TOWARDS AN IRANIAN CONCEPTION OF GIFTEDNESS

by

Sareh Karami

M.A., The University of Tehran, 2007

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Education)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Okanagan)

September 2013

© Sareh Karami, 2013
Abstract

Using a grounded theory approach (Lichtman, 2013) to the study of historical texts and an expert interview, this study investigates culturally embedded conceptions of giftedness as evidenced in the Iranian literary canon, *The Gulistan*, in order to guide the development of education and programming for gifted and talented students in Iran. Historically, *The Gulistan* has provided guidance to gifted and wise individuals regarding how to live life. Investigating these conceptions in *The Gulistan*’s stories gives us significant insight into what historically has counted as giftedness in the Iranian culture. Main themes arising from this study include: *Saheb Ferasat, Shukhdideh, Dana & Aghel, Kheradmand,* and *Hakim*. These themes are discussed in terms of their qualities, and through a detailed comparison between them. This study is an exploration of an approach to developing an Iranian conception of giftedness that is embedded in the culture. The framework and findings may be of interest to scholars, policy makers, and educators in various roles. This perspective on gifted education could be a compass for policy maker to help to distinguish a culturally appropriate definition of giftedness in Iran that is different from Western conceptions of gifted, and to design programs with an understanding of how to adapt research and programs to an Iranian context.
Preface

This thesis is an original intellectual product of the author, S. Karami, and the fieldwork reported in Chapters 3 to 5 was conducted through the ethical protocol: UBC Ethics Certificate number H13-00081 [Appendix A].
# Table of Contents

Abstract ............................................................................................................................................. ii

Preface ................................................................................................................................................ iii

Table of Contents .............................................................................................................................. iv

List of Tables ....................................................................................................................................... vi

Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................................... vii

Dedication ........................................................................................................................................... ix

1 Chapter: Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 10
   1.1 History of Giftedness .................................................................................................................. 11
   1.2 Gifted Education in Iran ............................................................................................................. 15
      1.2.1 Schools’ System in Iran ..................................................................................................... 15
      1.2.2 History of the Gifted Schools before the Revolution ......................................................... 16
      1.2.3 Gifted Schools after the Revolution .................................................................................. 17
      1.2.4 Identification of Students .................................................................................................. 17
      1.2.5 Indigenous Conception of Giftedness in the Iranian Gifted Schools ......................... 17

2 Chapter: Review of Literature ......................................................................................................... 19
   2.1 Conceptions of Giftedness ......................................................................................................... 19
      2.1.1 Dai’s Major Tensions and Themes in Gifted Studies ......................................................... 20
      2.1.2 Theories in Gifted Education ............................................................................................... 21
         2.1.2.1 Renzulli’s Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness ......................................................... 21
            2.1.2.1.1 The Model and the Major Tensions ........................................................................ 23
         2.1.2.2 Sternberg’s WICS Model of Giftedness ..................................................................... 24
            2.1.2.2.1 Creativity ................................................................................................................ 25
            2.1.2.2.2 Intelligence ............................................................................................................. 26
            2.1.2.2.3 Wisdom ................................................................................................................ 27
            2.1.2.2.4 Synthesized ............................................................................................................ 28
      2.1.3 The Model and the Major Tensions ...................................................................................... 29
         2.1.3.1 Sternberg’s Pentagonal Theory .................................................................................... 30
            2.1.3.1.1 The Model and the Major Tensions ....................................................................... 31
2.1.4 Culture and Giftedness in Theories .......................................................... 32
2.2 Implicit Theory .......................................................................................... 34
2.3 Purpose of the Study ................................................................................. 35
2.4 Research Questions ................................................................................... 35
2.5 Significance of the Study ......................................................................... 36

3 Chapter: Methodology .................................................................................38
3.1 Overall approach to the study and rationale ......................................... 38
3.2 Data and participant selection ................................................................. 41
3.2.1 Text selection ..................................................................................... 41
3.2.2 Interviewee selection ......................................................................... 43
3.3 Data collection ......................................................................................... 44
3.3.1 Literary canons ................................................................................. 44
3.3.2 Interview ........................................................................................... 45
3.4 Analysis .................................................................................................. 46

4 Chapter: Findings .........................................................................................51
4.1 Saheb Ferasat; /s̯eʃb fæːræsæ/ ................................................................. 51
4.2 Shukhdideh; /ʃu:khdideh/ ................................................................... 59
4.3 Dana and Aghel; /dæːnə & ægɛl/ ......................................................... 63
4.4 Kheradmand; /kʰɛɾædmeːnd/ ............................................................... 67
4.5 Hakim; /hækim/ ................................................................................... 84

5 Chapter: Discussion .......................................................................................93
5.1 Epithets that Depict Gifted and Wise People in The Gulistan ............ 93
5.1.1 Intrinsic Giftedness .......................................................................... 95
5.1.2 Extrinsic Giftedness ....................................................................... 96
5.2 Sa’adi’s Theory of Giftedness and the Major Tensions ....................... 99
5.3 Conclusion ............................................................................................ 102
5.4 Limitations and suggestions ..................................................................104

References .....................................................................................................107

Appendices .....................................................................................................112
Appendix A: Ethic approval ........................................................................ 112
Appendix B: Consent Forms ..................................................................... 113
Appendix C: Interview Guide ................................................................. 117
List of Tables

Table 3.1 A Sample Table of Themes for Ferasat in The Gulistan........................................48
Table 3.2 A Sample Table for an Epithet's Themes in The Gulistan....................................49
Table 4.1 Themes for Ferasat in The Gulistan........................................................................52
Table 4.2 Themes for Shukhdideh in The Gulistan ..................................................................59
Table 4.3 Themes for Dana & Aghel in The Gulistan ...............................................................64
Table 4.4 Themes for Kheradmand in The Gulistan ..................................................................67
Table 4.5 Themes for Hakim in The Gulistan ...........................................................................85
Table 5.1 Categories for the Epithets for Gifted and Wise in The Gulistan...............................94
Table 5.2 Hierarchy of Wisdom Levels' Rarity .........................................................................96
Table 5.3 Stacked Venn diagram for the Abilities of Different Levels of Wisdom ..................98
Table 5.4 Comparing How Renzulli’s, WICS, Pentagonal, and Sa'adi’s Theories Meet
    Major Tensions in the Field ..........................................................................................101
Acknowledgements

This research project would not have been possible without the support of many people. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the people who have been instrumental in the successful completion of this project.

I would like to offer my special thanks to my husband M. Ghahremani for his love, kindness and support he has shown during the past two years it has taken me to finalize this thesis. He supported me throughout entire process, both by keeping me harmonious and helping me putting pieces together.

I am forever indebted to my parents, E. Rahnama and N. Karami, and my brother T. Karami for their understanding, endless love, support and encouragement when it was most required.

I owe a very important debt to my friends In Iran, particularly Afsoon Afzal, whose care and every day support in harsh times was really helpful. I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to my other friends Z. Ejei, S. Ariyafar, P. Sahranavard, S. Yousefi, A. Derakhshan, K. Hashemi and S. Saki.

I would like to express my very great appreciation to my supervisor Dr. Bosetti for her valuable and constructive suggestions during the planning and development of this research work.

Advice given by Dr. Richardson has been a great help in understanding the field better. Her willingness to give her time so generously has been very much appreciated. I am particularly grateful for her insightful comments and suggestions.

I sincerely thank Dr. Schnellert, for his valuable advice and assistance, especially in methodological data analysis.
I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Crichton for her great support. I couldn’t finish my study without her support when she was the director of Graduate Studies in the Faculty of Education.

My sincere thank also goes to Dr. Labun. She patiently provided me with great assistance in my academic writing.

Assistance provided by Mrs. Cox and other university staff was greatly appreciated. Besides, I would like to thank the authority of University of British Columbia (UBC) for providing me with a good environment and facilities to complete this thesis.

I would like to show my appreciation to my friends here Sepideh Pakpour and Dr. Milani for being the surrogate family during these two years.

I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues Tracy Riley, Kelly Hanson, and Rhonda Peterson who kindly edited this thesis.

Sareh Karami
Dedication

I dedicate my thesis to my family and special friends, whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity rings in my ears.

I also dedicate my thesis to NODET, Iranian organization for development of exceptional talents, where I studied, worked, and grew up.
1 Chapter: Introduction

This study investigates culturally embedded conceptions of giftedness as evidenced in the Iranian literary canon, *The Gulistan*, in order to guide the development of Iranian conceptions of giftedness, education and programming for gifted and talented students. I bring to this research personal experience of attending middle and high school in the Iranian School for the Gifted, NODET- which stands for National Organization for Development of Exceptional Talented. After graduating from the school, I returned to work at NODET for 10 years as a teacher, programmer, and the head of research and extracurricular programs department.

I was responsible for developing special programs for gifted students to provide them with academic and social skills and knowledge they needed. During my tenure at the school I had two main goals: The first one was identifying gifted students’ needs (academic, social and emotional) and the second goal was designing appropriate programs to address those needs. To achieve these goals I reviewed many books and research articles. I also went through the official documents. During the investigation, I found that there is no Iranian definition, identification process, and programming.

Although Iran has offered programs for gifted students since 1968, it has not developed any official culturally specific definitions of giftedness; rather it draws upon Western themes, conceptions, and research into giftedness. The Iranian system constructs programs and selection processes based on Western perspectives. However, Western definitions might clash seriously with the context of Iran. Khaleefa’s study (1999) illuminates that “practice of importing methods of studying creativity, intelligence and giftedness without rigorous conception is handicapping” (p. 25). This perspective on gifted education would be a compass for policy makers. It could help policy makers distinguish the
definition of giftedness in Iran from other definitions. This study as the first step towards Iranian conceptions of giftedness will bring this subject to attention of scholars, policy makers, and educators in various roles.

By Iranian I mean the dominant culture of Iranian people. Although there are some minority groups in Iran, Persian is a dominant culture. Persian is the official language of Iran and the schools’ text books are written in Persian.

I want to be clear that this study investigates giftedness in a specific literary canon (The Gulistan) which is Persian. Although Persian is dominant culture of Iran, there are minority groups. Moreover, I know that Iranian culture cannot be reduced to this specific text. In fact, this study is the first step towards Iranian conceptions of giftedness; it provides methodology that other scholars can do it in different ways.

In this first chapter I will review the history of giftedness and the history of gifted schools in Iran to provide the background of the field and the context of the study.

1.1 History of Giftedness
Recognition of gifted students goes back thousands of years. Confucius (551–479 BC) divided people into three types: superior, mediocre, and inferior (Phillipson & McCann, 2007). In addition, Han-Shu or History of the Former Han Dynasty, which is written 2200 years ago, divides people into several groups with regard to their mental ability: top-top, top-middle, top-bottom, middle-top, middle-middle, middle-bottom, bottom-top, bottom-middle, and bottom-bottom (Phillipson, 2007). At the same time, the Chinese government conducted a carefully planned competition to recognize extremely good people for government positions (Dubios, 1970). In Classical Greece, Plato (424/423 BC–348/347 BC) advocated developing gifted and talented youth for leadership roles in a society (Colangelo & Davis, 1997).
The Renaissance exerted a powerful influence on the conception of giftedness (Ziegler and Stoeger, 2007). During the Renaissance, the government supported people with outstanding ability in art, architecture, and literature. The first usage of the term “talent” defined as “individual aptitude” goes back to 1537 as used by philosopher Paracelsus (Passow, Mönks, & Heller, 1993, as cited in Ziegler and Stoeger, 2007). “Down through the ages almost every culture has had a special fascination for people who have made notable contributions to their respective areas of interest and involvement” (Renzulli 2005, p. 246).

However, the first scientific study of giftedness was carried out by Sir Francis Galton in the late 1800’s (Miller, 2008). In *Hereditary Genius* (1869), he investigated the effect of heredity on intellectual abilities. He believed that intelligence “is a biological trait heritable through natural selection” (Dai 2010, p. 12). Terman (1877-1956) formed the Intelligence Quotient or IQ approach to giftedness (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011). He defined gifted people as the top 3 to 5 percent people above the normal curve on the Stanford-Binet intelligence test (Miller, 2008). Intelligence Quotient or IQ has been played an important role in gifted education (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011), as most past efforts to define giftedness focus on the concept of intelligence (Renzulli, 2005).

It is important to note that despite the fact that Terman (1926) defines intelligence based on IQ scores, he warns against defining intelligence only based on IQ scores (Renzulli, 2005). Neisser et al.’s (1996) defines intelligence as individuals’ differences “in their ability to understand complex ideas, to adapt effectively to the environment, to learn from experience, to engage in various forms of reasoning, to overcome obstacles by taking thought” (p. 77). Sternberg and Detterman (1968) asked 24 well-known cognitive psychologists what they saw as intelligence. Common responses involved three themes:
capacity to learn from experience, ability to adapt to surrounding environment, and an understanding and control of one’s own thinking process (meta-cognition). These psychologists also strongly emphasized the key role of culture and real-world context (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011).

