teachers. These data are reported in Table 5.

Table 5

Distribution of Area of Specialization of Participating Teachers

Area	Number	Percent
Regular Elementary	175	84.6
Special Education	23	11.1
Gifted Education	9	4.3

One hundred and forty-two (68.6%) of the participating teachers are working at schools serving low-socioeconomic status students, 64 (30.9%) participants reported that they are working at schools serving middle-socioeconomic status students, and 1 (.5%) participant reported that she is working at school serving high-socioeconomic status students. These data are reported in Table 6.

Table 6

## Socio-economic Status of the Schools Population

School SES	Number	Percent
Low	142	68.6
Medium	64	30.9
High	1	.5

The majority of the participants (72.9%) reported that the school in which they are working is a medium school size, 33 (15.9%) reported that their school is a large school and 23 (11.1%) reported that their school is a small school size.

Table 7

## School Size of the Participating Teachers

School Size	Number	Percent
Small (250 students or less)	23	11.1
Medium (251-500 students)	151	72.9
Large (501 students or more)	33	15.9

*Instrument*

Most gifted and talented education programs in the U.S. schools have included some forms of giftedness in their definitions of the term gifted. But in actual practice, these gifted and talented programs mainly serve and identify those who have high scores on either intelligence or achievement tests (Pirto, 1999). Currently, developing definitions of the term gifted reflect a movement to discard unitary measures of IQ as the



major measure of an individual's potential giftedness in favor of multiple measures of creativity, problem-solving ability, talent, and intelligence. However, despite these changes, critics argue that many, if not most, local, district, and state definitions are elitist in nature and favor the "affluent" and privileged" (Margolin, 1994). Moreover, in a survey of state coordinators for the talented, VanTassel-Baska and her colleagues (1989) found that most states use the 1972 Marland definition of giftedness and talent that lists six categories (superior cognitive, specific academic, creative, visual and performing arts, leadership, and psychomotor) of varieties of talent, but in reality the students who are identified as gifted, are for the most part, those who score high on norm-referenced tests that uncover superior cognitive or specific academic types of talents (Piiro, 1999). Therefore, the instrument of this study (case vignettes) focuses on the academically gifted, those who demonstrate high scores on intelligence and/or achievement tests.

A short descriptive vignette about a student who should be placed in a gifted and talented program was developed because of the information it will reveal in relation to the goal of this study. All the traits in the vignette were derived from descriptions of gifted children in introductory special education textbooks and professional journals by Gallagher and Kirk (1983); Hallahan and Kauffman (1986); and Minner, Prater, Bloodworth, and Walker (1987) to assure the content validity of the case vignettes. The content validity was assessed also by sending a copy of the instrument (case vignettes) to three experts in the field of gifted education. Each expert assessed the intended content area. To assess the reliability of the case vignettes, teachers who agreed to participate in the pilot study were asked to participate again one week later. The test-retest reliability

for the two questionnaire items was adequate for the purpose of this study ( $r = .75, p < .05$ ;  $r = .76, p < .05$  for items 1 and 2 respectively).

Twelve versions of the case vignettes were developed in the current study by systematically interchanging ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status (see Appendix C). As seen in Appendix C, the resulting case vignettes were upper middle SES white American male; upper middle SES African American male; upper middle SES male; upper middle SES white American female; upper middle SES African American female; upper middle SES female; lower middle SES white American male; lower middle SES African American male; lower middle SES male; lower middle SES white American female; lower middle SES African American female; and lower middle SES female. Two questions were developed to assess the dependent variables of this study. Each question was followed by a six point Likert-scale with possible responses ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree (see Appendix D).

### *Research Design*

Initially, this study utilized a  $2 \times 2 \times 3$  multivariate factorial design (see Figure 1). However, due to the small number of the participating teachers who returned the vignettes that included gender ( $n < 20$ ), the gender variable was eliminated in this study. Thus, the study resulted in a  $2 \times 3$  multivariate factorial design (see Figure 2). The factors were socioeconomic status (lower middle, upper middle) and ethnicity (white, African American, control group-no ethnic identification was supplied-) of the student. Since the independent variables were arbitrarily manipulated by the researcher through the use of

case vignettes, the study is considered fixed effects experimental. Dependent variables were the teachers' referral and placement recommendations of gifted child in the gifted and talented program.

		<b>Socioeconomic Status</b>					
		Lower-middle			Upper-middle		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>						
		African American	white American	Control	African American	white American	Control
Male		n = 15	n = 15	n = 15	n = 17	n = 19	n = 19
Female		n = 15	n = 15	n = 19	n = 21	n = 18	n = 14

Figure 1.  $2 \times 2 \times 3$  Design of Study

<b>Socioeconomic Status</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>		
	African American	white	Control
Lower-medium	n = 30	n = 30	n = 34
Upper-medium	n = 38	n = 37	n = 33

Figure 2.  $2 \times 3$  Design of Study

### *Pilot Study*

A pilot study was conducted using twenty elementary school teachers enrolled in graduate classes in the College of Education at a large midwestern university. The purpose of the pilot study was to determine whether the instrument used was straightforward and clear with no ambiguity. Results of the pilot study indicated that the case vignettes were straightforward and clear with no ambiguity.

### *Procedure*

Initially, the researcher planned to randomly select 12 elementary schools from a large metropolitan midwestern city school districts. In addition, the researcher planned to make direct contact with each school. However, the school districts research office indicated to the researcher that contacting the schools should be accomplished through the area administrators.

The area administrators who represented the four geographical quadrants of the researcher interest (e.g., Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest) were contacted by the research office. The areas administrators of the Northeast, Northwest, and Southwest quadrants agreed to participate in this study. However, the area administrator of the Southeast quadrant declined to participate in this study because she believed that this was too trivial an issue for the schools to be involved. The remaining area administrators who agreed to participate in this study contacted the schools principals in their area and asked for their cooperation and participation in this study. In Fall 2001, three schools in each of

the quadrants agreed to participate in this study. Therefore, a total of nine schools agreed to participate in this study. Information about the study and a thank-you letter from the researcher were sent via e-mail to the principals of all the nine schools (see Appendix H). Principals were also asked in the letter if the researcher could come at the beginning or after a faculty meeting to collect the data. School principals were also given an opportunity to make their own suggestions regarding preferred method for data collection. The only condition given to the principals was that teachers should not talk to each other when they are completing the surveys. Arrangements were made by telephone and e-mail for data collection. For the specific schools that had a low response rate, follow-up phone calls were placed to the principals. Each principal was also asked by phone, one or two days before the faculty meeting, about the total number of classroom teachers in their schools. Accordingly, each packet contained the following: consent form (Appendix A), instruction sheet (Appendix B), short descriptive vignette (Appendix C), two items questionnaires (Appendix D), and teacher information sheet (Appendix E) was prepared for each teacher. All teachers who normally attended faculty meetings in each school took part in the study, except for physical education or music teachers who had no experience or training in the identification of gifted/talented children.

