

Teachers Perceived Influence of Teaching Experience on Gifted and Talented Pupils' Academic Performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State

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Abstract

Every young learner deserves early nurturance, which can be accelerated by various factors. However, without timely and effective interventions, these factors can either nurture or hinder the innate potential of these learners. Provision of sufficient and high-quality support is essential for their development. This study examined teacher's perceived influence of teaching experience on the academic performance of gifted and talented pupils in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State. The population for the study consisted of all teachers in Ilorin East Local Government, and a sample size of 346 was selected using simple random sampling technique, with 18 primary schools and 20 teachers involved. A questionnaire was the instrument for data collection, and both face and content validity were used, to examine the reliability, croabach Alpha was used. Descriptive statistics such as mean and frequency counts were used to answer the research questions, and inferential statistics, including Independent Sample T-tests, were used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that teachers perceive their influence, based on their teaching experience, on the academic performance of gifted and talented pupils in Ilorin East Local Government Area as low. Additionally, no significant difference was found in teachers' perceptions of their influence based on gender or school type. The study concludes that teachers believe other factors may play a more significant role in shaping these pupils' academic success. Based on the findings, it is recommended to provide targeted professional development for teachers, enhance classroom resources for gifted pupils, and implement support systems to help teachers meet the needs of these pupils.

Keywords: Academic performance; gifted and talented pupils; teacher teaching experience

Introduction

Gifted and talented pupils are individuals who possess extraordinary abilities, which are evident in their daily activities through advanced problem-solving skills, creative thinking, and exceptional performance in specific areas. These pupils often demonstrate a heightened capacity for learning, quick comprehension, and the ability to apply knowledge in novel ways. However, despite their exceptional talents, they may still encounter challenges in traditional academic environments that do not cater to their unique learning needs, potentially affecting their academic performance. Gifted and talented pupils are often recognized for their high cognitive abilities, creativity, and advanced problem-solving skills. These traits, however, can be compromised sometimes if the gifted and talented pupils are subjected to unchallenging educational activities or being handled by unprofessional teachers. Therefore, the academic performance of gifted and talented pupils becomes difficult to measure.

The academic performance of gifted and talented pupils hinges not only on their inherent abilities but also on the effectiveness of the instruction they receive. (Ramat,2024). Experienced teachers, with their ability to draw from years of classroom practice, are often better equipped to tailor their

teaching methods to meet the complex and varied needs of gifted and talented pupils. The quality of instruction is often evaluated through the experience of teachers who are responsible for delivering differentiated educational instruction to gifted and talented pupils in heterogeneous classroom settings. (Tomlinson, 2022). Gifted and talented pupils require teachers who possess specialized training and have accumulated years of practice and pedagogical knowledge. These teachers tend to develop a more nuanced understanding of the academic, emotional, and social needs of gifted and talented pupils. Research indicates that teachers with greater teaching experience are more likely to employ differentiated instruction techniques, fostering a learning environment that both challenges and supports high-ability pupils (Tomlinson, 2022).

Moon (2023) asserted that experienced educators tend to be more adept at identifying and addressing the diverse needs of gifted and talented pupils, including those from underrepresented populations, which can positively impact academic performance. Teachers' professional expertise, particularly gained through years of teaching experience, significantly affects the academic performance of gifted and talented pupils. Experienced teachers tend to develop a deep understanding of these learners' differentiated needs, from creating individualized learning tasks to effectively managing complex classroom dynamics. Studies have shown that teachers with extensive experience are more likely to implement flexible instructional strategies, incorporate advanced content, and set higher expectations, all of which contribute to improved academic outcomes for gifted and talented students (Johnson, 2021). Additionally, Nguyen and Thompson (2023) emphasize that teaching experience is associated with a teacher's ability to provide both emotional and academic support to gifted pupils, particularly in helping them navigate challenges like heightened sensitivity or perfectionism. Garcia and Lee (2022) further opined that experienced teachers are more adept at implementing adaptive strategies such as differentiated instruction, inquiry-based learning, and collaborative problem-solving, which are critical for enhancing the academic performance of gifted and talented pupils. Additionally, Harris and Green (2024) suggest that experienced educators are more likely to recognize subtle signs of disengagement or underachievement among gifted and talented pupils, enabling them to intervene with targeted support and enrichment opportunities.