It is important to realize that different cultures conceptualize intelligence in different ways (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011). Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko (2011) believe that “intelligence, understood wholly outside its cultural context, is a mythological construct” (p. 155). For example, Shi (2004) illuminates that a Chinese conception of intelligence puts more emphasis on “the transfer of energy within the biological, physical, and chemical aspects of the mind rather than a strictly psychological perspective” (p.339 as cited in Phillipson & McCann, 2007, p. 12). Chen, Braithwaite, and Hung (1982) found that memorization of facts is more valued as important for intelligence by Chinese students than Australian students. Another example of cultural differences has to do with interpretation of silence in different cultures. Western perspective of intelligence construes silence as a lack of information (Irvine, 1978; Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011). However, the Wolf tribe in Africa believes that people of higher social class should speak less (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011). Srivastava and Mirsa (1996) suggest that differences among cultures are “due to differences in the kinds of skills valued by the two kinds of cultures” (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011, p. 147). In essence, the definitions of intelligence vary from culture to culture (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011).

Although most of the efforts to define giftedness focus on the concept of intelligence (Renzulli, 2005), intelligence is just one component of giftedness (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995; Sternberg & O’Hara, 1999; Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011; Renzulli, 2005). And
generally, models of giftedness “include the more complex characteristics” (Phillipson, 2007). Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko (2011) categorize approaches to the conception of giftedness into three major branches: no conceptual framework, IQ based frame-work and, more than IQ skill based frame-work. Borland argues that although there is a consensus that IQ plays an important role in gifted education, no one in the field believes anymore in IQ as the only indicator of giftedness (2008).

In the twentieth century and recent decade, extensive research has been conducted into different aspects of giftedness and gifted education, for example, how to define giftedness and talent, how to assess giftedness, and how to promote talent. However, there is still a lack of agreement on conceptualizing giftedness (Pfieffer, 2003). The key point that must be remembered in defining giftedness is that, like intelligence, definitions of giftedness vary according to culture (Philipson, 2007). As an illustration, within Chinese culture giftedness is seen as an inborn quality that can be obtained through industriousness, perseverance, and learning (Chan, 2007). At the same time, Thai people count a person who is fast learner, good problem solver, sharp thinker, and has the ability of responding well spontaneously as gifted person (Anuruthwong, 2007). Despite this fact, “Haensly, (2000) recognized that people were only just beginning to understand the variability in the conceptions of giftedness around the world” (as cited in Philipson, 2007, p. 1).

“McCann (2000) argued against a single conception of giftedness and encouraged each country to develop indigenous conceptions as this was healthy for gifted education” (as cited in Philipson, 2007, P. 1). This is important because conceptualizing giftedness is the first factor that must be considered in both how to assess giftedness and how to promote it (Renzulli, 2005). My home country Iran is one of the first countries to offer special education
for gifted students to promote their talent. Nevertheless, no one has conducted research on how Iranian people define giftedness based on their culture. Because the Iranian educational system is unknown out of Iran, the next section explores the structure of Iranian gifted schools.

1.2 Gifted Education in Iran

‘NODET’ is the written abbreviation for "National Organization for Development of Exceptional Talents". The organization is responsible for gifted schools in Iran. It is important for most families to send their children to NODET, because of the high quality of its educational facilities and teachers and its upper social class. Hence, what is valued in NODET shapes the people’s conception of giftedness and gifted education practices.

1.2.1 Schools’ System in Iran

The school system falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Training. There are four kinds of schools in Iran: public schools, private schools, schools for students with disabilities, and schools for gifted students. The structure of the educational system under this ministry is divided into the four cycles: pre-elementary school, elementary school, middle school, and high school. At the end of each year students take exams which determine their promotion to the following grade. Except for pre-elementary schools, students take a nation-wide examination at the end of each cycle. Those who pass the exam are qualified to proceed to the next cycle. Since the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979 Iranian schools have to be single gender.

**Pre-elementary** is a one-year program for five year old children in which they receive the basic notions needed to enter primary schools. The five-year primary cycle covers grades 1-5 and it is free and compulsory. This cycle provides students with general education.
Middle (Guidance) school cycle covers grades 6 to 8. In this phase the abilities, as well as the interests of students are recognized, so they become prepared to decide which branch (academic, fine art or technical/vocational) they intend to choose in the next cycle.

High school is a four-year stage that covers grade 9 to Grade 12. It is divided into three main branches: academic, fine art or technical/vocational. The academic branch is divided into three streams namely: humanities, physics-mathematics, and experimental sciences. The technical/vocational branch is designed to train technicians for the labor market. Most of Iranian students attend the academic branch. Gifted schools only offer physics-mathematics and experimental sciences, they do not offer humanities.

1.2.2 History of the Gifted Schools before the Revolution

“Hooshmand” elementary school was the first Iranian Gifted School. It began in Tehran in 1967 with 14 students. However it was not a national organization. In 1968, the Department of Children and Exceptional Students under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Training was established. In 1969, this department established the first national school for gifted and talented children. School’s main objective was training the gifted students in order to provide educated and skilled dignitaries and cabinet members for the crown prince. Indeed, it was superintended by the Queen.

After 18 years, in 1974, the elementary and the middle school had ten grades and 225 pupils in total, 107 girls and 118 boys. At the end of each year, one or two new students could be adopted or transferred to the ordinary schools.

In 1976, it became an Organization for Development of Exceptional Talents under the jurisdiction of the Board of which the Queen Farah was the head. This organization had a
different education system and the Minister of Education was not even a member of the board.

1.2.3 Gifted Schools after the Revolution

After the revolution the organization was cancelled until 1987. However, the two schools for gifted students (single gender schools) in Tehran had been working at that time.

In 1987, with the request of Vice-Prime Minister Dr. J. Ejie, the organization was established. It was initially only to be run under the board of trustees. The Board of Trustees included: Minister of Education, Minister of Culture and Higher Education, Scientific and Industrial Research Organization chairman, managing director of radio and television, Deputy Prime Minister and Head of Planning and funding. Since then, the organization increased its schools and established schools in other cities. However, NODET does not have any pre-elementary and elementary schools, NODET schools are just middle and high schools.

1.2.4 Identification of Students

Every year, the National Organization holds two national exams to select the students to continue studying in the National Organization’s affiliated centers. One of these exams is the middle school’s entrance exam and the other one is the high school’s entrance exam. Each exam has two stages and the test material is combination of intelligence, creativity, science (physics, chemistry, and Biology) and math knowledge. Through this process, about 3 percents of students will be accepted from all over the country; separately for boys and girls.

1.2.5 Indigenous Conception of Giftedness in the Iranian Gifted Schools

Although Iran has offered programs for gifted students since 1968, it has not developed any official, culturally specific, definitions of giftedness; rather it draws upon western themes,
conceptions, and research into giftedness. It constructs programs and selection process based on western perspectives.

In this chapter I provided an overview of the history of giftedness and the history of gifted schools in Iran. As will be discussed in chapter 2, the purpose of this study is to explore culturally embedded conceptions of giftedness as evidenced in an Iranian literary canon, in order to guide the development of Iranian conceptions of giftedness, education and programming for gifted and talented students.
2 Chapter: Review of Literature

In this chapter I will discuss conceptions of giftedness, major tensions in the field of gifted education, some major theories in the field, culture and giftedness, theoretical framework for this study, purpose of the study, and the research question. At the end of this chapter I will discuss the significance of the study.

2.1 Conceptions of Giftedness

Notwithstanding extensive research into conceptualizing giftedness, there is still no one single definition for giftedness (Pfeiffer, 2003) and there never will be (Renzulli, 2005).

Pfeiffer (2003) showed there is a lack of consensus on the definition of giftedness. He asked five fundamental questions from 64 authorities in the field of gifted education. He selected prominent authorities to participate in his research. The quality of the participants and the questions he asked made his research very valuable. The first question was: What do you see as the three greatest identification, assessment, and/or definitional issues in the gifted field? About 94% of participants agreed that there is a lack of agreement on conceptualizing or defining the gifted and talented.

Renzulli (2005) argues that “As long as there are differences of opinion among reasonable scholars, there will never be a single definition of giftedness, and this is probably the way that it should be” (p. 4). Dai (2010) categorizes the challenges that gifted studies faces into three categories; he dubs them major tensions and themes in gifted studies. In the next section, I will discuss these themes and tensions. Moreover, I will refer to these themes and tensions in all other sections of this thesis, as sorting through these tensions will clarify, if not resolve, major differences regarding what we know about the nature and nurture of giftedness and excellence (ontological
issues), how we come to know it (epistemological issues) and where we are going in educational policy and practices (normative issues) (Dai, 2010, p. 46).

2.1.1 Dai’s Major Tensions and Themes in Gifted Studies

Dai (2010) identifies “a set of themata or central issues” (p. 38) and sorts them into three groups: ontological tensions, epistemological tensions, and normative tensions. Each category has three major tensions that represent several questions.

First, ontological tension refers to the nature of the studies such as structure, properties, and relations; “[it] is concerned with the nature and kinds of existence” (p.38). The ontological tensions are: being versus doing/becoming; domain-general versus domain-specific; and, qualitative versus quantitative differences.

The second major tension is epistemological tension which “concerns the validity of ontological or knowledge claims and the cognitive foundation of knowing” (p. 42). Three main tensions in this category are: aptitude test versus authentic achievement; nomothetic versus idiographic; and, reductionism versus emergentism. “People with nomothetic perspective make universal assumption about what giftedness is” but “people with idiographic perspective see giftedness as involving unique individual functioning” (p.43). Reductionists believe that giftedness can be explained by simpler components. Emergentists insist “there are emergent properties that cannot be reduced to isolated lower-level components” (p.39).

The last tension is the normative which infers “norms” and “standards” and “values”; in short it implies “what ought to” rather than “what is” (p.44). Expertise versus creativity, gifted child versus talent development, and excellence versus equity are this category’s tensions. The expertise versus creativity tension describes an objective of gifted education in that gifted children must be creative or proficient. Gifted child emphasize the “well-being
and personal growth of the child” and talent development focused on “long-term talent development” (p. 44). Finally, excellence versus equity tension discusses “whether gifted education undermines equity” (p.44).

As mentioned before, these tensions articulated by Dai are the most important challenges gifted education is faced with. Every theory in the field meets each tension in its own way while describing conceptions of giftedness. In next section, I will discuss some major theories in the field.

2.1.2 Theories in Gifted Education

There are two kinds of theories in gifted education: formal/explicit theory and informal/implicit theory. Miller (2008) defines an explicit theory as a “theory that is explained in the literature of the field” and an implicit one as “a theory that is formed through the sum of a person’s experiences with gifted education and gifted individuals” (p. 108). To launch a full-scale investigation into the conceptions of giftedness this study has to consider both explicit and implicit theories. In the following section, I seek to investigate the major theories in the field that deepen the understanding of conceptions of giftedness.

2.1.2.1 Renzulli’s Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness

Renzulli (2005) recognizes two kinds of giftedness “schoolhouse giftedness” and “creative productive” giftedness. He argues that we have to consider both kinds of giftedness in gifted education. Schoolhouse giftedness is “test-taking” or “lesson-learning” giftedness which can be easily measured by IQ or other cognitive tests. He argues schoolhouse giftedness is the type of giftedness “often used for selecting students” for special programs (p. 253). Although Renzulli emphasizes that both types of giftedness are important and must be considered in
gifted programs, he suggests that the best purpose for gifted education is developing creative productivity.

Creative productive giftedness can be portrayed by the three-ring conception of giftedness theory. This theory uses the word “gifted behavior” instead of gifted individuals and argues that gifted behavior “reflects the interaction among three basic clusters of human characteristics - above average ability, task commitment, and creativity” (Renzulli & Reis 2012, p. 256).

To understand what Renzulli means when he describes “creative productive”, the word “creativity” must be discussed. Divergent thinking which is offered by Guilford (1967) and Torrance’s (1966) theory of creativity (and his test) are the most significant concepts influencing the conception of creativity (Dai, 2010). Nowadays more factors have contributed to creativity. Plucker, Beghetto & Dow (2004) found that most research articles on creativity do not define creativity. They synthesized the definitions of creativity they found, and offer this definition for creativity.

Creativity is the interaction among aptitude, process, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful as defined within a social context (p. 90).

Plucker, Beghetto & Dow’s (2004) definition of creativity is similar to the third category of Csikszentmihalyi’s (1996) “creative people.” Csikszentmihalyi recognizes three kinds of creativity: the first one refers to “unusual and stimulating thoughts,” people with this kind of thinking are deemed to be “brilliant”. The second group are “people who experience the world in novel and original ways; these people are called as “personally creative”. The
third group are people “who have changed our culture” Csiksentmihayil calls them “creative” (Renzulli 2005, p. 254).