Seven school principals out of the nine schools (A, B, C, E, F, K, L) agreed to let the researcher come at the beginning of the faculty meeting to conduct the study. However, the other two schools principals (G and J) prefer to collect the data by themselves and agreed to follow the researcher's guidelines including the method for returning the data to the researcher. For those two schools, the researcher delivered, in person, the study packets, information about the study, and self-addressed stamped

envelops to each principal. The completed surveys were received within a one to three week time period. By Fall 2001, data were collected from a total of 121 classroom teachers.

Due to the small number (121) of teachers responding by the end of Fall 2001, the researcher contacted the schools again during Spring 2002 to seek more participants. Seven more schools agreed to participate in this study (O, P, I, H, D, M, and N), out of the three participating geographical areas of the large midwestern city. This time, due to a time constraint, the researcher asked the principals to administer the study during a faculty meeting and return the completed surveys in self-addressed envelops to the researcher by February 28, 2002. All principals of these schools agreed to do so and returned the surveys by the due date.

In each faculty meeting, packets were handed to each elementary teacher to complete. With each packet, there was a copy of the study and information about the researcher for the teachers to keep (Appendix F). The participants were asked to read the vignette of the child and to answer the two questions. The teachers at each school were seated in groups of four to eight, with those remaining forming an additional group. Fifteen minutes later, each teacher read the vignette and entered his/her judgments about it on a rating sheet, and passed it to the researcher or the principal. In addition to the information, which was gathered from the two questions, other information on teacher characteristics was collected such as teachers' race, gender, age, highest degree earned, and experiences in education (see Appendix E).

### *Data Analysis*

Data were initially evaluated by developing descriptive statistics on each variable including, where appropriate, frequency analysis, means, and standard deviations. Post hoc Scheffé was employed to test for significance where appropriate.

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed on the data to answer the two research questions. The two dependent variables were the teachers' referral and placement decisions. The independent variables for this study were two: (1) the students' ethnicity (three levels) and (2) the students' socioeconomic status (two levels).

## CHAPTER IV

### Results

#### *Introduction*

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of the child's ethnicity and socioeconomic status on teachers' referral and recommendations for placement in the gifted and talented programs. The data consisted of the participants' responses on the six points Likert-Scale to the two questions. The procedure involved the collection of data from elementary school teachers across a large midwestern city.

A 2 x 3 between subject multivariate analysis of variance was performed on the two dependent variables: teachers' referral and placement decisions. Independent variables were socioeconomic status (lower-medium and upper-medium) and ethnicity (white, African American, and control -no ethnic identification was supplied-).

All analyses were performed using SPSS MANOVA (GLM program). Order of entry of independent variables was ethnicity, then socioeconomic status. Total N = 207. Results of evaluation of assumptions of independence, normality, and homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices (Boxes M = 21.594;  $P > .05$ ) were satisfactory.



### *Analysis of Results from Research Questions*

Two specific research questions were addressed in this study. The results of their outcomes are as follows:

A multivariate analysis of variance was performed to determine if a significant interaction effect existed between the students' ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The results of this analysis showed a non-significant interaction effect between the students' ethnicity and socioeconomic status  $\Lambda = .996$ ;  $F(4, 400) = .938$ ;  $p \geq .05$ . Therefore, the following analysis focused on the main effects that were addressed in the two research questions.

*Research Question One: Does the student's ethnicity have an effect on the teachers' referral and recommendation for placement in the gifted/talented program?*

A multivariate analysis of variance indicated a significant effect for ethnicity,  $\Lambda = .954$ ;  $F(4, 400) = 2.406$ ;  $p \leq .05$ . Reported below are results from the MANOVA between-subjects tests for each dependent variable.

*Referral Decision.* The results of the between-subjects MANOVA showed significant effect for the students' ethnicity ( $F = 4.807$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ; see Table 8). However, between-subjects MANOVA results showed no significant interaction effect between the student's ethnicity and socioeconomic status ( $F = .060$ ,  $p \geq .05$ ). That is, teachers felt that the referral for gifted/talented programs was a function of the child's ethnicity regardless of the child's socioeconomic status.

*Placement Decision.* The between-subjects MANOVA results showed neither the main effect for the students' ethnicity ( $F = 2.135, p \geq .05$ ; see Table 8) nor the interaction effect between the student's ethnicity and socioeconomic status ( $F = .083, p \geq .05$ ) was statistically significant. That is teachers' responses to the case vignettes indicated that the placement in the gifted and talented program was not a function of the child's ethnicity (see Table 8 and 9).

A scheffe's post hoc test determined the significance between the treatment (ethnicity) group mean scores on referral decision. Statistically significant differences were found between the mean scores of the African American (mean = 4.53) and control group (mean = 5.04) (see Table 10). The post hoc results suggested that teachers were found to be more likely to refer the non-labeled student to the gifted/talented program than the African American student.

In reviewing Figures 3, the graph indicated that teachers were more likely to refer the non-labeled student and the white American student in the gifted/talented program than African American student. The results of this study indicated that the label that has been appended to the child does make a difference in the teachers' educational-decision making.

Table 8

The Effect of Students' Ethnicity on the Teachers' Referral and Placement Decisions

Source	Dependent variables	F	Sig.
Student-Ethnicity			
	Referral Decision	4.807	.009*
	Placement Decision	2.135	.121

\*Significant at  $p \leq .05$

Table 9

## Means and Standard Deviations for the Teachers' Referral and Placement Decisions

Based on the Child' Ethnicity

Student's Ethnicity		Referral Decision	Placement Decision
white American	Mean	4.96	4.63
	N	68	68
	Std. Deviation	1.04	1.21
African American	Mean	4.53	4.28
	N	72	72
	Std. Deviation	1.15	1.15
Control	Mean	5.04	4.66
	N	67	67
	Std. Deviation	1.15	1.33

Table 10

## Scheffe' Test for Groups with Significant Differences on the Teachers' Referral Decision

Treatment Groups		Mean Difference	Significance of F
white	African	.43	.058
	Control	-8.89E-02	.887
African-American	white	-.43	.058
	Control	-.52*	.017
Control	white	8.89E-02	.887
	African	.52*	.017