Teacher experience encompasses the range of knowledge, skills, and expertise that educators acquire through their time spent in the classroom. This experience is crucial in shaping how teachers design and deliver instruction, manage classrooms, and support pupil learning. Experienced teachers excel in instructional methods, developing curricula that align with educational standards and address diverse pupil needs (Smith & Jones, 2021). Effective classroom management is another critical aspect, where experienced educators establish clear expectations, address behavioral issues consistently, and balance instructional activities to maintain a positive and productive learning environment (Williams, 2019). They are also adept at building strong relationships with learners, fostering a nurturing atmosphere that enhances engagement and motivation (Johnson & Lee, 2022). Experienced teachers use a variety of assessment tools to evaluate pupils' progress, providing timely and constructive feedback to guide learning and support academic achievement (Davis, 2021). They are committed to continuous professional development, staying updated on new teaching methods, technologies, and educational policies (Miller, 2023). Their adaptability allows them to respond effectively to changing classroom dynamics and diverse pupils' needs (Taylor, 2020).

Similarly, it is often said that the standard of education depends on the standard of the teachers. Teachers' roles become indispensable in general education. With a marked degree of standard, the tasks teachers of gifted and talented pupils are saddled with greater responsibilities compared to those of regular or conventional classroom teachers. This assertion is supported by Khalil and Accariya (2016) that teachers are the important factor influencing gifted and talented pupils' academic performance. Again, Ozcan (2016) concurred that teachers have a "crucial effect" on the educational experiences of gifted and talented pupils. Researchers have found that gifted and talented pupils prefer certain characteristics in their teachers such as empathy, rapport, and the

willingness to listen (Siegle, 2014). These mark the place of teachers in building academic confidence among gifted and talented pupils.

Gifted and talented pupils require experience teachers who are familiar with their unique characteristics and can accommodate their distinctive traits. Regular teachers may struggle to correctly interpret, listen to, accept, and build rapport with these pupils in a way that supports their educational goals. Consequently, the objectives for gifted and talented pupils may not be fully realized if their teachers are not specifically trained or adequately prepared for the challenges at hand. Therefore, teacher engagement has been identified as a key factor influencing academic achievement among gifted and talented pupils (Gagné, 2003).

Academic performance refers to the level of achievement of a learner in a specific academic programme or subject, encompassing quantitative and qualitative indicator such as grades, test scores, attendance records, class participation, and overall mastery of course material (Adeyemo, 2012, Arora & Saxena, 2015, Chen & Liu, 2018). It is influenced by factors like learner motivation, study habits, learning style, social and economic background, as well as access to resources such as textbooks, technology, and academic support services (Adeyemo, 2012). Academic performance is also affected by individual characteristics such as intelligence and motivation, environmental and contextual factors like instructional quality and social support, and external factors including family circumstances, peer pressure, and cultural norms (Adeyemo, 2012).

The academic performance of gifted and talented pupils is significantly impacted by the quality of instruction they receive. Experienced teachers play a crucial role in harnessing and nurturing the potential of these pupils. They employ advanced instructional methods, such as differentiated instruction and enriched curriculum, to provide appropriate challenges that match the learners' high capabilities when educators effectively tailor their teaching strategies to the advanced needs of gifted Learners, these learners are more likely to achieve exceptional academic results. (Davis, 2021).

Gender refers to the social, psychological, and cultural attributes, roles, and expectations associated with being male or female in a given society. It encompasses a range of identities and roles beyond the binary classification of male and female, including non-binary, genderqueer, and other gender identities (Berk, 2021). The influence of a teacher's experience on the academic performance of gifted and talented learners is significantly shaped by gender. Male and female teachers may employ different teaching styles, and learners may perceive and respond to them differently based on gendered expectations (Baker & Leary, 2021). These perceptions can affect how learners engage with the material and their overall academic performance. Additionally, gender dynamics in the classroom, combined with teaching experience, play a crucial role in shaping the success of gifted learners. Understanding these interactions is the key to developing effective educational strategies for gifted learners. The influence of a teacher's experience on the academic performance of gifted and talented learners is shaped by both gender and school type. Male and female teachers may adopt different pedagogical approaches, and learners' responses can vary based on gendered expectations (Meyer & Turner, 2020). These dynamics, along with the type of school whether public or private, affect how learners engage with learning and their overall academic success. The interplay of these factors is crucial for creating effective educational strategies for gifted learners across different school environments (Worrell, 2021).

School type refers to how schools are classified based on their funding, governance, and educational approach. Public schools are government-funded and provide free education to all pupils within their designated area, adhering to state and local regulations. Private schools are funded through tuition and private sources, offering more flexibility in curriculum and often requiring payments for enrollment. They operate independently of government control and can provide specialized programs and unique educational approaches. (Worrell, 2021).