Renzulli (2005) believes that creative productive giftedness can be developed (being versus becoming tension). The aim of such development is increasing “the chance that more students will become creative.” That is, “their idea and work will actually have an impact on others and cause changes” (p.254-5). Renzulli emphasizes that “the areas of performance in which one might be recognized as a “gifted” person are determined by the needs and values of the prevailing culture” (p. 246).

The three-ring conception of giftedness “attempts to portray the main dimensions of human potential for creative productivity” (Renzulli, 2005, p. 256), the theory applies to gifted behaviors instead of gifted individuals. It “reflects the interaction among three basic clusters of human characteristics -above average ability, task commitment, and creativity” (Renzulli & Reis, 2012, p. 22). “Above average ability is used to describe both general and specific abilities” (Renzulli, 2005, p.260). Renzulli defines “the top 15 to 20 percent of any given area of human endeavor” (p.260) as well above average ability. Task commitment is a focused form of motivation, it brings energy to “bear on a particular problem or specific area” (p.263). Individuals who own these characteristics or are capable to gain profit from them “to any potentially valuable area of human performance” are those who can develop gifted behavior (Renzulli & Reis, 2012, p. 22).

2.1.2.1.1 The Model and the Major Tensions
Due to the fact that the three-ring conception of giftedness theory explains giftedness by simpler components, it meets reductionism versus emergentism tension on the reductionism end of spectrum. Moreover, as mentioned before, the model promises that developing
creative productivity is the best purpose for gifted education. This argument demonstrates the position of Renzulli’s theory in relation to the expertise versus creativity tension as obviously on the side of creativity.

Further, Renzulli’s theory maintains that a person must be above average in both general and specific abilities. Examples for general abilities are “verbal and numerical reasoning, spatial relations, memory, and word fluency” (Renzulli, 2005, p.259) and “specific abilities consist of the capacity to acquire knowledge, skill, or the ability to perform in one or more activities of a specialized kind and within a restricted range” (Renzulli, 2005, pp. 259-60). It shows that the theory is somewhere in between on the domain-general versus domain-specific spectrum.

Finally, it is not a nomothetic theory, as gifted behaviors are not universally valid. It is also not idiographic as it is not “involving unique individual functioning and development” (Dai, 2010, p. 43). In fact, it is somewhere in between.

According to the three-ring conception of giftedness theory, gifted behaviour “reflects the interaction among three basic clusters of human characteristics: above average ability, task commitment, and creativity” (Renzulli & Reis, 2012, p. 22). Comparatively, Sternberg’s WICS Model (which stands for wisdom, intelligence, creativity, and synthesized) of Giftedness which I will discuss next proposes that giftedness is a function of wisdom, intelligence, and creativity.

2.1.2.2 Sternberg’s WICS Model of Giftedness

WICS is a model of giftedness offered by Sternberg. WICS is the abbreviation for wisdom, intelligence, creativity, and synthesized (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011). The model
emphasizes the future role of gifted individuals, as gifted leaders (Sternberg, 2007). This model proposes that

Giftedness is, in large part, a function of creativity in generating ideas, analytical intelligence in evaluating the quality of these ideas, practical intelligence in implementing the ideas and convincing others to value and follow the ideas, and wisdom to ensure that the decisions and their implementation are for the common good of all stakeholders (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011, p. 34).

Sternberg (2008) believes that creativity, intelligence, and wisdom are not merely inborn qualities. In fact, giftedness in creativity, intelligence, and wisdom, is determined through the interaction of genes and environment. For illustrative purpose, I will discuss creativity, intelligence, and wisdom below.

2.1.2.2.1 Creativity

As I discussed creativity in previous section here I will just elaborate upon Sternberg’s definition of creativity. Sternberg (2009) maintains that:

Creativity refers to the skills and attitudes needed for generating ideas and products that are (a) relatively novel, (b) high in quality, and (c) appropriate to the task at hand.

Creativity is important for giftedness because it is the component whereby one generates the ideas that will influence others (p. 2).

The elements of creative attitudes include:

1. Problem redefinition
2. Problem analysis
3. Selling a solution
4. Recognition how knowledge can both help and hinder creative thinking
5. Willingness to take sensible risks
6. Willingness to surmount obstacles
7. Belief in one’s ability to accomplish the task at hand
8. Willing to tolerate ambiguity
9. Willingness to find extrinsic rewards for the things one is intrinsically
10. Continuing to grow intellectually rather to stagnate (Sternberg, 2009)

It is important to remember “few people have all of these elements. They need only enough
of them to translate their potential gifts into actualized one” (Sternberg, Jarvin, and
Grigirenko, 2011, p. 34).

2.1.2.2.2 Intelligence
This model is based on Sternberg’s definition of Successful intelligence. According to this
definition, intelligence is;
1. The ability to achieve one’s goals in life, given one’s sociocultural context;
2. By capitalizing on strengths and correcting or compensating for weaknesses;
3. In order to adapt to, shape, and select environments;
113-114).

According to the first item, intelligence has different meaning for each individual (Sternberg,
2003) and gifted individuals are not necessarily good at everything (Sternberg, 2008). In fact,
the first item has three sub-items per se: “(a) identifying meaningful goals; (b) coordinating
those goals in a meaningful way so that they form a coherent story of what one is seeking in
life; and (c) moving a substantial distance along the path toward reaching those goals”
(Sternberg, 2003, p. 113).
2.1.2.2.3 Wisdom

Wisdom is recognized as the most important and rarest quality in gifted individuals (Sternberg, 2009). The history of the study of wisdom in the West goes back to the Platonic dialogues (Robinson, 1998; Osbeck & Robinson, 2005, as cited in Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011). Wisdom has three different meanings in these dialogues:

1. Sophia, “which is found in those who seek a contemplative life in search of truth”
2. Phronesis, “which is the kind of practical wisdom shown by statesmen and legislators”
3. Episteme, “which is found in those who understand things from a scientific point of view” (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011, p. 103).

Research has been conducted into wisdom in recent decades. Here I review some important studies. For example, Holliday and Chandler (1986) investigate implicit theories of wisdom and proposed five underlying aspects to wisdom: exceptional understanding, judgment and communication skills, general competence, interpersonal skills, and social unobtrusiveness (as cited in Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011).

Smith and Baltes (1990) conducted the most extensive research on wisdom and they proposed an explicit theory. They promise five components for wisdom (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011).

(a) rich factual knowledge (general and specific knowledge about the conditions of life and its variations); (b) rich procedural knowledge (general and specific knowledge about strategies of judgment and advice concerning matters of life); (c) life span contextualism (knowledge about the contexts of life and their temporal [developmental] relationships); (d) relativism (knowledge about differences in values,
goals, and priorities); and (e) uncertainty (knowledge about the relative indeterminacy and unpredictability of life and ways to manage)” (as cited in Sternberg, 2003, p.127).

The definition of wisdom in WICS theory is based on Sternberg’s (1998) balance theory of wisdom. According to this theory, wisdom is defined as the application of intelligence and creativity as mediated by values toward the achievement of a common good through a balance among (a) intrapersonal, (b) interpersonal, and (c) extrapersonal interests, over the (a) short and (b) long-terms, in order to achieve a balance among (a) adaptation to existing environments, (b) shaping of existing environments, and (c) selection of new environments (Sternberg, 2003, p.123).

There are five primary sources of differences directly affecting the balance processes:

1. Goals
2. Balancing of Responses to Environmental Contexts
3. Balancing of Interests
4. Balancing of Short- and Long-terms
5. Values

Sternberg (2002) argues that some intelligent and creative people can be foolish. Based on his argument such people have five characteristics: insouciance, ego-centrism, omniscience omnipotence, and invulnerability (as cited in Sternberg, 2003).

2.1.2.4 Synthesized

In this model, giftedness is conceptualized as a synthesis of intelligence, creativity, and wisdom. Gifted individuals in this model require the person to possess each of the elements of WICS (Sternberg, 2008). According to this model, a truly gifted person is relatively rare
“because it requires a synthesis of all of the elements described above” (Sternberg, 2007, p.39). In fact, giftedness is seen as

a function of creativity in generating ideas, analytical intelligence in evaluating the quality of these ideas, practical intelligence in implementing the ideas and convincing others to value and follow the ideas, and wisdom to ensure that the decisions and their implementation are for the common good of all stakeholders (Sternberg, Jarvin & Grigorenko, 2011, p. 34).

To sum up, in this model Sternberg emphasizes the leadership role of gifted individuals. This model sees giftedness as a function of creativity, intelligence, and wisdom. He argues that truly gifted leader must have all elements synthesizing together, otherwise s/he will fail (Sternberg, 2009).

2.1.3 The Model and the Major Tensions
With attention to the above statements, WICS is a reductionist theory. It explains giftedness “at a more basic level of analysis” (Dai, 2010, p. 39): creativity, intelligence, and wisdom.

Also, this model argues that creativity, intelligence, and wisdom are not completely inborn qualities. “Although these attributes may be partially heritable,” (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011, p. 34) they can be developed. That is, the model is somewhere in between on the being versus becoming tension spectrum.

Furthermore, Sternberg argues that “successfully intelligent people balance adaptation to, shaping of, and selection of environments by [capitalizing] on their strengths and compensating for or correcting their weaknesses. Gifted individuals, from this viewpoint, are not necessarily good at everything” (Sternberg, 2008, p. 4). That is to say, Sternberg believes that giftedness is domain specific rather than domain general, as gifted people have
strengths and weaknesses and they are not good at “any single domain” (Dai, 2010, p. 39).
As the theory maintains “that ‘intelligence’ means a somewhat different thing to each
individual” and “there is no single way to succeed … that works for everyone”, the theory is
not nomothetic. However, it is not idiographic, as it is not “involving unique individual
functioning and development” (Dai, 2010, p.43). Hence it is located somewhere in between.

The three-ring conception of giftedness theory and WICS are two major explicit
theories in the field. The pentagonal theory (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011) is
another important explicit theory. The pentagonal theory is drawn from people’s implicit
theories. Hence, investigating the pentagonal theory is a path leading to understanding
implicit theories.

2.1.3.1 Sternberg’s Pentagonal Theory
The pentagonal theory “was intended to capture people’s implicit theories” (Sternberg,
Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011, p. 7). In fact, the theory is a brief sketch of folk verdict on
criteria for being gifted (Dai, 2010). The first criterion, excellence, claims that “gifted”
describes an individual who is extremely good in dimension(s) compared to peers. The
second criterion is rarity, which is “needed to supplement the excellence criterion” (p. 3), and
it means that the superior attribute of a person who is deemed gifted must be rare relative to
peers. The level of this “extremely high” may change over time but always there are just few
people who are “extremely high”. As an illustration of this concept consider Dai’s (2010)
illustration of the scientist in 19th century who didn’t need much mathematics to solve
genetics problems. Dai argues that the prerequisites of giftedness change through time and
culture. In fact, “giftedness is not one thing and what constitutes giftedness can change over
time” (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011, p. 11). The third criterion is the productivity
criterion, which states that giftedness “must lead to, or potentially lead to productivity” (p. 4). To judge a child’s mental ability her/his potential productivity is mainly accounted for. However, the older a person becomes, the more important becomes her/his actual productivity. Demonstrability is the fourth criterion. This refers to the point that we should be able to demonstrate the high aptitude that caused someone to be deemed gifted through valid instruments. The final criterion is value and this indicates the cultural diversities of dimensions through which society judges a person gifted. “The pentagonal theory allows that what is prized as a basis for giftedness may differ from one culture, or even subculture, to another” (p. 7).

2.1.3.1.1 The Model and the Major Tensions

As it is defined the theory, to be gifted one has to be extremely good in one dimension or more dimensions. This definition illuminates how the pentagonal theory maintains that giftedness is domain specific. According to the productivity criterion, giftedness “must lead to, or potentially lead to productivity” (p. 3). The pentagonal theory is in the creativity category in the creativity versus expertise tension.

To demonstrate the location of the pentagonal theory on the excellence vs. equity tensions spectrum I refer to Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko (2011).

Excellence will exist whether we have a word for it or not. In anti-utopian novels, such as Orwell’s 1984 or Clarke’s The City and the Stars, politicians may try to homogenize the masses. But people will differ despite the efforts of politicians, educators, or anyone else. They will also have different educational needs. Changing how language is used will not change the differential needs with which students come to the classroom (p. 3).
They also argue that gifted education cannot be seen as patched on to regular instruction and it “needs to be systematically planned for and delivered” (p.12). Henceforth, the theory is on the excellence end of the spectrum.

The value criterion puts the theory somewhere in between the nomothetic versus idiographic tension. As value criterion argues “the person must show superior performance in one or more dimensions that is valued for that person by his or her society” (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011, p. 6). The theory is not nomothetic as gifted behaviors are not universally valid. However, it is not idiographic as it is not “involving unique individual functioning and development” (Dai, 2010, p. 43).