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

white mean = 4.96

African American mean = 4.53

Control = 5.04

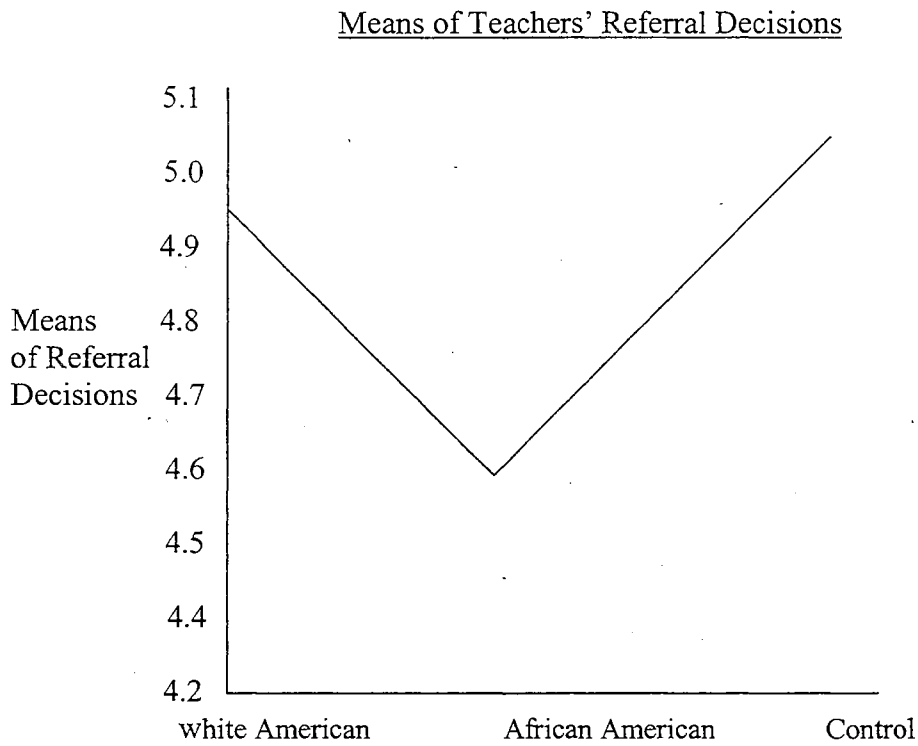


Figure 3. The graph of the means of the teachers' referral decisions based upon the student's ethnicity.

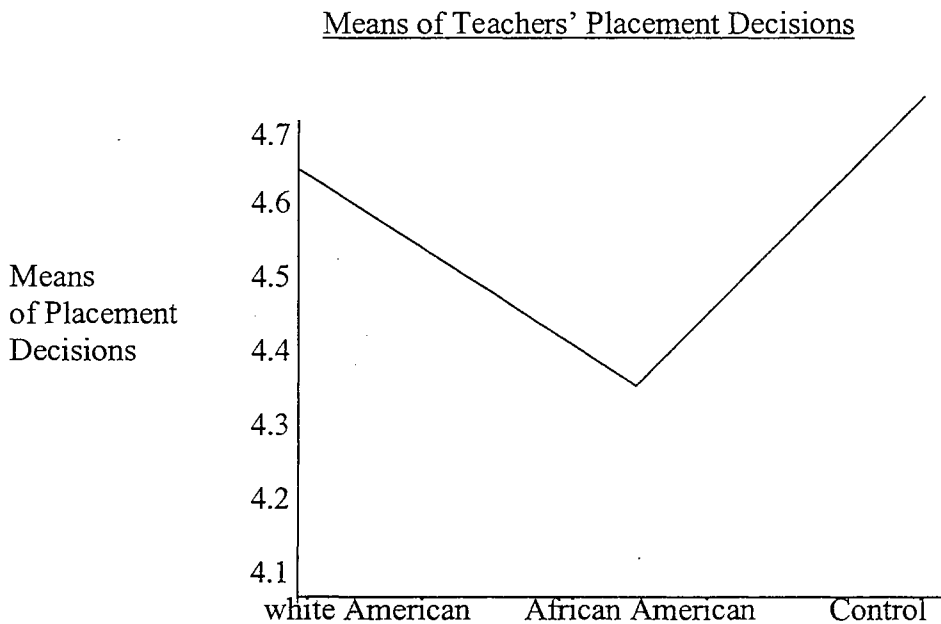


Figure 4. The graph of the means of the teachers' placement decisions based upon the student's ethnicity.

*Research Question Two: Does the student's socioeconomic status have an effect on the teachers' referral and recommendation for placement in the gifted/talented program?*

The effects of the student socioeconomic status upon the two dependent variables of teachers' referral and placement decisions were tested using multivariate analyses of variance. A multivariate analysis of variance indicated a non-significant main effect for socioeconomic status  $\Lambda = .989$ ;  $F(2, 200) = 1.092$ ,  $p \geq .05$ . Reported below are results from the between-subjects MANOVA tests for each dependent variable.

*Referral Decision.* The MANOVA results showed no statistically significant difference ( $F = 1.970$ ,  $p \geq .05$ ) between the teachers' decision to refer children who represented an upper socio-economic status compared to children who represented a lower socioeconomic status as shown in Table 11. Specifically, teachers were found to be no more likely to refer the student who represented an upper socioeconomic status (mean = 4.93) than the student who represented a lower socioeconomic status (mean = 4.73) (see Table 12).

*Placement Decision.* The MANOVA results showed no significant effect for the students' socioeconomic status ( $F = 1.812$ ,  $p \geq .05$ ) as shown in Table 11. Teachers were found to be no more likely to place the student who represented an upper socioeconomic status (mean = 4.63) than the student who represented a lower socioeconomic status (mean = 4.40) (see Table 11).