The Perception of Influence examines how teachers believe their experience affects their ability to teach and support gifted and talented pupils, ultimately impacting their academic performance.

Experienced teachers are generally more confident in managing diverse classrooms, differentiating instruction to challenge advanced pupils while keeping others engaged (Adeyemi, 2010). They develop strategies to keep gifted pupils motivated through tailored tasks and groupings, fostering academic growth. With experience, teachers feel better equipped to address the individual learning styles and emotional needs of gifted pupils, which enhance their engagement and performance (Gagné, 2003). Over time, they adapt their teaching methods, incorporating enrichment activities and independent learning opportunities. These teachers also use assessments to track progress and provide constructive feedback, helping gifted pupils improve academically (Ogunyemi, 2015). However, experienced teachers also recognize challenges, such as balancing the needs of gifted pupils with those of the broader classroom and providing individualized support. Despite these challenges, they often feel more capable of managing the academic and social needs of gifted pupils, reinforcing their belief that their teaching positively impacts pupil outcomes (Adeyemi, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Gifted and talented pupils are individuals with exceptional abilities. This exceptionality is demonstrated in their everyday activities. Evidence has shown that pupils who exhibit a certain degree of high capacities in various aspects of life may find it difficult to excel academically. The choice to focus on teaching experience is based on the understanding that one of the key factors determining the success of gifted and talented learners is the level of nurturing they receive. While giftedness and talent may stem from innate abilities (nature), nurture consist the environment in which the gifted and talented individuals find themselves, this environment connotes so many things that can facilitate the innate abilities of this population. Among those environmental influences is teacher. Teachers and their experiences are vital in teaching and learning as this determines the success of teaching and learning outcomes. Research indicates that the ability to succeed or demonstrate higher-order thinking in areas outside of traditional academics does not necessarily translate into improved academic performance. For example, gifted pupils may excel in creative problem-solving or artistic expression but struggle with standardized tests or traditional classroom assessments. This disconnect highlights the need for educational approaches that recognize and cultivate the unique strengths of gifted learners while addressing their academic challenges. Therefore, there is a need for this study.

Research Question

What is the teacher's perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Research hypotheses

HO₁ There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State based on gender.

HO₂ There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State based on school type.

Methodology

Research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey. The population for this study were all primary school teachers in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State. The population of teachers in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State was 3,915, to determine the sample size for the study, research advisor (2006) was used to sample 360 teachers in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State, 18 schools was sampled and 20 teachers were randomly selected using simple random technique in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire title (Questionnaire on teacher's perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils academics performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State) the questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A

and Section B. Section A contained items on the bio data of the respondents, while Section B included four Likert scale statements: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Face content validity was done by expert in the department of early childhood and primary education. Cronbach Alpha reliability was used to determine the reliability co-efficient at 0.74. Descriptive statistics of mean, frequency count was used to answer the research question while inferential statistics of Independent sample T-test and was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Research Question: What is the teacher perceived influence of teaching experience of gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Table1:

Showing the teacher's perceived influence of teaching experience of gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	ME AN	ST D
1	Teachers with more years of experience adapt their teaching methods to meet the needs of gifted pupils.	50(13.9)	91(25.3)	122(33.9)	97(26.9)	2.3	1.0
2	Experienced teachers are more effective at challenging gifted and talented Learners academically.	46(12.8)	105(29.2)	108(30.0)	101(28.1)	2.3	1.0
3	The academic performance of gifted pupils improves significantly with experienced teachers.	52(14.4)	69(19.2)	133(36.9)	104(28.9)	2.2	1.0
4	Teachers with more experience provide more effective feedback to gifted and talented pupils.	15(4.2)	127(35.3)	81(22.5)	134(37.2)	2.2	1.3
5	Experienced teachers are more capable of managing the unique needs of gifted learners.	25(6.9)	84(23.3)	126(35.0)	125(34.7)	2.0	0.9
6	Teachers with extensive experience are skilled at differentiating instruction, offering personalized learning experiences that cater to the specific needs of gifted and talented learners.	22(6.1)	89(24.7)	114(31.7)	135(37.5)	1.9	0.9
7	Experienced teachers have better classroom management skills, which positively impacts gifted pupils' learning.	22(6.1)	67(18.6)	193(53.6)	78(21.7)	2.1	0.8
8	Gifted and talented learners are more likely to reach their academic potential with teachers who have extensive teaching experience. Gifted pupils tend to be more motivated when taught by experienced teachers.	28(7.8)	115(31.9)	126(35.0)	91(25.3)	2.2	0.9
9	Teachers with more experience are better at identifying and nurturing the talents of gifted pupils.	22(6.1)	62(17.2)	149(41.4)	127(35.3)	1.9	0.9
10	The academic success of gifted pupils is strongly linked to the experience level of their teachers.	26(7.2)	46(12.8)	168(46.7)	120(33.3)	1.9	0.9
11	Experienced teachers are more likely to use differentiated instruction to cater to gifted learners.	40(11.1)	104(28.9)	116(32.2)	100(27.8)	2.2	1.0
12	. Teachers with extensive experience can better foster creativity in gifted pupils.	12(3.3)	73(20.3)	149(41.4)	126(35.0)	1.9	0.8
13	Gifted pupils show higher academic achievement under the guidance of experienced teachers.	-	26(7.2)	192(53.3)	142(39.4)	1.7	0.6
14	With a deep understanding of the needs of gifted learners, experienced teachers often advocate for appropriate resources and opportunities to support their learners' academic journeys.	44(12.2)	58(16.1)	138(38.3)	120(33.3)	2.0	0.9
15	. The academic potential of gifted pupils is maximized when taught by experienced teachers.	43(11.9)	103(28.8)	112(31.1)	102(28.3)	2.2	1.0
WEIGHTED MEAN = 2.0							

Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentages

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 1: showed the teacher's perceived influence of teaching experience of gifted and talented pupils academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State is follows: Teachers with more years of experience adapt their teaching methods to meet the needs of gifted pupils 2.3, Experienced teachers are more effective at challenging gifted and talented Learners academically 2.3, The academic performance of gifted pupils improves significantly with experienced teachers 2.2, Teachers with more experience provide more effective feedback to gifted and talented pupils 2.2, Experienced teachers are more capable of managing the unique needs of gifted learners 2.0, Teachers with extensive experience are skilled at differentiating instruction, offering personalized learning experiences that cater to the specific needs of gifted and talented learners 1.9, Experienced teachers have better classroom management skills, which positively impacts gifted pupils' learning 2.1, Gifted and talented learners are more likely to reach their academic potential with teachers who have extensive teaching experience. Gifted pupils tend to be more motivated when taught by experienced teachers 2.2, Teachers with more experience are better at identifying and nurturing the talents of gifted pupils 1.9, The academic success of gifted pupils is strongly linked to the experience level of their teachers 1.9, Experienced teachers are more likely to use differentiated instruction to cater to gifted learners 2.2, Teachers with extensive experience can better foster creativity in gifted pupils 1.9, Gifted pupils show higher academic achievement under the guidance of experienced teachers 1.7, With a deep understanding of the needs of gifted learners, experienced teachers often advocate for appropriate resources and opportunities to support their learners' academic journeys 2.0, The academic potential of gifted pupils is maximized when taught by experienced teachers 2.2. The weighted average was 2.0 which is lesser than 2.50, this shows that the teacher's perceived influence of teaching experience of gifted and talented pupils academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State is low.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State based on gender.

Table2:

Summary of T-Test of the significant difference in teachers' perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State based on gender.

	Gender	N	Mean	Std Deviation	T	F	Df	Sig	Decision
Teachers Perceived Influence	Male	149	30.86	3.39					
					0.68	13.36	358	.494	Not Sig
	Female	211	30.56	4.53					

Source: Field Survey 2024.

Table 2 showed the summary of t-test results showing the significant difference in teachers' perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State based on gender. It was revealed that male respondents had mean score 30.86 and standard 3.39 deviation while female respondents had mean score 30.56 and standard deviation 4.53, the t was 0.68, degree of freedom 358, F was 13.36 and significant level of .494 ($P > 0.05$). This implies that there was no significant difference in teachers' perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State based on gender. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states there is no significant difference in teachers' perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State based on gender was not rejected.

HO2: there is no significant difference in teachers' perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State based on school type.

Table 3:

Summary of T-Test of the significant difference in teachers' perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State based on school type.

	SCHOOLTYPE	N	Mean	Std Deviation	T	F	Df	Sig	Decision
Teachers Perceived Influence	Private	172	30.92	3.65					
	Public	188	30.47	4.46	1.04	9.98	358	.297	Not Sig

Source: Field Survey 2024.