Although there are many explicit theories of giftedness (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011), this section provided a brief description of three major theories: The three-ring conception; WICS; and, the pentagonal theory. Through these theories, we can reach a more profound understanding of conceptions of giftedness.

2.1.4 Culture and Giftedness in Theories
Although there is a lack of consensus on the definition of giftedness among authorities in the field (Pfieffer, 2003), most theorists emphasize the significant role of cultural values in defining giftedness.

For example, as mentioned in the previous section, Sternberg (1995) in his pentagonal theory reveals five criteria for being gifted. One of these criteria is the value criterion, which is indicative of the culturally-based diversity of dimensions that are valued for society to judge a person gifted (as cited in Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011). This theory asserts that “what is prized as a basis for giftedness may differ from one culture, or even subculture, to another” (Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011, p. 7). Equally important, the value of each criterion varies from culture to culture (Phillipson & McCann,
Zhang and Sternberg (1998) found that Chinese view excellence, productivity, and value as important and sufficient criteria for giftedness; they do not see rarity and demonstrability as important. However, Hong Kong’s and United States’ teachers rated rarity as an important criterion (Phillipson, 2007).

Similarly, Renzulli (2005) argues the needs and values of the culture determine the “areas of performance in which one might be recognized as a gifted” (p.246). Dai (2010) also argues that the prerequisites of giftedness changes through time and culture. Haensly, Reynolds and Nash propose (1986) that gifted people use their incredible “coalescence of abilities” in “response to some setting”. The value of each response “is determined in large by the context in which they live” (as cited in Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011, p.28). Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1986) believe that “talent cannot be observed except against the background of well-specified cultural expectation” (as cited in Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011, p.28).

For example, within German culture aptitude for high performance, individuality, creativity and innovation, and uniqueness are valued as aspects of giftedness (Zeigler and Stoeger, 2007). Within Chinese culture giftedness is mainly seen as an inborn quality but it is possible for many people to become gifted “through industriousness, perseverance, and learning” (Chan, 2007, p. 42). “The Chinese also think everybody is gifted in some way provided that he or she is hard working and obedient to parents and teachers, thereby facilitating the maximum development of intelligence” (Chan, 2007, p. 43). Chan argues that “Chinese Confucian traditions often encourage obedience but discourage questioning and deviance” (p. 44). He claims that this fact explains the lower scores of Chinese students on creativity tests. Chinese culture encourages reference to “already existing knowledge than to
explore new possibilities” (p.44). Shona (from central southern Africa) “consider giftedness to be associated primarily in service to the community” (Mpfu, Ngara, and Gudyana, 2007, p. 239). They also believe that giftedness can be shown in different domains. These domains are “tied to agricultural-subsistence economies, social needs of family and clan affiliations, including spiritual supplication with the departed ancestors” (p. 240).

Although such cross-cultural perspectives on giftedness and gifted education are very advantageous to societies’ indigenous cultural and educational demands, Phillipson & McCann (2007), in their edited volume, *Conceptions of Giftedness: Sociocultural Perspective*, promise that “there does not appear to be a single volume to date that clearly describes conceptions of giftedness from the perspective of different cultures” (p. 14).

Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko (2011) argue that this book is “the best single compendium of views of conceptions of giftedness around the world” (p. 151). However, this book describes conceptions of giftedness in only a few cultures.

### 2.2 Implicit Theory

To take the first step towards an Iranian conception of giftedness, I will investigate implicit theories. Sternberg believes that investigating implicit theories provides a path leading to explicit ones (Lim & Plucker, 2002). The most compelling model for this is, as mentioned, Sternberg (1993) pentagonal theory, which was developed by investigating people’s implicit theories. Lim and Plucker (2002) emphasize the importance of implicit theories in such studies. They say:

> From a practical standpoint, when people engage in intellectual activity—or evaluate the intellectual activity of others—they rarely have explicit theories in mind. Their thoughts and actions are guided by personal definitions of these constructs and beliefs about how to foster and evaluate intelligence that may be very different from the
theories developed by experts. An understanding of implicit theories provides researchers with insight into these constructs. Indeed, Sternberg (1987) has suggested that implicit theory research provides an alternative to traditional, explicit models of cognition (p.186).

As Iran has defined giftedness in Western terms and has not applied Iranian specific conceptions to gifted education, this study intends to articulate a conception of giftedness that is culturally appropriate. Investigating implicit theories is the first step towards Iranian conceptions of giftedness.

2.3 Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study is to explore culturally embedded conceptions of giftedness as evidenced in the Iranian literary canon, *The Gulistan*, to guide the development of Iranian conceptions of giftedness, and education and programming for gifted and talented students.

*The Gulistan*, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, is not only a valuable book for entertaining people but it also reflects what is valued within Iranian culture through the Persian influence. This book has many stories and poems describing who counted as a wise or gifted person and people still refer to these stories. Hence, investigating this book’s definitions of giftedness will give us insight into how giftedness has been understood and constructed within Iranian culture.

2.4 Research Questions
Regarding the importance of cross-cultural thinking about giftedness, this research will explore

- How conceptions of giftedness are constructed and portrayed through the Iranian literary canon, *The Gulistan*?
2.5 Significance of the Study
Despite the significant influence of culture on giftedness, cross-cultural perspectives on giftedness have not yet been taken into consideration as much as needed by scholars, teachers, school counselors, and others who define giftedness, identify gifted students, and create programs.

The definition of giftedness or “the way in which one views giftedness” is the first factor that must be considered in both identification processes and programming (Renzulli, 2005, p. 248). In fact, most authorities are unanimous on the importance of the logical relationship between the definition, identification and programming for gifted education (Renzulli, 2005; Feldhausen et al, 1984). As the program designer in the Iranian Gifted School, I realized that most nonwestern countries usually use identification instruments and programs that arose from western definitions of giftedness. However, western definitions might clash seriously with the context of nonwestern countries. Such a fallacy in identification procedures might leave many gifted students behind and in programming might prevent a society from achieving gifted education’s purposes. For example, if one society defines giftedness as an extraordinary performance in visual arts, using the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales as the identification instrument will cause serious problems in both programming and results. A cross-cultural perspective on gifted education would be a compass for policy makers in different societies. It could help policy makers distinguish the definition of giftedness in their society from other definitions. This understanding might encourage program designers to invent programs that fit with their special contexts.

Although this study is not going to discuss minority groups in gifted education, it could be advantageous to these groups. Minority groups are one of the main concerns of authorities in the field as many minorities are still ignored in the identification procedures
and cannot get involved in special programs, even when they are highly gifted (Pfieffer, 2003). As Ford et al. (2008) propose, educators’ lack of “cultural competence (knowledge, skills, and dispositions)” causes “underrepresentation of racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students in gifted education” (p. 82). They suggest cross-cultural understanding of giftedness can help educators to gain “cultural competence” which prevents them from being “racially, culturally, and linguistically” biased (Ford et al., 2008, p. 82). Such cross-cultural perspective on giftedness will equip educators in various roles with “cultural competence”. Educators’ “cultural competence” would facilitate identifying minorities in identification procedures.

Finally, as Brislin (1976) argues, “cross-cultural research can make contribution to theory development” (p.215). Like other cross-cultural studies, thinking cross-culturally about gifted education’s definitions, identifications, and programs will contribute to a more profound understanding of giftedness. As Catherina (2010) argues “all theories about giftedness have been presented by theorists with psychological background, the theorists also were predominantly white and male” (p. 336). Such cross-cultural studies will make shifts in perceptions of giftedness.

To sum up, in these chapters I explain the purpose of this study, why it is important to do it. I also explained the context of the study and its conceptual framework. In the next chapter I will discuss the methodology I employed to address the research question.
3 Chapter: Methodology

3.1 Overall approach to the study and rationale

Many scholars have written about *The Gulistan* from literary and philosophical perspectives (e.g., Ross, 1890; Calder, 1975; Eastwick, 1984; John Yohannan, 1987; Jackson, 2003; Vahid Dastjerdi, 2002; Sharp, 2004; Thackston, 2008; Esfandiari, Mahadi, Jamshid, & Rahimi, 2012; Jalilian & Sahraee, 2012). While a close reading of the text using philosophic and literary analysis would provide rich insight into conceptions of giftedness in Iranian culture, this is not the focus of this study. The field of gifted education resides in the domain of educational psychology. This study aims to develop a typology of conceptions of giftedness that are not based on psychological constructs, rather, emerge from revered historical texts that form and inform our cultural understanding of what it means to be a wise person. *The Gulistan*, is a revered book in the Iranian literary canon that can inform cultural understanding of a wise person’s characteristics. Historically, *The Gulistan* guides individuals to live with giftedness and wisdom. Investigating these conceptions in *The Gulistan*’s stories will tell us what historically counted as giftedness in the Iranian culture.

The methodology of this study is grounded theory (Lichtman, 2013) based in analysis of historical texts and expert interview, as this study aims to “discover theory from data” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Grounded theory is “a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273). It “is based on concepts that are generated directly from the data that are collected…” (Johnson & Chritensen, 2012, p.400). In grounded theory codes are created through the close analysis of the data (Charmaz, 2010, p. 187). In fact, “Coding starts the chain of the theory
development” (p. 187). There are three stages of coding: open-coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Johnson & Chritensen, 2012).

Open coding, initial coding or line-by-line coding proceeds “through our examining each line of data and then defining actions or events within it” (Charmaz, 2010, p. 187) and “it involves labeling important words or phrases” (Johnson & Chritensen, 2012, p. 403).

Line by line coding sharpens our use of sensitizing concepts—that is, those background ideas that inform the overall research problem. Sensitizing concepts offer ways of seeing, organizing, and understanding experience; they are embedded in our disciplinary emphases and perspectival proclivities. (Charmaz, 2010, p. 187)

For example, when coding the data I took into consideration major tensions in various theoretical conceptions of giftedness that are discussed in the second chapter. This stage of coding” keeps us thinking about what meanings we make of our data” (p. 187).

In axial coding, the researcher “develops the concepts into categories” and “organizes the categories” s/he also “looks for possible relationships among categories” (Johnson & Chritensen, 2012, p. 403). The axial coding goal is to make connections between categories and sub-categories and it “can be done during initial coding” (Charmaz, 2010, p. 188).

Selective or focused coding is the final stage of data analysis in grounded theory (Johnson & Chritensen, 2012). This stage involves sorting initial codes, making decisions about selecting codes (Charmaz, 2010), looking for the story line of the theory, reflecting on results, fleshing out the details of the theory, and rechecking the theory with the data” (Johnson & Chritensen, 2012, p. 404). In fact, “it is during selective coding that the researcher writes the story, developing theory” (p. 404)
As “the immediate focus” of this study is not people, rather written text, I used content analysis to code data from *The Gulistan* (Springer, 2010, p.418). That means, I used the procedure of content analysis to code the data in context of grounded theory. In other words, I regarded the data through grounded theory lenses; however, I used content analyses’ steps of gathering information. For instance, I did line by line coding through steps 4, 5, 6, and 7 of my data analysis and axial coding through steps 8 to 10; steps 12 and 13 of my data analysis was involved in selective coding. Hence, the themes were extracted through a content analysis; a categorizing and classification of its many words and phrases into fewer ones (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007). I drew *The Gulistan*’s key words and phrases that described gifted and talented people through the content analysis. Content analysis is “the systematic examination of texts … to analyze their prominent manifest and latent meanings” (Saldaña, 2011, p.10). And it “involves the restatement of a longer narrative (the original text) in terms of a shorter one (the content analysis) in which key themes are identified and analyzed” (Springer, 2010, p. 418).

As a “researcher can use grounded theory techniques with varied forms of data collection” (Charmaz, 2010, p. 186), along with the content analysis of texts, I also conducted an expert interview. Employing both the interview and content analysis provided me with a more robust understanding of my research question. This in-depth interview with an expert deepened my analysis of *The Gulistan*’s stories towards the development of a theoretical model. However, as grounded theory is an endless process (Johnson & Christensen, 2012), this research does not claim that it reached the Iranian cultural definition of giftedness and wisdom rather it is a step “towards an Iranian conception of giftedness.”
3.2 Data and participant selection
As mentioned before, this study aims to determine a culturally embedded understanding of
giftedness. The approach I choose is to examine a traditional text that represents Iranian
culture. The understanding of these texts is challenging; therefore I consulted with an scholar
in the analysis of these texts. His expert view helped to validate the accuracy of my
interpretations and to “collect additional data to fill in gaps” in my data (Johnson &
Chritensen, 2012, p. 403)

3.2.1 Text selection
In order to determine which text I would work with, I went through the following steps:

Step 1: I investigated a range of literary canons including Hafez, Rumi’s, Shahnameh, and
Sa’adi’s to determine which of these canons would be best to represent the dominant,
Persian perspective within Iranian culture and gifted and wise people in this culture.