Table 11

The Effect of Students' SES on the Teachers' Referral and Placement Decisions

Source	Dependent variables	F	Sig.
Student-SES	Referral Decision	1.970	.162
	Placement Decision	1.812	.180

\*Significant at  $p \leq .05$ 

Table 12

Means and Standard Deviations for the Teachers' Referral and Placement Decisions

Based on the Child's SES

Student's SES		Referral Decision	Placement Decision
Lower	Mean	4.73	4.40
	N	100	100
	Std. Deviation	1.13	1.29
Upper	Mean	4.93	4.63
	N	107	107
	Std. Deviation	1.01	1.14

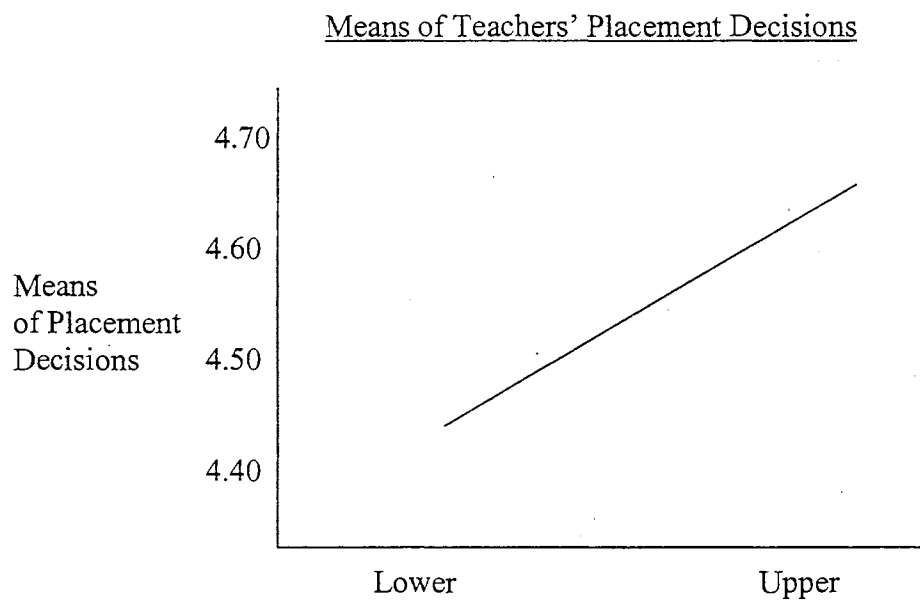
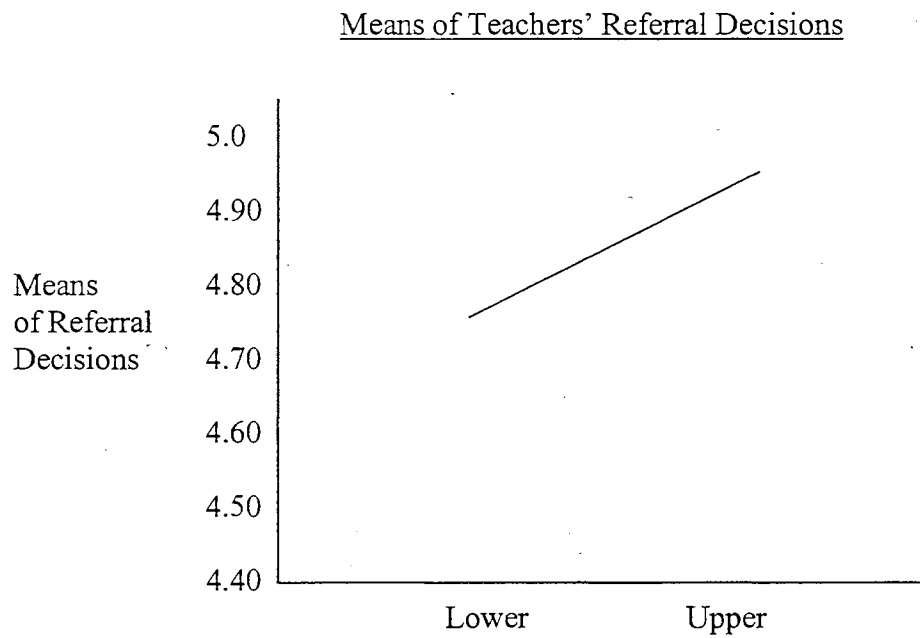


Figure 5. The graph of the means of the teachers' referral and placement decisions based upon the student's SES

### *Secondary Findings*

Despite the intent to select a sample drawn from large metropolitan midwestern city school districts in order to maximize the potential to include teachers from different cultural backgrounds and schools with different levels of socio-economic status, the results produced a homogenous sample. Specifically, 92 % of the participating teachers were females and the sample was predominately white (83%). Moreover, 62% of the teachers reported that bachelor degree is the highest degree they have earned; while 85% of the sample is general educators; and 66% of the participants reported that they have at least seven years of teaching experience. Sixty-nine percent of the participating teachers were working at schools serving low- socioeconomic status students, 72% of the participants reported that the school in which they were working is a medium school size, and 41% of the sample's age range was 46 years old or older. Therefore, there was very little variability across demographics in this particular study.



## CHAPTER V

### Summary, Conclusions, Implications of the Data, and Recommendations

#### *Summary*

This chapter consists of four sections. The first section summarizes the purpose, methods, and results for this study. The second section relates to conclusions drawn from this study. The third section presents a discussion of the limitation and implications of this study. The final section includes recommendations for further research.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of the student's ethnicity and socioeconomic status on teachers' referral and recommendation for placement in the gifted and talented program through the use of case vignettes. The two questions were:

*(1) Does the child's ethnicity have an effect on the teachers' referral and recommendations for placement in the gifted and talented program? (2) Does the child's socioeconomic status have an effect on the teachers' referral and recommendations for placement in the gifted and talented program?*

The participants in this study were 207 elementary school teachers. After signing consent forms, all participants were asked to read a case vignette and answer to two questions.

The multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to test for significance differences between the students' ethnicity and socioeconomic status on the dependent variables. The two dependent variables are the teachers' referral and placement decisions. A multivariate analysis of variance indicated a significant main effect for ethnicity. The univariate analysis indicated that the variable referral is the variable that contributed to the overall multivariate significance (see Table 8). And based on the Scheffé analysis teachers were found to refer the non-labeled child in higher rate in comparison to the African American child (see Table 10). In this study neither the main effect of socioeconomic nor the ethnicity  $\times$  socioeconomic status interaction was statistically significant that is, teachers felt that the referral for the gifted/talented program were more appropriate for non-labeled students than for African American students, regardless of the student's socioeconomic status.

In summary, the present study found that teachers were more likely to refer the non-labeled student for the gifted/talented program than to refer the African American student. Additionally, teachers were found to be no more likely to place the student in the gifted/talented program based on the child's ethnicity. However, the mean scores as shown in Table 8 and Figure 4 suggested that teachers tended to place more likely the non-labeled and the white American student in G/T program than to place the African American student. For the second variable (socioeconomic status), teachers were found to be no more likely to refer or place the student who represented an upper socioeconomic status than the student who represented a lower socioeconomic status.

### *Conclusions*

Teachers are often the primary source of referrals, the gatekeepers of gifted and talented programs (Ford & Webb, 1994). Surveys of past screening practices indicate frequent reliance on teacher referrals in the identification of gifted and talented children (Marland, 1972; Renzulli & Vassar, 1967). Although the literature is inconclusive regarding the effectiveness of teacher's judgment in gifted/talented programs, this study indicates that teachers may not be the reliable source for referring children to the gifted and talented programs.