Table3 showed the summary of t-test results showing the significant difference in teachers' perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State based on school type.. It was revealed that Private respondents had mean score 30.92 and standard 3.65 deviation while public respondents had mean score 30.4681and standard deviation 4.46, the t was 1.04, degree of freedom 358, F was 9.98 and significant level of .297($P>0.05$). This implies that there was no significant difference in teachers' perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State based on school type. Therefore, the null hypothesis states there is no significant difference in teachers' perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State based on school type was not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The finding revealed that teacher's perceived influence of teaching experience of gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State was low. This could be because the perception that teachers feel their experience has a low influence on the academic performance of gifted and talented pupils in Ilorin East Local Government Area can be attributed to several factors. Many teachers lack specialized training for effectively teaching gifted learners, leading to uncertainty about their impact. They may also believe their instructional methods do not meet the unique needs of these pupils or underestimate their potential, thinking they do not require extra support. This finding is not in support with the finding of (Adeyemi, 2021) who examines how Nigerian teachers perceive the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in supporting gifted learners. The research emphasizes the importance of tailoring educational approaches to accommodate the unique abilities of gifted pupils and aims to assess teachers' attitudes toward this instructional strategy. The findings reveal that many teachers recognize the value of differentiated instruction but express uncertainty about their ability to implement it effectively.

The finding also revealed that there was no significant difference in teachers' perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State based on gender. This can be attributed to several factors. First, both male and female teachers receive similar professional training, equipping them with comparable skills to teach gifted pupils. The use of standardized teaching practices further reinforces this, as teachers across genders often employ the same methods and strategies. Additionally, both male and female teachers share a common goal of enhancing pupils' success, which shapes their perceptions of how their experience affects academic outcomes. This finding was in align with the finding by Smith and Lewis (2013) who examine the relationship between teacher characteristics—specifically gender and teaching experience and their impact on the academic performance of gifted learners. The researchers conducted a survey involving both male and female teachers who were responsible for teaching gifted pupils in various primary schools. They examined whether the gender of teachers had a significant influence on the effectiveness of their teaching, particularly in promoting the academic success of gifted learners. The findings of the

study revealed that there was no significant difference in teaching effectiveness based on the gender of the teachers. This suggested that male and female teachers were equally capable of supporting the academic development of gifted learners. Instead, the study highlighted that teaching experience played a more substantial role in enhancing the academic outcomes of gifted pupils. Teachers with more years of experience were better equipped to understand the unique needs of gifted learners, provide appropriate challenges, and adapt their teaching strategies effectively to support their academic growth.

The study also revealed that there was no significant difference in teachers' perceived influence of teaching experience on gifted and talented pupils' academic performance in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State based on school type. This suggests that experienced teachers are equally effective in both public and private schools. Factors like universal teaching skills, consistent curricula, similar resource availability, and a common focus on supporting gifted pupils likely contribute to this consistency in teacher effectiveness across different school environments. The finding is not in support of the findings from Greenwald, Hedges and Laine's (1996) meta-analysis which highlight the critical role of teacher quality in pupils' achievement. The study found a strong positive relationship between teacher qualities defined by experience and qualifications and pupils' performance across various school types, including public, private, and charter schools. This consistency suggests that high-quality teachers significantly enhance pupils' outcomes, regardless of the educational setting. Additionally, the analysis noted that while the impact of teacher quality is universally significant, schools with more resources may further amplify the benefits of effective teaching. Overall, the study underscores the universal importance of teacher effectiveness in education.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of this study, it was concluded that findings from this study indicate that teachers in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State perceived the influence of their teaching experience on the academic performance of gifted and talented pupils to be relatively low. Despite their experience, teachers believe that other factors may play a more significant role in shaping the academic success of gifted learners. Additionally, the study reveals no significant difference in teachers' perceptions based on gender or school type. This suggests that regardless of a teacher's gender or the type of school they work in, their perception of how their experience impacts gifted pupils' academic performance remains consistent. These results emphasize the need for more targeted professional development and instructional strategies that cater specifically to the needs of gifted and talented pupils to enhance their academic outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made

1. Provide Targeted Professional Development: Schools should offer specialized training and workshops for teachers on how to effectively support the academic needs of gifted and talented pupils. This could include strategies for differentiating instruction, fostering higher-order thinking, and creating enrichment opportunities to enhance the academic performance of these learners.
2. Enhance Classroom Resources for Gifted Pupils: Educational authorities should invest in resources that support the unique learning needs of gifted pupils, such as advanced instructional materials, technology, and programs that promote independent learning. This will enable teachers to provide more effective, challenging, and engaging learning experiences.
3. Support Systems for Teachers: Schools should create mentorship programs where less experienced teachers can collaborate with their more experienced colleagues to share strategies and experiences in teaching gifted learners. This collaboration can help improve teachers' perceptions of their influence and increase their ability to positively impact the academic performance of gifted pupils.

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