Step 2: I read the following articles related to Iranian literature and culture to inform my
selection of the appropriate text for the purpose of this study.

- *Media, culture and society in Iran: living with globalization and the Islamic state* by
  Semati (2008).
- *Life as a stream and the psychology of “moment” in Hafiz’ verse: Application of the
  blending theory* by Keshavarz, & Ghassemzadeh (2008).

Middle Class Impediments to Iranian Modernization by Gastil (1958)

Step 3: I met with six scholars of Iranian literature and culture.

The text I determined as the best choice was *The Gulistan* (The Rose Garden). *The Gulistan* is a famous Iranian canon that was completed in 1258 by Sa’adi (1184-1288/1290) and it can be found in almost every Iranian home. *The Gulistan* has been taught at Iranian schools for more than 700 years. School books still contain several stories from this great canon. The scholars that I met with agreed that *The Gulistan* is the best representative canon of Iranian culture. Archer (1964), an England Sa’adian scholar wrote in the preface of the English rendition of *The Gulistan* that there is no better representative of Iranian culture than *The Gulistan*. He also argues that *The Gulistan* has reached such acceptability in the Orient that no European canon could reach it in Occident.

*The Gulistan* depicts the real world in its stories (Dr. Propitious, Interview, February 28th, 2013). It is divided into 8 chapters: chapter 1, the manner of kings (41 stories); chapter 2, the morals of Dervishes (49 stories); chapter 3, on the excellence of contentment (29 stories); chapter 4, on the advantage of silence (14 stories); chapter 5, on love and youth (21 stories); chapter 6, on weakness and old age (9 stories); chapter 7, on the effects of education (20 stories); chapter 8, on rules for conduct in life (82 maxims and 21 admonitions). All in all, *The Gulistan* contains 183 stories, 82 maxims, and 21 admonitions. These stories are laden with an amazing variety of short poems, pieces of advice, humorous reflections, and aphorisms. I delved deeply into the vignettes of *The Gulistan* to find out how gifted individuals are portrayed and what are deemed the essential qualities of giftedness.
3.2.2 Interviewee selection

I conduct an in-person semi-structured interview to “collect additional data to fill in gaps” (Johnson & Chritensen, 2012, p. 403) in order to support understanding of conceptions of giftedness in this book.

Interviewing is a “purposeful interaction in which one person obtains information from another” (Gay, Mills, Airasian, 2012, p. 386). A researcher can obtain complementary data that cannot be gained from other resources from an interview (Gay, Mills, Airasian, 2012). A researcher can “follow up respondent’s answer to obtain more information and clarify vague statements” (M.D. Gall, Gall, and Borg, 2007, p. 228). As a person who is not an expert in this literature, this interview helped me to “obtain important data” that I couldn’t “acquire from observation alone” (p. 386).

A semi-structured interview was conducted in person with an academic scholar from a distinguished university in Tehran. I used expert sampling to choose my interviewee “to elicit the views of [a] person(s) who … [has] specific expertise” and “to provide evidence for the validity of” my findings. “Expert sampling involves the assembling of a sample of persons with known or demonstrable experience and expertise in some area” (Torchim, 2006, para. 6). For this reason, I was looking for an expert who is an academic literary scholar from a prominent university in Tehran who also knows about conceptions of giftedness. Finding such an interviewee was crucial to this study, as Johnson and Chritensen (2012) argue it is important that researchers have *theoretical sensitivity*, a characteristic that is present when the researcher is effective at thinking about what kind of data need to be collected and what aspects of already collected data are the most important for the grounded theory (p. 403).
For this purpose, I went to the literature departments of three major universities in Tehran and asked for Sa’adian scholars. It is important to realize that there are very few Sa’adian scholars. After determining who to contact, I made an appointment for an introductory meeting to talk about my research purposes and questions. The goal of this meeting was find out if they had the relevant expertise to help me. In this introductory meeting, I asked them to read the consent form and to sign it if they consented to participate in this study. However, after meeting with five scholars an appropriate fit was not found, as the Sa’adian scholars did not know about conceptions of giftedness. They told me that no one has worked in this area, yet. I continued my search and indeed I finally found a Sa’adian scholar who also has been working in gifted schools for more than six years. Hence, he had good sense of what is meant by giftedness in the Iranian educational system. In this thesis, I refer to him with the pseudonym called Dr. Propitious.

3.3 Data collection
It is important to recognize that in grounded theory research “data collection and data analysis are concurrent and continual activities” (Johnson & Chritensen, 2012, p. 400). Hence, it is difficult to divide these processes into two sections thoroughly. However, I explained them in two separate sections in order to make them clearer.

3.3.1 Literary canons
Following my selection of The Gulistan as explained above, I searched for the best English rendition of the text. One of the scholars I had met subscribed to the Edward Rehatsek’s (1964) translation. Moreover, Archer (1964) believes that it is the only thorough translation of The Gulistan in English. Hence, I bought a bilingual copy of The Gulistan which is translated by Edward Rehatsek.
I read *The Gulistan* thoroughly twice and underlined the words that I believe best depicted gifted or wise people. Based on this, I selected stories that represented gifted and wise people’s qualities.

### 3.3.2 Interview

As mentioned above, I had an initial introductory meeting with Dr. Propitious to find out whether he could aid me in my research. At that meeting I talked about my research questions and purposes. After our initial meeting, I emailed him my research questions and interview survey, as he wanted to read them before the next meeting, and he also wanted the time to investigate *The Gulistan* for key words and stories. I shared with him the stories and qualities that I already identified. After two weeks we met again for our interview. Then, I asked him to identify what he deemed to be the most significant stories that reflected giftedness to add to my sample analysis (a few key stories I had determined). Dr. Propitious preferred to conduct the interview in a special coffeehouse. The interview was conducted in Persian and the duration of it was an hour. I recorded the interview and then transcribed it. During the transcription process, I translated some key parts into English.

Member checking was employed to avoid misinterpreting and misrepresenting my interviewee’s words and ideas. I did member-checking to give the participant a chance to revise, add thoughts or delete anything that he is not comfortable with, and to make the research relationship an open and highly respectful one. I sent him the transcripts and the sections I wanted to use in my thesis by email for his validation.
3.4 Analysis

“Data analysis in grounded theory is called the *constant comparative method*, and it involves constant interplay among the researcher, the data, and the developing theory” (Johnson & Chritensen, 2012, p. 400). To analyze the data from *The Gulistan* and the interview I took the following steps:

Step 1: I read *The Gulistan* thoroughly in both languages and underlined the words that I believe best depicted gifted or wise people including Hakim, Kheradmand, Dana, Aghel, Daneshmand, Hooshmand, Honarmand, Daneshmand, and Alem. I also determined key stories that best portrayed gifted and wise people.

Step 2: I read through the interview transcripts for the key words and stories that Dr. Propitious determined depicted giftedness. He referred to two new words that I had not recognized before including Saheb Ferasat and Shukhdideh.

Step 3: I reviewed the stories, taking into consideration these key words. I marked key stories with page marker flags; different colors for the stories that were distinguished by Dr. Propitious and me. Initially, I found 11 words that seem to describe gifted individuals (*Hakim, Kheradmand, Dana, Aghel, Daneshmand, Hooshmand, Honarmand, Daneshmand, Alem, Saheb Ferasat* and *Shukhdideh*).

Step 4: I further investigated each of these 11 words in alphabetical sequence. To investigate each of the 11 words, I scanned *The Gulistan* for each word. Every time I found a particular word that was used in a way to understand the context of the word, I wrote the page number of *The Gulistan* and a description of the particular word onto a flashcard. I used a separate
flashcard for each time I found the same word. For each word I ended up with between two and 23 flash cards.

Step 5: I read the flash cards carefully and found out that only six words out of these 11, depict gifted and wise people (Hakim, Kheradmand, Dana, Aghel, Saheb Ferasat and Shukhdideh).

Step 6: Each of these six epithets describes a different type of giftedness or wisdom. To gain a profound understanding of the essential qualities of each epithet and the differences between them, I went over my flash cards in a process of consistent comparison described below. I realized that Dana and Aghel depict the same type of wisdom. Hence, I considered them as one epithet.

Step 7: For each of these words, I identified appropriate text segments that depicted the word and placed brackets around them. I then assigned a code word or phrase to each segment; a code that describes a segment’s meaning (Creswell, 2012). I wrote these codes on the flash cards.

Step 8: I went through the data set twice (as described in step 6) “to ensure consistency, refinement, modification, and exhaustiveness of coding” (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007, p. 478).

Step 9: The similar codes were grouped to reduce the number of themes (Creswell, 2012) in order to make the model more workable and understandable and to get rid of repetition. I finally ended up with between six to 11 themes for each epithet. Some of these themes were further grouped into two or more subthemes under the main theme (see Table 3.1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Story number</th>
<th>Themes (English script)</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Qualities (Persian script)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 1&lt;br&gt;Story #5, chapter 1&lt;br&gt;Story #6, chapter 2&lt;br&gt;Story #19, chapter 5</td>
<td>Teenager</td>
<td></td>
<td>نوجواني</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 1&lt;br&gt;Story #5, chapter 1</td>
<td>Inborn</td>
<td></td>
<td>دانی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 1&lt;br&gt;Story #5, chapter 1&lt;br&gt;Story #6, chapter 2&lt;br&gt;Story #47, chapter 2&lt;br&gt;Story #19, chapter 5</td>
<td>Foresight</td>
<td></td>
<td>درون بینی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 1&lt;br&gt;Story #47, chapter 2&lt;br&gt;Story #19, chapter 5</td>
<td>Courage and bravery acts</td>
<td>Social courage and bravery</td>
<td>شجاعت و جمیعت اجتماعی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 1</td>
<td>Courage and bravery in wars</td>
<td></td>
<td>شجاعت و جمیعت در جنگ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 1&lt;br&gt;Story #5, chapter 1&lt;br&gt;Story #6, chapter 2&lt;br&gt;Story #47, chapter 2&lt;br&gt;Story #19, chapter 5</td>
<td>Speaking habits</td>
<td>Engage in witty repartee</td>
<td>حاضر جوابی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eloquent</td>
<td>خوش سخن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perceptive</td>
<td>نگه سنگی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 1</td>
<td>Short statured</td>
<td></td>
<td>ریز جهه</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #5, chapter 1</td>
<td>Miraculous</td>
<td></td>
<td>اقبال بلد</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 10: Although Rehatsek (1964) is the best English rendition of *The Gulistan*, it has some mistakes (Archer, 1964). For example some words have different meanings in Persian and he might have been misunderstood and chosen wrong English equivalent for the Persian one. Thus, I double checked the English rendition of stories and text segments and made necessary changes to avoid mistranslation. I replaced the English words which were used to describe gifted and wise people with the original Persian words. The English words that
Rehatsek uses as English equivalents of these six epithets do not have their exact meanings. For example, Rehatsek use shrewdness, intelligent, and sage as English equivalents of \textit{Saheb Ferasat}. However, none of these English words in Rehatsek’s translation have accurately described the essence of \textit{Saheb Ferasat}. Hence, I used the original Persian epithet in the stories with the intention of showing readers the original words in the contexts of the stories.

Step 11: I constructed a table (see table 3.2) for each epithet. This table shows which themes are used the most to describe each type of giftedness. The number and chapter number of the stories that reflect each theme can be seen in the table.

Step 12: I reached the definition of each of the epithets depicting giftedness in \textit{The Gulistan}. The hierarchical tree diagrams were constructed to show themes, subthemes, and their interconnections. These are shown in the conclusion portion of chapter 5.

Step 13: I put all the epithets, themes, and subthemes together and finished the data analysis by writing a theory of how giftedness is conceived, valued, revered in Iranian culture.

\textbf{Table 3.2 A Sample Table for an Epithet's Themes in \textit{The Gulistan}}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Story number</th>
<th>Themes (English script)</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Themes (Persian script)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49
To sum up, using a grounded theory approach (Lichtman, 2013) to the study of historical texts and an expert interview, this study investigates culturally embedded conceptions of giftedness as evidenced in the Iranian literary canon, *The Gulistan.*
4 Chapter: Findings

All in all, *The Gulistan* contains 183 stories and 82 maxims. These stories are interspersed with a variety of short poems, containing aphorisms, advice, and humorous reflections. By scrutinizing these stories and the characters in these stories, I found out how gifted individuals are portrayed in *The Gulistan* and what the essential qualities of what Sa`adi deems as gifted. I also examined the predominant images, metaphors or words are used to describe gifted people in *The Gulistan*. Sa`adi uses five epithets in order to delineate the people with superior intellectual ability in his stories: 1. Saheb Ferasat (فراست صاحب, 2. Shukh dideh (ضْخ یذٍ), 3. Dana & Aghel (عاقل و دان), 4. Kheradmand (خردمند), 5. Hakim (حکیم). In the next section, each of these concepts will be investigated and the key examples of stories that most exemplify the qualities will be represented.