The results of this study indicated that the student's label (ethnicity) does make a difference on the teachers' educational decisions. Teachers felt that the non-labeled student should be referred for the gifted/talented program to a significantly greater degree than the African American student. It is evident from this study that teacher expectations regarding race was so strong, when elementary school teachers treated the identical information contained in the case vignettes differently. The negative bias found in the present study toward African American student in general is disturbing. Moreover although the SES main effect was not statistically significant in this study, Figure 5 suggested that teachers tended to refer the student who represented an upper-middle socioeconomic status for the gifted/talented program more likely than the student who represented lower-middle socioeconomic status and to place more likely the student who represented an upper-middle socioeconomic status in the gifted/talented program than the student who represented a lower-middle socioeconomic status.

The findings of this study indicated that the child's ethnicity has an effect on the teachers' educational decision-making. This finding is consistent with the findings of Bennet, 1979; Dusek and Joseph 1983; Grant, 1984; Smith, 1979; and Wilkerson, 1980 who found in an experiments in which educators were given the exact same information about students except for their ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds, that educators attributed higher academic and intellectual potential to European American students than to African American students. In other studies that utilized a typical paradigm of this type of research were reported by Zucker and Prieto (1977) and Prieto and Zucker (1981). The results of these studies indicated that teachers felt that special class placement was more appropriate for Mexican-American student than for white American student. Additionally, the results of this study were consistent with the study of Yessledyke and Algozzine (1980) who found that classification decisions are more a function of naturally occurring pupil characteristics including sex, SES, type of referral problem, and physical appearance. However, the findings of this study differ from those of Matuszek and Oakland (1979) and Tobias, et al., (1982) who found that the ethnic background of the student was not significant in the referral process for special education services.

The results of this study also indicated that teachers were relying on informal information (e.g., ethnicity) when make eligibility decisions for gifted and talented placements. This is also consistent with the study of Powell and Siegle (2000) and Gagné (1993) who reported that when teachers were asked to nominate students for gifted and talented programs based on hypothetical student profiles, teachers were more likely to select profiles where the students' behavior did not match expected gender stereotypes. In this study the socioeconomic status was not statistically significant. However, the SES

mean scores as shown in Table 12 and Figure 5 suggested that teachers' tendencies move toward the same direction with the results of Rist who found in his classical study (1971) that comparing the way teachers treated African American students from different socioeconomic-class backgrounds, that teachers have prejudice against poor students. Additionally, in a most recent study, Guskin, et al., (1992) found that low SES males were seen as less attentive and low SES students overall were seen as less confident.

The results of this study indicated that labels that have been appended to the student can have an initial negative effect upon teacher's referral and placement decisions. Teachers perceived nonlabeled and white student essentially the same in comparison to African American student. This is particularly disturbing because African American students make up approximately 17% of all school age children. Stereotypical notions on the part of teachers of what an African American student is likely may be effectively barring some African American gifted youngsters from participating in Gifted and Talented programs.

Not only does the label affect teacher perceptions and expectations, but also it has been demonstrated to create stereotypes, which can be detrimental to the academic as well as to the social development of children. The fact that some children are referred for the gifted and talented program while others are not in this study is an indication of teachers' bias and prejudice against African American children. According to Kolb and Jussim (1994), when perceptions differ from reality, the perceptions win out and a perceptual bias exist. The way that teachers evaluate the case vignettes differently could also be explained as a halo effect; that is teachers probably unconsciously tend to place a sort of a "halo" over poor and African American students. This view has been discussed

in the literature by Fraiser (1987) who indicated that a persisting attitude is that gifted and talented characteristics cannot exist in lower populations. It should be noted that the halo effect could serve sometimes as the expectations that trigger the start of the self-fulfilling prophecy (Tauber, 1997). The self-fulfilling prophecy theory can also be a good explanation of why teachers treated the same case vignettes differently. Good and Brophy (1978) presents a five-step model to explain how teacher's expectations for students often can lead, via differential treatments, to the fulfillment of these expectations:

Step 1: Teacher Forms Expectations

Step 2: Based Upon These Expectations, the Teacher Acts in a Differential Manner

Step 3: The Teacher's Treatment Tells Each Student What Behavior and Achievement the Teacher Expects

Step 4: If This Treatment is Consistent Over Time, and if the Student Does Not Actively Resist, It Will Tend to Shape His or Her Behavior and Achievement

Step 5: With Time, The Student's Behavior and Achievement Will Conform More Closely to That Expected of Him or Her.

Interpreting the results of this study in light of the self-fulfilling prophecy theory (Merton, 1948), we can see that teachers' expectations of students were formed not by who the students are as individuals but, instead, by the fact that the students are seen to be part of a larger group. A review of the literature by Cooper (1989) supports the fact that not only do teachers' expectations of student performance influence student achievement, but "teachers' expectations of students' performance may vary as a function of students' social class"(p. 1763). In a most recent study, Boyce (1990) concluded that teachers in high SES schools had higher or greater expectations for student academic

achievement than did their counterparts in low SES schools. The majority of teachers who participated in this study were teaching low SES students. This may be a good explanation of why these teachers tended to expect less from poor children. In general, African Americans were rated in a biased manner in this study. Beady and Hansell (1981) studied whether the race of teachers in African American elementary schools was associated with teachers' expectations of student achievement and they reported that African American teachers had significantly greater expectations that their students would enter and complete college than white teachers. Since 82% of the participating teachers are white, this can be a good explanation of why elementary school teachers in this study tended to expect less for African American students; they may have been responding to students on the basis of ethnocentrism. And finally, the majority of the participants in this study reported that bachelor degree is the highest degree they have earned. Therefore, teachers may not be the most reliable source for identifying gifted and talented students.

In addition to the results of this study, the results of several empirical studies established that factors affecting teacher expectancy and behavior are ethnic background (Ford & Webb, 1994; Jackson & Cosca, 1974; Prieto & Zucker, 1981), child's race (Jackson & Cosca, 1974; Prieto & Zucker, 1981), and socioeconomic status (Rist, 1971). A possible explanation of why teachers' expectations are affected by these factors may be found in Ogbu's theory. According to Ogbu (1994), school personnel are more willing to accept and tolerate the cultural differences of voluntary immigrants (e.g., Jewish). However, the cultural differences of involuntary immigrants (e.g., African American, Mexican American, and Native American, etc) are devalued and disliked by school

personnel. According to this theory, schools are not willing to accept and tolerate the cultural differences of involuntary immigrants for three reasons: the history of their relationship with the dominant European Americans; the myths that European Americans have created about their innate inferiority in order to justify the conquest of their land and the enslavement of their ancestors; and the fact that they do not look like European Americans in either looks or behavior (Grossman, 1995). Additionally, the fact that the teachers' educational decision-making in this study reproduces ethnic disparities can be explained by the social reproduction theory. For instance, Giroux (1983) reported that poor and non-European American students are exposed to an educational structure that reproduces the ethnic and socioeconomic-class disparities in outcomes.