4.1 Saheb Ferasat;  فراست صاحب / sɒheb færnsæ /

The Dehkhoda dictionary, which is the most extensive dictionary of the Persian language, defines *Ferasat* as: understanding, perception, intelligence, and wisdom and the ability to discover what is likely to happen based on the situation and the appearance of people.

*Saheb Ferasat* means to have the quality of *Ferasat*. There are five stories in *The Gulistan* that describe this concept. Table 4.1 shows the frequency of the themes in these five stories that delineate *Saheb Ferasat* people in *The Gulistan*. In the following section, I will describe the qualities that are related to *Ferasat* in detail.
### Table 4.1 Themes for Ferasat in The Gulistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Story number</th>
<th>Themes (English script)</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Qualities (Persian script)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 1</td>
<td>Teenager</td>
<td></td>
<td>نوجوانی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #5, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #6, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #19, chapter 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 1</td>
<td>Inborn</td>
<td></td>
<td>ناشی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #5, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 1</td>
<td>Foresight</td>
<td></td>
<td>درون‌بینی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #5, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #6, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #47, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #19, chapter 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 1</td>
<td>Courage and bravery acts</td>
<td>Social courage and bravery</td>
<td>شجاعت و جسارت اجتماعی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #47, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #19, chapter 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 1</td>
<td>Courage and bravery in wars</td>
<td></td>
<td>شجاعت و جسارت در جنگ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 1</td>
<td>Speaking habits</td>
<td>Engage in witty repartee</td>
<td>حاضر جوابی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #5, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #6, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #47, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #19, chapter 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 1</td>
<td>Short statured</td>
<td></td>
<td>ریز جهان</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #5, chapter 1</td>
<td>Miraculous</td>
<td></td>
<td>اهمیل باند</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. A *Saheb Ferasat person is a very young person*. There are five people who have this quality in these stories. In three of these stories Sa`adi employed the phrases “the son of the king” (which is translated as prince in English text), “The son of the military officer”, and “The hermit’s son” to introduce these people. In Sa`adi’s time people used such words to describe young people who are not older than eighteen years (Dr. Propitious, Interview, February 28th, 2013). In the forth story, Sa`adi represents “Majnun” as a *Saheb Ferasat* person. Majnun is the famous semi-historical
character in the Iranian canons. His real name was Qays and he felt in love with Leyli when they were schoolchildren. Leyli’s father didn’t allow them to be together. Hence, Qays became crazy about her and that is why he is later given the name Majnun by his community, which means stuck-moon. Although the stories do not tell us about his exact age, they promise that he was still school-age boy. As opposed to these four Saheb Ferasat people, we cannot recognize the last person’s age range. Based on the fact that the ages of four Saheb Ferasat people (out of five) are recognizable and all of these people are teenagers, we can come to the conclusion that a Saheb Ferasat person is young and the epithet has been used to describe teenagers.

2. Ferasat is an inborn quality and a Saheb Ferasat person has had it naturally since his birth. Ferasat cannot be taught (Dr. Propitious, Interview, February 28th, 2013). Moreover, as mentioned above a Saheb Ferasat person is a teenager. Hence, he has not achieved Ferasat through experience. Furthermore, in one of the stories, Sa`adi characterizes the son of a military officer as a Saheb Ferasat person. Sa`adi begins the story with this sentence:

   I saw at the palace-gate of Oglimish the son of a military officer who was endued with marvelous intellect, penetration, perception and Ferasat; also the signs of future greatness manifested themselves on his forehead whilst yet a small boy (story # 5, chapter 1)

Sa`adi argues that the son has these qualities since he was khord (خورد) which refers to a very young child. As this boy has had Ferasat since he was a very young, he must not have achieved it through education or experience. Dr. Propitious also confirmed
that *Ferasat* is inborn quality and it is not teachable and cannot gained through experience or education (Dr. Propitious, Interview, February 28th, 2013).

3. People with *Ferasat* can discover what other people think and what is going to happen. It is important to realize that this is not a divine or magical quality. *Saheb Ferasat* people find out what people think based on scrutinizing and analyzing their faces and expressions. The following story illustrates this quality in *Saheb Ferasat* people:

   *I have heard that a royal prince of short stature and mean presence, whose brothers were tall and good-looking, once saw his father glancing on him with aversion and contempt but he had the Ferasat to guess the meaning and said: ‘O father, a puny intelligent fellow is better than a tall ignorant man, neither is everything bigger in stature higher in price. A sheep is nice to eat and an elephant is carrion.’* (Story # 3, chapter 1)

   In this story the prince has the shrewdness and penetration to guess the meaning of his father’s glancing. In fact, he discovered what his father thought, although his father had never talked about his idea. There are two more stories that show *Saheb Ferasat* people have foresight.

   *A king was casting a glance of contempt upon a company of dervishes and one of them, understanding by his Ferasat the meaning of it, said: ‘O king, in this world we are inferior to thee in dignity but more happy in life. In death we are equal and in the resurrection superior to thee.’* (Story # 47, chapter 2)
And the final example is story number 19 of chapter 5

A king of the Arabs, having been informed of the relations subsisting between Leyli and Majnun, with an account of the latter’s insanity, to the effect that he had in spite of his great accomplishments and eloquence, chosen to roam about in the desert and to let go the reins of self-control from his hands; he ordered him to be brought to his presence, and this having been done, he began to reprove him and to ask him what defect he had discovered in the nobility of the human soul that he adopted the habits of beasts and abandoned the society of mankind. Mejnun replied:

‘Many friends have blamed me for loving her.

Will they not see her one day and understand my excuse?’

Would that those who are reproving me

Could see thy face, O ravisher of hearts,

That instead of a lemon in thy presence

They might heedlessly cut their hands.

That the truth may bear witness to the assertion: This is he for whose sake ye blamed me.

The king expressed a wish to see the beauty of Leyli in order to ascertain the cause of so much distress. Accordingly he ordered her to be searched for. The encampments of various Arab families having been visited, she was found, conveyed to the king and led into the courtyard of the palace. The king looked at her outward form for some time and she appeared despicable in his sight
because the meanest handmaids of his harem excelled her in beauty and attractions. Mejnun was Saheb Ferasat and understood the thoughts of the king and said: ‘It would have been necessary to look from the window of Mejnun’s eye at the beauty of Leyli when the mystery of her aspect would have been revealed to thee.’

In each of these stories, a Saheb Ferasat person could guess the thoughts of other people.

4. A Saheb Ferasat person has a lot of courage and bravery: In several stories\(^1\) Saheb Ferasat people have the courage to meet with kings try to influence them. For example, in one story Dervish tells the king “O king, in this world we are inferior to thee in dignity but more happy in life. In death we are equal and in the resurrection superior to thee.” (Story #47, chapter 2) This shows that they have great courage to tell what they think and do not afraid of king’s authorities and dictatorship. The other story that illuminates courage and bravery in Saheb Ferasat people is the story that narrates the short statured prince. Sa`adi continues the story:

\[\begin{align*}
I \text{ heard that on the said occasion the king was menaced by a powerful enemy and that when the two armies were about to encounter each other, the first who entered the battlefield was the little fellow who said:}\\
\text{‘I am not he whose back thou wilt see on the day of battle}\\
\text{But he whom thou shalt behold in dust and blood.}
\end{align*}\]

\(^1\) Story #3, chapter 1
Story #42, chapter 2
Story #19, chapter 5
Who himself fights, stakes his own life

In battle but he who flees, the blood of his army.’

After uttering these words he rushed among the troops of the enemy, slew several warriors and, returning to his father, made humble obeisance and said:

‘O thou, to whom my person appeared contemptible,

Didst not believe in the impetuosity of my valour.

A horse with slender girth is of use

On the day of battle, not a fattened ox.’ (story # 3, chapter 1)

The last story describes different kind of courage, bravery in dangerous and fighting and war situation. In the other three stories, Saheb Ferasat people are portrayed as brave and courageous people in social situation. Although two different kind of bravery are depicted in these stories, four out of five Saheb Ferasat people depicted are courageous and brave.

5. Saheb Ferasat people are eloquent and perceptive and have the ability to engage in witty repartee. In all five stories Saheb Ferasat people perceptively understand situations or people’s thoughts and instantly react to the circumstances by eloquently producing riposte. This quality can easily be seen in all of the stories I mentioned above. There is one story that reflects this quality particularly well:
An ascetic, being the guest of a king, ate less than he wished when sitting at dinner and when he rose for prayers he prolonged them more than was his wont in order to enhance the opinion entertained by the king of his piety.

When he returned to his own house, he desired the table to be laid out for eating. He had a Saheb Ferasat son who said: ‘Father, hast thou not eaten anything at the repast of the sultan?’ He replied: ‘I have not eaten anything to serve a purpose.’ The boy said: ‘Then likewise say thy prayers again as thou hast not done anything to serve that purpose.’

O thou who showest virtues on the palms of the hand

But concealest thy errors under the armpit

What wilt thou purchase, O vain-glorious fool,

On the day of distress with counterfeit silver? (Story # 6, chapter 2)

When the ascetic’s son saw that his father had refrained from eating in order to influence the king, he guessed that his father had prayed more than usual to influence the king as well. He believed that his father’s eating was pointless, as he had not eaten to satisfy his hunger and his praying was pointless because he had not prayed to satisfy God, but instead the king. He explained this in one sentence. ‘Then likewise say thy prayers again as thou hast not done anything to serve that purpose.’

Sa’adi highlights the importance of being eloquent and perceptive in Saheb Ferasat people in two couplets in the short statured prince story.

While a man says not a word

His fault and virtue are concealed.
Think not that every desert is empty.

Possibly it may contain a sleeping tiger. (Story # 5, chapter 1)

Thus, according to Sa’adi a Saheb Ferasat person can immediately react to the situation by making great speech or engaging in witty repartee.

### 4.2 Shukhdideh; دیده شوخ /ʃuʃdjde/

_The Dehkhoda_ dictionary defines _Shukhdideh_ as a rude and rogue person; however, Dr. Propitious believes that in _The Gulistan, Shukhdideh_ was used to depict gifted people who are older than teenagers but not educated (Dr. Propitious, Interview, February 28th, 2013).

Though being rude and rogue, _Shukhdideh_ are eloquent, perceptive and have social courage. As you can see in table 3, this quality has similarities to _Ferasat_ for example, like _Saheb Ferasat_ people, _Shukhdideh_ people have this quality intrinsically, and they are courageous and eloquent. There are just two stories about _Shukhdideh_ people; therefore it is difficult to elaborate in more detail features of this quality. That said, I use these stories to discuss the important features of this quality below.

### Table 4.2 Themes for Shukhdideh in _The Gulistan_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Story number</th>
<th>Themes in English</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Themes in Persian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Story #23, chapter 1</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td></td>
<td>بزگسال</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #35, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Story #23, chapter 1</td>
<td>Inborn</td>
<td></td>
<td>دانش</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #35, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Story #23, chapter 1</td>
<td>Arch humor and being rogue</td>
<td></td>
<td>شیطان</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #35, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Story number</td>
<td>Themes in English</td>
<td>Subthemes</td>
<td>Themes in Persian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2         | Story #23, chapter 1  
         Story #35, chapter 2 | Perceptive and recognizing the opportunities | نئکته نسجی و شناخت فرصت ها |
| 2         | Story #23, chapter 1  
         Story #35, chapter 2 | Speaking habits  
         Story #23, chapter 1  
         Story #35, chapter 2 | Engage in witty repartee | حاضر جوایی |
| 2         | Story #23, chapter 1  
         Story #35, chapter 2 | Social courage and bravery | Eloquent | خوش سخن |

1. *They are adults.* There are two *shukhdeh* people that are depicted in *The Gulistan*; one of these people is servants and the other is slave. This fact shows that they were adults.

2. *This quality is inborn.* These two *Shukhdeh* people are slave and servant. The fact that in Sa’adi’s time slaves and servants were usually born into servant and slave families and were not allowed to be educated, illuminates that they are not educated and they did not have outstanding experience. Accordingly, it leads us to the conclusion that *shukhdeh* people have this quality intrinsically (Dr. Propitious, Interview, February 28th, 2013).

3. *They are known for their perceptiveness, arch humor, and recognition of opportunities.* Reading the following example illuminates these features in a *Shukhdeh* person.
One of the servants of Umrulais\(^2\) had fled but some men, having been sent in pursuit, brought him back. The vizier who bore a grudge towards him desired him to be killed that the other servants may not imitate his example. He placed his head on the ground before Umrulais and said:

‘Whatever befalls my head is lawful with thy approbation. What plea can the slave advance? The sentence is the master’s.’

‘But, having been nourished by the bounty of this dynasty, I am loath that on the day of resurrection thou shouldst be punished for having shed my blood; but, if thou desirest to kill me, do so according to the provisions of the law.’

He asked: ‘How am I to interpret it?’ The slave continued: ‘Allow me to kill the vizier and then take my life in retaliation so that I may be killed justly.’

The king smiled and asked the vizier what he thought of the matter. He replied: ‘My lord, give freedom to this shukhdideh as an oblation to the tomb of thy father for fear he would bring trouble on me likewise. (Story # 23, Chapter 1)

In the story, the servant cleverly recognized that killing him is the vizier’s request and not the king’s desire. Hence, he saw a possibility for being absolved. He found that making a clever funny argument about killing the vizier is a great opportunity. Dr. Propitious emphasizes that being arch is very important feature of Shukhdideh people.

4. Like Saheb Ferasat people, Shukhdideh people are eloquent and they have the ability to engage in witty repartee. This story clarifies the quality in Shukhdideh people.

\(^2\) Umrulais the 2\(^{nd}\) Sultan of the Saffaride dynasty reigned A. H. 267, A. D. 880.
In conformity with the above sentiments an affair of importance emerged to a padshah, who thereon vowed that, if it terminated according to his wishes, he would present devotees with a certain sum of money. His wish having been fulfilled, it became necessary to keep his promise. Accordingly he gave a purse of dirhems to one of his confidential servants to distribute it among recluses. It is related that the slave was intelligent and shrewd. He walked about all day and returning at nightfall, kissed the dirhems and deposited them before the king with the remark that he had not found any devotees. The king rejoined: ‘What nonsense is this? As far as I know there are four hundred devotees in this town. He said: ‘Lord of the world, who is a devotee does not accept money and who accepts it is not a devotee.’ The king smiled and said to his courtiers: ‘Despite of my wishing to do good to this class of worshippers of God, this Shukhdideh bears them enmity and thwarts my wish but truth is on his side.’

If a devotee has taken dirhems and dinars

Find another who is more a devotee than he. (Story # 35, chapter 2)

This Shukhdideh person perceptively understood that a devotee person does not accept money. He disobeyed the dictate of the king which was unforgiveable. However, he made witty repartee as an apologia for his contumacy.

5. Shukhdideh people have social courage and bravery. In Sa’adi time slaves and servants did not have the right to express their ideas. Their only duty was to obey
orders. These two Shukhdideh people, who were servant and slave, not only had the
courage to have an argument but also the one who they discussed with were the kings.

Shukhdideh people are not educated and, they do not obtain their giftedness
from experience; however, they have the ability to recognize the opportunities and
use them. Moreover, they are arch, perceptive, and eloquent.

4.3 Dana and Aghel; عاقل و دانا/damn & agel/
Aghel and dana are two terms that are used in The Gulistan to depict people with high
intellectual ability. The Persian word Aghl (ægl) refers to intellectual ability and Aghel means
a person who has considerable intellectual ability. Dana means a person who knows. A deep
and thorough investigation of the The Gulistan’s stories illuminates that Dana is used with
the same meaning as Aghel (Dr. Propitious, Interview, February 28th, 2013). They both
depict that people have above average intellectual ability. The people with good nature can
obtain this quality extrinsically through experience and education. Aghel and Dana people
can recognize the opportunities and use them (see table 4). There are more features for this
quality; however, I will just explain two important features that better elucidate the quality.
Some of the qualities will be described in the Kheradmand section, as they are more
emphasized in stories about Kheradmand people.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Story numbers</th>
<th>Themes in English</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Themes in Persian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4         | Story #4, chapter 1  
Story #21, chapter 1  
Story #35, chapter 2  
Maxim #1, chapter 8  
Maxim #56, chapter 8 | Above average | Their intellectual abilities are higher above average | عقلی عظمی بالاتری از سایر مردم |
| 2         | Maxim #54, chapter 8  
Maxim #56, chapter 8 | Being Aghel & Dana is dignity | | عقل و دانا بودن عزت است |
| 3         | Story #3, chapter 1  
Story #5, chapter 4  
Story #2, chapter 6  
Story #1, chapter 7  
Admonition #16, chapter 8  
Maxim #37, chapter 8  
Maxim #56, chapter 8 | Compared with foolish people | | با ندان مقایسه شده |
| 1         | Story #4, chapter 1  
Story #2, chapter 6  
Story #1, chapter 7 | Can be obtained through education | | اکتساب است |
| 1         | Story #21, chapter 1 | When an opportunity comes, they can see it and use it | | شناخت و استفاده از فرصت ها |
| 1         | Maxim #56, chapter 8 | Avoiding fellowship with stupid people | | اجتناب از هم صحبتی با نانان |
| 1         | Maxim #37, chapter 8 | Silent | | خاموشی |
| 1         | Story #35, chapter 2 | Silent | | نکته سنج |
| 1         | Maxim #32, chapter 8 | Moderate, mild | | تعادل |
| 1         | Maxim #32, chapter 8 | Do not arguing with foolish men | | با ندان یکی به دو نمیکنند |
| 1         | Maxim #32, chapter 8 | Not being contentious | | سلیقه جو نیست |
1. *Aghel & Dana people’s intellectual abilities are higher above average and Being Aghel and Dana is dignity.* For example, in the following maxim people ask an *Aghel* person a question, which means other people know *Aghel* people are people with the ability to solve others’ problems and answer their questions.

*An Aghel, having been asked who is lucky and who is not, replied: ‘He is lucky who has eaten and sowed but he is unlucky who has died and not enjoyed.’* (Maxim #1, chapter 8)

In maxim 56 of this chapter, Sa’adi asks a *Dana* person to give him advice. Again, *Dana* person is seen as a person who understands matters better than other people and his advice is worthy.

Moreover, according to Maxim 56 of chapter 8, being *Dana and Aghel* is an honor.

*Ask what thou knowest not; for the trouble of asking Will indicate to thee the way to the dignity of being Dana.*
To highlight the qualities of Dana and Aghel people, Sa’adi compares them with foolish and “stupid” people in 7 stories out of 13. For example in a very famous maxim Sa’adi argues that:

*Musk is known by its perfume and not by what the druggist says. A Dana is silent like the perfumer’s casket but displays accomplishments, whilst an ignoramus is loud-voiced and intrinsically empty like a war-drum.* (Maxim #37, chapter 8)

This maxim is in school books and all Iranian students read it. Besides, the first sentence of this maxim is known as a proverb.

2. *Being Dana and Aghel is an experience and age related quality and one with good nature can become Aghel and Dana.* Sa’adi narrates that ‘*A vizier who had a stupid son gave him in charge of a scholar to instruct him and if possible to make him Aghel’* (story # 1, chapter 7). This example illuminates that being Aghel is an extrinsic quality and it is possible to make someone Aghel through education. Along with education, age is an important factor in being Aghel and Dana. In another story Sa’adi says that ‘*aged men spend their lives according to Aghel and propriety; not according to the impulses of folly and youth.*’ Although being Aghel and Dana is an extrinsic quality, Sa’adi believes that nature plays a crucial role in becoming Aghel and Dana. I will describe how Sa’adi meets the ontological tension (being versus doing/becoming) in the next section that describes Kherdmand people.
4.4 Kheradmand; خردمند / xerædmænd/

Kherad, a Persian word, literally translates as ‘wisdom’; kherdmand or Ahle kherad are the words equated with wise.

These words appear in The Gulistan 35 times in 29 different stories. In six stories, Kheradmand people make speech and the rest of stories delineate the essential qualities of Kheradmand people. Sa’adi sets up a complex set of themes through these stories, which describe the meaning of Kheradmand. Some of the themes are: extrinsic disposition, sophisticated and experience, perfect for government positions, speaking habits, and self control. Table 3 shows the themes and their frequency.

**Table 4.4 Themes for Kheradmand in The Gulistan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Story numbers</th>
<th>Themes in English</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Themes in Persian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #4, chapter 1</td>
<td>Extrinsic disposition</td>
<td>Can be obtained through education</td>
<td>اکتسابی است</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #15, chapter 1</td>
<td>It is disposition</td>
<td></td>
<td>خوی است</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Story #1, chapter 1</td>
<td>Sophistication and experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>پختگی و تجربه</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #4, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #15, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #16, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #36, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #5, chapter 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Admonition #6, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Admonition #10, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Perfect for government positions</td>
<td>مناسب برای دولتمردی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Story #15, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Free-spirited</td>
<td>ازادگی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #16, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #36, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Admonition #10, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Story numbers</td>
<td>Themes in English</td>
<td>Subthemes</td>
<td>Themes in Persian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Speaking habits</td>
<td>Speaks timely</td>
<td>سخن به‌جا گفتن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #7, chapter 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Speaking perceptively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #5, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Story #1, chapter 1</td>
<td>Makes wise speech</td>
<td></td>
<td>سخن حکیمانه</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #5, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>می‌گوید</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #36, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #27, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #24, chapter 1</td>
<td>Can see fundamental/underlying/root cause</td>
<td></td>
<td>علت اصلی را می‌بیند</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Story #34, chapter 1</td>
<td>Self control</td>
<td>Restraint</td>
<td>خوشبختی‌داری</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #10, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #29, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Story #34, chapter 1</td>
<td>Having accurate self-consciousness</td>
<td></td>
<td>اندازه‌‌گیری را دانستن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #41, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #10, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #29, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #5, chapter 4</td>
<td>Soft</td>
<td></td>
<td>نرم‌خویی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #5, chapter 4</td>
<td>Tolerance, Level-headed</td>
<td></td>
<td>تحمل و مدارا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Story #5, chapter 4</td>
<td>Do not arguing with foolish men</td>
<td></td>
<td>با نادان یکی به دو نمی‌کنند</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #35, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #5, chapter 4</td>
<td>Not being contentious</td>
<td></td>
<td>مستزیج نیست</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Maxim #10, chapter 8</td>
<td>Moderate, mild</td>
<td></td>
<td>متواضع</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Story #1, chapter 1</td>
<td>Fore-thought</td>
<td></td>
<td>دور اندیشی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #4, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #16, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Admonition #15, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #59, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #16, chapter 1</td>
<td>Cautious</td>
<td></td>
<td>محافظ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #36, chapter 1</td>
<td>Contentment</td>
<td></td>
<td>قناعت</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #3, chapter 4</td>
<td>Humility</td>
<td></td>
<td>فروتنی</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The below mentioned themes are the nub of the stories.
1. *Kheradmand people have particular disposition and a person with good nature can become Kheradmand through education.* According to Sa’adi, *Kheradmand* people have particular characteristic attitudes. Sa’adi narrates the story of a band of Arab brigands that captured by king’s army. This story illustrates that *Kheradmand* people have particular disposition and also shows the importance of nature in gaining wisdom. After capturing the band, the King ordered all of them to be slain. However, there was a youth among them and one of the viziers (minister) asks the king not to kill him as he is so young and he can change through education. *The king, being displeased with his request, answered:*

> ‘He whose foundation is bad will not take instruction from the good,

> To educate unworthy persons is like throwing nuts on a cupola.

> ‘It is preferable to extirpate the race and offspring of these people and better to dig up their roots and foundations, because it is not the part of *Kheradmand* men to extinguish fire and to leave burning coals or to kill a viper and leave its young ones....

*The vizier heard these sentiments, approved of them nolens volens, praised the opinion of the king and said:* ‘What my lord has uttered is the very truth itself because if the boy had been brought up in the company of those wicked men, he would have become one of themselves. But your slave hopes that he will, in the society of pious men, profit by education and will acquire the disposition of (kherdamand) Kheradmand persons. Being yet a child the rebellious and perverse temper of that band has not yet taken hold of his nature and there is
a tradition of the prophet that every infant is born with an inclination for Islam but his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Majusi.’

Finally, the king said: ‘I grant the request although I disapprove of it.’

In short, the vizier brought up the boy delicately, with every comfort, and kept masters to educate him, till they had taught him to address persons in elegant language as well as to reply and he had acquired every accomplishment. One day the vizier hinted at his talents in the presence of the king, asserting that the instructions of (kherdamand) Kheradmand men had taken effect upon the boy and had expelled his previous ignorance from his nature. The king smiled at these words and said:

‘At last a wolf’s whelp will be a wolf

Although he may grow up with a man.’

After two years had elapsed a band of robbers in the locality joined him, tied the knot of friendship and, when the opportunity presented itself, he killed the vizier with his son, took away untold wealth and succeeded to the position of his own father in the robber-cave where he established himself. The king, informed of the event, took the finger of amazement between his teeth and said:

‘How can a man fabricate a good sword of bad iron?

O sage, who is nobody becomes not somebody by education.