### *Limitations*

There were a number of limitations in this study, which should be considered when interpreting the data. The population used for the study was limited to elementary school teachers, which prohibits generalization for other teachers. It is also geographically limited to people living in the midwestern United States. People in other parts of the country may react different from those who live in the midwest. The sample was largely composed of whites, and therefore does not allow for the variability that ethnicity might introduce. Ethnic differences have been found to affect teachers in the referral process (Tobias et al., 1982). Therefore, the use of a more heterogonous sample could likely have different results. And finally, an important point that should be noted is



that students should not be referred or recommended for placement in G/T programs based on the limited information contained in the case vignettes.

### *Implications of the Data*

This investigation did reveal an under-referral of African American students for the gifted/talented program. Studies of minorities in the gifted and talented programs show evidence of under-representation. Additionally, research gives evidence that race is influential in the recommendation process. Overall this research did support this influence.

The results of this investigation that some students are referred for the gifted and talented program while others are not add to the reasons that minorities are enrolled in gifted and talented programs in disproportionate numbers. It does appear to be teachers' bias and prejudice against African American children. It has been recommended that to reduce the inappropriate and biased referrals to programs for students with disabilities and to increase the number of appropriate referrals to programs for gifted and talented students, regular educators' knowledge of the contextual, cultural, gender, and socioeconomic factors should be increased (Grossman, 1995). Extensive research also documents the far-reaching effects of teacher expectations on the performance of children and how teachers' belief can be changed. What teachers expect of students influences what students come to expect of themselves (Rice, 1990). Therefore, teacher education programs may need to focus on changing teachers' attitude toward African Americans.

Multicultural education is a comprehensive approach to empower teachers in schools (Banks, 1999). Therefore, to eliminate the teachers' bias, teacher education programs should be focused on preparing teachers multiculturally by taking into account the following guidelines: First, teachers should be prepared to confront their prejudice and biases and to broaden their perspectives of personal values and to become aware of how their own personal values can affect their evaluation of the minority child (Grossman, 1995); second, teachers should be prepared to increase their knowledge of other cultures (Kea & Utley, 1998); and third teachers should study the history of the American educational system from a multicultural pluralistic perspective (Sulieman, 1996).

Grossman (1995) also indicated that it is as important to avoid relating to students on the basis of incorrect stereotypes as it is to avoid being insensitive to the role that ethnic, socio-economic, or gender-influenced attitudes and behavior may play in some students' lives. Therefore, teachers should be prepared to take into account the role of the child's ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender.

### *Recommendations for Future Research*

As a result of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The present study utilized a brief vignette that contained limited information of the child. Researchers may wish to develop more comprehensive vignette of various youngsters and determine if additional descriptive information about students influences teachers' judgments.

2. The present study used a stratified cluster sampling technique. And only those schools that agreed to participate they were included in this study. A replication of this study using a random sampling would allow for greater generalization of findings.
3. In this study the majority of participants were general educators. A replication of this study with special education and gifted education teachers would provide an interesting comparison to this investigation.
4. Because of the homogenous ethnic population used in this study, it is recommended that this study be duplicated with teachers' ethnicity as an independent variable.
5. The present study provides no information on how specific training program can influence teachers' perceptions of African American and students. Future research should focus on how specific training programs influence teachers' perceptions of gifted African Americans and youngsters.

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## Appendix A

## Consent Form

Dear Participant:

I am conducting this study to gather information about how teachers perceive gifted youngsters and to examine factors that can be related to the decisions regarding referral and placement of students in gifted and talented programs. I am particularly interested in asking elementary school teachers to read a brief vignette and to answer two questions. Each question will follow by a six point Likert scale. Responses to the questionnaire will become part of a larger study on how elementary school teachers perceive gifted youngsters. Hopefully, the results of the completed research project will help us to understand the underlying factors that can contribute to teachers' referral and placement decisions in the gifted and talented programs. The result of this study has the potential for helping pre-service as well as in-service teachers better understand gifted and talented programs.

If you agree to participate in this study, your responses will be kept strictly **CONFIDENTIAL** and **ANONYMOUS**. Your name will not be associated with the research notes. The research notes will be destroyed one year after the collection of the data and will be anonymous. The administration of the vignette will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes. There are no risks involved. The participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the option to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at anytime without penalty after notifying the project director.

Questions about this research can be directed to Hala Elhoweris at 91-9 S. University Place, Stillwater, OK, 74075, (332-2992), email [halaelhoweris@Yahoo.com](mailto:halaelhoweris@Yahoo.com), and University Research Compliance Sharon Bacher at 305 Whitehurst, Stillwater, Ok 74078, (405) 744-5700; email [sbacher@okway.okstate.edu](mailto:sbacher@okway.okstate.edu). Both of these addresses are located on the campus of Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK in the 405 area code. This information is also printed on an attached sheet that is yours to keep.

If you agree to participate in this study, please read and sign the statement at the bottom of this page. The completion of this form will give us permission to proceed with the study and utilize your responses for our research.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Hala Elhoweris, doctoral student at Oklahoma State University

I understand that participation is voluntary; that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent to participate in this project at any time without penalty.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ (a.m./p.m.)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Participant)



Appendix B  
Instruction Sheet

I am conducting this study as part of the requirements for the completion of my doctoral degree at Oklahoma State University. I am soliciting your help and I am asking you for your cooperation in this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers' perceived gifted youngsters and to examine factors that can be related to the decisions regarding referral and placement of students in gifted and talented programs.

Please Follow These Instructions:

1. Please read and sign the consent form.
2. Answer all the information that needed in the demographic sheet.
3. Read the descriptive vignette.
4. Then answer to the two questionnaire items.

## Appendix C

### Case Vignettes

John is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. John is a White American male who lives with his natural mother and father in a lower-middle class neighborhood.

John is a healthy boy and rarely misses school. His teachers feel that John is emotionally healthy. He has the normal problems all boys experience, but he typically handles them quite well. John has a keen sense of humor and high level of self-confidence. John is sensitive to others' needs. He is very popular with his peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He is regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. He has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

John is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. John is an African American male who lives with his natural mother and father in a lower middle class neighborhood.

John is a healthy boy and rarely misses school. His teachers feel that John is emotionally healthy. He has the normal problems all boys experience, but he typically handles them quite well. John has a keen sense of humor and high level of self-confidence. John is sensitive to others' needs. He is very popular with his peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. He has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

John is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. John lives with his natural mother and father in a lower middle class neighborhood.

John is a healthy boy and rarely misses school. His teachers feel that John is emotionally healthy. He has the normal problems all boys experience, but he typically handles them quite well. John has a keen sense of humor and high level of self-confidence. John is sensitive to others' needs. He is very popular with his peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. He has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

John is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. John is a White American male who lives with his natural mother and father in an upper-middle class neighborhood.

John is a healthy boy and rarely misses school. His teachers feel that John is emotionally healthy. He has the normal problems all boys experience, but he typically handles them quite well. John has a keen sense of humor and high level of self-confidence. John is sensitive to others' needs. He is very popular with his peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. He has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

John is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. John is an African American male who lives with his natural mother and father in an upper-middle class neighborhood.

John is a healthy boy and rarely misses school. His teachers feel that John is emotionally healthy. He has the normal problems all boys experience, but he typically handles them quite well. John has a keen sense of humor and high level of self-confidence. John is sensitive to others' needs. He is very popular with his peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. He has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

John is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. John lives with his natural mother and father in an upper-middle class neighborhood.

John is a healthy boy and rarely misses school. His teachers feel that John is emotionally healthy. He has the normal problems all boys experience, but he typically handles them quite well. John has a keen sense of humor and high level of self-confidence. John is sensitive to others' needs. He is very popular with his peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, John scored above his grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to his peers. He was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. He regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. He has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

Mary is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. Mary is a White American female who lives with her natural mother and father in a lower middle class neighborhood.

Mary is a healthy girl and rarely misses school. Her teachers feel that Mary is emotionally healthy. She has the normal problems all girls experience, but she typically handles them quite well. Mary has a keen sense of humor and high level of self-confidence. Mary is sensitive to others' needs. She is very popular with her peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, Mary scored above her grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to her peers. She was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. She regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. She has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.



Mary is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. Mary is an African American female who lives with her natural mother and father in a lower middle class neighborhood.

Mary is a healthy girl and rarely misses school. Her teachers feel that Mary is emotionally healthy. She has the normal problems all girls experience, but she typically handles them quite well. Mary has a keen sense of humor and high level of self-confidence. Mary is sensitive to others' needs. She is very popular with her peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, Mary scored above her grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to her peers. She was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. She regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. She has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

Mary is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. Mary lives with her natural mother and father in a lower middle class neighborhood.

Mary is a healthy girl and rarely misses school. Her teachers feel that Mary is emotionally healthy. She has the normal problems all girls experience, but she typically handles them quite well. Mary has a keen sense of humor and high level of self-confidence. Mary is sensitive to others' needs. She is very popular with her peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, Mary scored above her grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to her peers. She was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. She regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. She has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

Mary is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. Mary is a White American female who lives with her natural mother and father in an upper middle class neighborhood.

Mary is a healthy girl and rarely misses school. Her teachers feel that Mary is emotionally healthy. She has the normal problems all girls experience, but she typically handles them quite well. Mary has a keen sense of humor and high level of self-confidence. Mary is sensitive to others' needs. She is very popular with her peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, Mary scored above her grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to her peers. She was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. She regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. She has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

Mary is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. Mary is an African American female who lives with her natural mother and father in an upper middle class neighborhood.

Mary is a healthy girl and rarely misses school. Her teachers feel that Mary is emotionally healthy. She has the normal problems all girls experience, but she typically handles them quite well. Mary has a keen sense of humor and high level of self-confidence. Mary is sensitive to others' needs. She is very popular with her peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, Mary scored above her grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to her peers. She was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. She regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. She has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

Mary is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. Mary lives with her natural mother and father in an upper middle class neighborhood.

Mary is a healthy girl and rarely misses school. Her teachers feel that Mary is emotionally healthy. She has the normal problems all girls experience, but she typically handles them quite well. Mary has a keen sense of humor and high level of self-confidence. Mary is sensitive to others' needs. She is very popular with her peers and is well liked by teachers. On the last achievement test, Mary scored above her grade level in all subjects and scored significantly high in reading and math compared to her peers. She was given an individualized intelligence test and earned a score of 125. She regarded by teachers as bright, inquisitive, and highly verbal. She has demonstrated leadership abilities in school and in the community.

## Appendix D

## Questionnaire

1) This student should be referred for a comprehensive evaluation for possible placement in a gifted/talented program.

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
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2) I feel this student should be placed in a gifted/talented program.

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
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## Appendix E

## Demographic Information

Directions: Please write your response in the space provided or check off your response from the list of choices.

1. What is your gender?

Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your age group?

\_\_\_\_\_ 25 years old or less

\_\_\_\_\_ 26-35 years old

\_\_\_\_\_ 36-45 years old

\_\_\_\_\_ 46 or more years

3. With what ethnic group do you most identify?

\_\_\_\_\_ Anglo American/Caucasian

\_\_\_\_\_ African American/Black

\_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic/Latino

\_\_\_\_\_ International

\_\_\_\_\_ Native American/American

\_\_\_\_\_ Indian Asian/Asian American

Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the highest degree you have achieved?

\_\_\_\_\_ Doctorate

\_\_\_\_\_ Bachelors

\_\_\_\_\_ Masters

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

5. For how many years have you been teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_ 1-2 years

\_\_\_\_\_ 3-4 years

\_\_\_\_\_ 5-6 years

\_\_\_\_\_ 7 and up years

6. Which of the following best describes the group of students you are teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_ Regular elementary

\_\_\_\_\_ (k-5) Special education

\_\_\_\_\_ Gifted education

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

7. Which of the following best describes the socioeconomic status of the majority of children and families at the school in which you are currently working?

Low SES \_\_\_\_\_

Middle SES \_\_\_\_\_

Upper SES \_\_\_\_\_

8. What size of the school in which you are currently working?

\_\_\_\_\_ Small include 250 students or less.

\_\_\_\_\_ Medium includes 251-500 students.

\_\_\_\_\_ Large includes 501 students or more.

## Appendix F

## Copy of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers' perceived gifted youngsters and to examine factors that can be related to the decisions regarding referral and placement of students in gifted and talented programs.

Questions about this research can be directed to:

1. Hala Elhoweris at 91 South University Place # 9, Stillwater, OK, 74075,  
Phone # (405) 332-2992 (Home) (405) 744-8147 (Office),  
Email address: [halaelhoweris@Yahoo.com](mailto:halaelhoweris@Yahoo.com),
2. University Research Compliance Sharon Bacher at 305 Whitehurst, Stillwater, Ok 74078  
Phone #: (405) 744-5700  
Email address: [sbacher@okway.okstate.edu](mailto:sbacher@okway.okstate.edu).



## Appendix G

## Oklahoma City Public School Approval to Conduct Research



Planning, Research, and Evaluation ★ 413 N.W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street ★ Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
Office: (405) 297-6811 ★ Fax: (405) 297-6723

October 8, 2001

Ms. Hala Elhoweris  
Oklahoma State University  
91 S University Place #9  
Stillwater, OK 74075

Dear Ms. Elhoweris,

Your proposal to conduct research in the Oklahoma City Public Schools entitled "The Effects of the Students' Ethnicity, Gender, and Socio Economic Status on Teachers' Referral and Recommendation for Placement in the Gifted Program" has been approved by the OKCPS review committee. Please feel free now to initiate contact with Mr. Lee Roland, Area Administrator (945-1107), Ms. Elaine Ford, Area Administrator (425-4619), Ms. Jessie Wesley, Area Administrator (478-1538), and Ms. Rochelle Converse, Area Administrator (752-6829) to schedule times and coordinate procedures for your research. They will coordinate with the Elementary School Principals to help in identifying teachers who volunteer to participate. Further contact and coordination needs to be accomplished through them. Your research should be conducted in whatever manner causes the least disruption to the school environment.

Best of luck in your data collection and analyses. We look forward to seeing the results of your efforts when the study is complete.

Sincerely,

George H. Kimball, Ph.D.  
Planning, Research, & Evaluation  
Oklahoma City Public Schools

xc: Dr. Lease  
Mr. Roland  
Ms. Ford  
Ms. Wesley  
Ms. Converse

## Appendix H

## Principle Letter

November 16, 2001

Mr.

Principal of .....Elementary School

Dear Mr.

Thank you for your cooperation and acceptance to participate in my dissertation study. As part of the requirements for the completion of my doctoral degree at Oklahoma State University, I'm writing my dissertation on "the effect of the child's ethnicity, gender, SES on teachers' referral and placement decisions in the gifted and talented programs". Thus, the attached instrument is a measure of elementary teachers' perceptions of gifted students and factors that are related to the decisions regarding referral and placement of students in gifted/talented programs. The results of this study has the potential for helping pre-service as well as in-service teachers better understand the gifted and talented programs. It is also the intent of this study to examine factors that can result in an under-representation of minority students in gifted/talented programs.

I'm particularly desirous of obtaining responses from elementary teachers in order to determine what factors are or are not considered when making decisions regarding the referral and placement of students in gifted/talented programs. In order to make contact with them, I am soliciting your help. I would appreciate it if you would let me know when it will be possible for me to survey your teachers either at the beginning or at the end of a faculty meeting. The survey has been tested with a sampling of elementary school teachers who are currently enrolled in graduate classes at Oklahoma State University. It is estimated that it should not take longer than 10 to 15 minutes to complete this survey. All responses will be kept anonymous.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Oklahoma State University has approved this study (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu). If you have questions about this study, please contact me at (405) 744-8147 or through e-mail. In addition, this study has been reviewed and approved by the Oklahoma City Public Schools. If you have additional questions, please contact Mr. Kimball at (405) 297-6811.

I would appreciate it if you would let me know by email or telephone when it will be possible for me to collect the data from your teachers.

Sincerley,

Hala Elhoweris  
Graduate Student

## Appendix I

## Institutional Review Board Approval

**Oklahoma State University  
Institutional Review Board**

Protocol Expires: 10/29/02

Date: Tuesday, October 30, 2001

IRB Application No ED0237

Proposal Title: THE EFFECT OF THE STUDENTS' ETHNICITY, GENDER, AND SES ON TEACHERS'  
REFERRAL AND RECOMMENDATION FOR PLACEMENT IN THE GIFTED PROGRAMPrincipal  
Investigator(s):Hala Elhoweris  
91-9 South University Place  
Stillwater, OK 74078Pauline Holloway  
442 Willard  
Stillwater, OK 74078Reviewed and  
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

---

  
Dear PI :

Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to the IRB, in 203 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Carol Olson, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

Oklahoma State University  
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 10/29/02

Date: Thursday, June 06, 2002

IRB Application No: ED0237

Proposal Title: THE EFFECT OF THE STUDENTS' ETHNICITY, GENDER, AND SES ON TEACHERS'  
REFERRAL AND RECOMMENDATION FOR PLACEMENT IN THE GIFTED PROGRAM

Principal  
Investigator(s):

Hala Elhowens  
91-9 South University Place  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Pauline Holloway  
442 Willard  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and  
Processed as: Exempt                      **Modification**

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

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Signature:



Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

Thursday, June 06, 2002

Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

VITA 2

Hala Mutwali Elhoweris

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: THE EFFECT OF THE STUDENTS' ETHNICITY AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS ON TEACHERS' REFERRAL AND RECOMMENDATION FOR PLACEMENT IN THE GIFTED/TALENTED PROGRAM

Major Field: Educational Psychology

Minor Field: Special Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Las Cruces, New Mexico, September 5, 1967, the daughter of Mutwali Elhoweris and Amna Khidir. Married to Negmeldin Alsheikh; mother of Omer Alsheikh and Mohammed Alsheikh.

Education: Received Bachelor of Arts from University of Khartoum in August 1991; received Master of Special Education Degree from Oklahoma State University in December 1998, completed requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at Oklahoma State University in August 2002.

Professional Experience: Arabic Teacher, French School, January, 1990 to April, 1990; Teacher, Ithad Elementary School, August, 1991, to December, 1993; French and English Teacher, Sudan Institute, January, 1992, to December, 1993; Testing Assistant, University Testing and Evaluation Services, August, 1997, to May 1998; Reading Tutor, Skyline Elementary School, January, 1999, to May, 1999; Teacher, Children's Chalet Day Care, summer 1999; Research Assistant, Department of Education in the school of Curriculum and Educational Leadership, Oklahoma State University, August, 1999, to May 2001; Teaching Assistant, Department of Education in the school of Curriculum and Educational Leadership, Oklahoma State University August 2001, to May 2002.