The rain, in the beneficence of whose nature there is no flaw,

Will cause tulips to grow in a garden and weeds in bad soil.
Saline earth will not produce hyacinths.

Throw not away thy seeds or work thereon.

To do good to wicked persons is like

Doing evil to good men.’ (Story# 4, chapter 1)

This is the key story that demonstrates how a kheradmand person is depicted in The Gulistan. The first subtlety of this story is that kheradmand people have a special disposition. When the vizier was trying to persuade the king to shed the blood of the youth, he said ‘But your slave hopes that he will, in the society of pious men, profit by education and will acquire the disposition of Kheradmand persons.’ According to this story, kheradmand people have particular disposition; however, the vizier’s argument has another notable matter: is it possible to achieve this disposition through education and experience or it is intrinsic?

Although at first glance one might think that this story has deeply pessimistic view of acquiring wisdom through education, rigorous view of the story illuminates that a person’s nature is regarded as essential for being Kheradmand. At the end of the story the king says ‘How can a man fabricate a good sword of bad iron? O sage, who is nobody becomes not somebody by education. The rain, in the beneficence of whose nature there is no flaw, will cause tulips to grow in a garden and weeds in bad soil.’ The king does not imply that it is impossible to educate a person to become Kheradmand, he argues that this boy is ill-natured and educating such a person is unattainable goal.
Indeed, *The Gulistan* has one chapter on the effects of education. These stories reveal that one can obtain wisdom through education if one has an *originally receptive nature*. The following story, is the notable example of what Sa’adi sees as the effects of education.

*A vizier who had a stupid son gave him in charge of a scholar to instruct him and if possible to make him intelligent. Having been some time under instruction but ineffectually, the learned man sent one to his father with the words: ‘The boy is not becoming intelligent and has made a fool of me.’*

*When a nature is originally receptive
Instruction will take effect thereon.
No kind of polishing will improve iron
Whose essence is originally bad.* (Story# 1, chapter 7)

The quote ‘*When a nature is originally receptive, instruction will take effect thereon*’ illuminates that Sa’adi believes in education; however, the next quote ‘*No kind of polishing will improve iron whose essence is originally bad*’ supports the idea that nature is major determinant of being educable. Likewise, the sixth story of this chapter says:

*A king entrusted a tutor with the care of his son, saying: ‘This is thy son.
Educate him as if he were one of thy own children.’ He kept the prince for some years and strove to instruct him but could effect nothing, whilst the sons of the tutor made the greatest progress in accomplishments and eloquence.
The king reproved and threatened the learned man with punishment, telling*
him that he had acted contrary to his promise and had been unfaithful. He replied: ‘O king, the instruction is the same but the natures are different.’

Although both silver and gold come from stones

All stones do not contain silver and gold.

Canopus is shining upon the whole world

But produces in some places sack-leather and in others adim\(^3\).

In the same way, the learned man emphasizes the importance of nature. He proposes that the same education does not have the same effect on people with different natures. Finally, in the third story of this chapter, Sa’adi underscores the importance of education. He says:

*He whom thou hast not punished when a child*

*Will not prosper when he becomes a man.*

Sa’adi also emphasizes the importance of education and nature both in Maxim 36:

*Capacity without education is deplorable and education without capacity is thrown away.*

Consequently, Sa’adi believes that *kheradmand* people have their own disposition. He also argues that a person can achieve that disposition through education, provided that s/he has good nature.

---

\(^3\) Adim is the name of the beautiful and tanned leather of Yemen (Arabia Felix), where the hot season, when Canopus is highest, is supposed to exert beneficent influence upon the leather.
2. *Experience and age is seen as the other key component of Kherdmand.* Having experience and being sophisticate are essential to *Kherdmand.* Story number fifteen of the first chapter is a key story that exemplifies this quality:

*A vizier, who had been removed from his post, entered the circle of dervishes and the blessing of their society took such effect upon him that he became contented in his mind. When the king was again favorably disposed towards him and ordered him to resume his office, he refused and said: ‘Retirement is better than occupation for Kheradmand man.’...* The king said: ‘Verily we stand in need of a man of efficient Kheradmand man who is able to carry on the administration of the government.’ He replied: ‘It is a sign of efficient wisdom not to engage in such matters.’

In this story, the man acquires wisdom from his personal experience. As in this special case, he finds that *retirement is better than occupation* from the personal experience of being occupied and retired. In the continuation of the story he tells a fable to make his argument powerful:

*A donkey, having been asked for what salary he had elected to attend upon the lion, replied: ‘That I may consume the remnants of his prey and live in safety from my enemies by taking refuge under his bravery.’* Being again asked that, as he had entered into the shadow of the lion’s protection and gratefully acknowledged his beneficence, why he had not joined the circle of intimacy so as to be accounted one of his favorite servants, he replied: ‘I am in the same way also not safe of his bravery.’
Although experience is requisite quality for *kheradmand* people, they are not obliged to experience everything by themselves; wisdom could also be achieved from other’s experience. For example, the story 36 of the chapter one narrates the story with the similar concept:

*There were two brothers: one of them in the service of the king and the other gaining his livelihood by the effort of his arm. The wealthy man once asked his destitute brother why he did not serve the sultan in order to be delivered from the hardship of laboring. He replied: ‘Why laborest thou not to be delivered from the baseness of service because Kheradmand men have said that it is better to eat barley bread and to sit than to gird oneself with a golden belt and to stand in service?’*

Like the vizier, the *Kheradmand* brother asserts that it is not wise to work for kings. However, he does not gain that from his personal experience but he knows that from other’s experience. Indeed, most of *Kheradmand* people portrayed by Sa`adi gain wisdom by learning from other’s experience.

Although wisdom can be obtained from experience and through the education, Sa`adi believes that it is not easy to become *Kheradmand*. One must try hard to experience things in order to learn from them. Maxim 21 in the final chapter of *The Gulistan* Says:

*Whatever takes place quickly is not permanent.*

*I have heard that eastern loam is made*

*In forty years into a porcelain cup.*
A hundred are daily made in Baghdad.

Hence thou seest also their price is vile.

A little fowl issues from the egg and seeks food

Whilst man’s progeny has no knowledge, sense or discernment.

Nevertheless the former attains nothing when grown up

Whilst the latter surpasses all beings in dignity and excellence.

Glass is everywhere, and therefore of no account,

But a ruby difficult to get, and therefore precious.

Along with hardship, time is the key determinant of being *Kheradmand*. He argues that *whatever takes place quickly is not permanent*, and it is not valuable. According to Sa`adi meritorious experience can hardly be achieved during the life. As it can be seen in the maxim, Sa`adi believes that *man’s progeny has no knowledge, sense or discernment*. Actually all *Kheradmand* people in *The Gulistan* are old or middle-aged except for one young *Kheradmand* man in the third story of chapter four. Indeed, *The Gulistan* employs the phrase “the folly of youth” which refers to the mistakes youth make as a result of their lack of experience.

3. *Kheradmand* people are perfect for government positions; however, they usually avoid themat as they are free spirited and they are aware of kings’ fickle temper.

From the twelve narrated characters in *The Gulistan* three are viziers, three are kings, one is Galenus, the other is Jacob (the prophet), and one is Sa`adi himself. Sa`adi does not talk about others characters’ positions and occupations. In fifth maxim of chapter eight Sa`adi argues:
The country is adorned by Kheradmand men and the religion by virtuous men.

Kings stand more in need of the advice of Kheradmand men than Kheradmand men of the proximity of kings.

*If thou wilt listen to advice, king,*

*There is none better in all books than this:*

*‘Entrust a business to a Kheradmand man* 

*Although it may not be his occupation.’* (Admonition #10, chapter 8)

As it is obvious in above couplets, Sa’adi believes that *kheradmand* people are perfect for government positions. However, he also claims that they do not like such positions. Along with last couplets of this maxim, in Story 1 with two brothers Sa’adi argues that ‘*Kheradmand men have said that it is better to eat barley bread and to sit than to gird oneself with a golden belt and to stand in service*’ and the reason is:

*To leaven mortar of quicklime with the hand*

*Is better than to hold them on the breast before the king.*

*My precious life was spent in considering*

*What I am to eat in summer and wear in winter.*

*O ignoble belly, be satisfied with one bread*

*Rather than to bend the back in service.*

The first reason is that *Kheradmand* people are free-spirited; they prefer to work hard rather than being at kings’ beck and call. The other reason that they are not interested in working for kings is more rational and it is because they learn from experiences *that it is necessary to*
be on guard of the fickle temper of kings because sometimes they are displeased with
politeness and at others they bestow robes of honor for rudeness (Story 15, chapter 1).

Stories 15 and 16 in chapter one illuminate this experience. In the sixteenth story of chapter
one

Sa’adi, as a kheradmand person, gives his friend an advice:

‘Dear friend! Employment by a king consists of two parts, namely, the hope for bread
and the danger of life, but it is against the opinion of Kheradmand men to incur this
danger for that hope.’

Although The Gulistan suggests that Kheradmand men should occupy key positions
in government, it says that they usually avoid it for rational and spiritual reasons.

4. One of main distinguishing features of Kheradmand people is their habits of
speaking. They are highly articulate speakers who speak timely and perceptively and
make wise speeches. In introduction of The Gulistan, Sa`adi emphasizes the
importance of speaking.

O Kheradmand man what is the tongue in the mouth?

It is the key to the treasure-door of a virtuous man.

When the door is closed how can one know

Whether he is a seller of jewels or a hawker?

Sa`di argues that the mouth is the treasure-door of a Kheradmand man’s knowledge
and virtues and the tongue is the key of this door. In other words, speaking will
unlock the door and the wisdom of a person can be seen while speaking. In the Maxim 59 of last chapter Sa`adi underlines the importance of the speech content.

\[\text{Until thou knowest thy words to be perfectly suitable}\]

\[\text{Thou must not open thy mouth in speech.}\]

\[\text{If thou speakest truth and remainest in captivity,}\]

\[\text{It is better than that thy mendacity deliver thee therefrom.}\]

In this piece of poem Sa’adi ingeminates that do not speak unless you want to say something worthy. In the third story of chapter four (on the advantageous of silence) Sa’adi narrates that:

\[\text{A Kheradmand youth possessed an abundant share of accomplishments and discreet behavior so that he was allowed to sit in assemblies of learned men but he refrained from conversing with them. His father once asked him why he did not likewise speak on subjects he was acquainted with. He replied: ‘I fear I may be asked what I do not know and be put to shame.’}\]

Indeed, speaking timely is overemphasized in several stories in this book. In addition to the story of kheradmand youth, this piece of poem that is written in the introduction of this book reveals the importance of speaking at the proper time.

\[\text{Although Kheradmand men consider silence civil,}\]

\[\text{It is better for thee to speak at the proper time.}\]

\[\text{Two things betoken levity of intellect: to remain mute When it is proper to speak and to talk when silence is required.}\]
Sa’adi describes a *Kheradmand* man as a person who prizes the silence as well as speaking. He does not speak when he does not have information; he recognizes when it is the proper time to speak and when it is not. There is another quote that reflects this feature, the seventh story of chapter four:

*Words have a head, O Kheradmand man, and a tail.*

*Do not insert thy words between words of others.*

*The possessor of deliberation, intelligence and shrewdness*

*Does not say a word till he sees silence.*

In fact, Sa’adi believes that a *kheradmand* person only speaks at the proper time and at that time, s/he says something *Kheradmand*. In seven stories, *kheradmand* people make wise and perceptive speech. Consequently, Sa’adi believes that *kheradmand* people can be identified by their speaking habits.

5. *A kheradmand person is able to see the fundamental, underlying, or root cause of something rather than symptoms.* There is a couplet in the twenty fourth story of chapter one that reveals this quality.

*Although the arrow is shot from the bow*

*Kheradmand men look at the archer.*

A *Kheradmand* man recognizes that the cause of the shot is not bow, even if s/he cannot see the archer. He can distinguish the root cause of the event.

6. *Kheradmand people are self-controlled, level-headed, soft and tolerant; they also have accurate self-consciousness and know their own intellectual and physical*
abilities. Each couplet of the following story describes one of these qualities. I will investigate all of the notions in this poem; however, I will refer to some other stories in between and come back to the long poem again.

Galenus saw a fool hanging on with his hands to the collar of a learned man and insulting him, whereon he said: ‘If he were learned he would not have come to this pass with an ignorant man.’

Two Aghel men do not contend and quarrel

Nor does a Dana fight with a contemptible fellow.

If an ignorant man in his rudeness speaks harshly

A Kheradmand man tenderly reconciles his heart.

Two pious men keep a hair between them untorn

And so does a mild with a headstrong man.

If however both sides are fools

If there be a chain they will snap it.

An ill-humored man insulted someone.

He bore it and replied: ‘O man of happy issue,

I am worse than thou canst say that I am

Because I know thou are not aware of my faults as I am. (Story# 5, chapter 4)

---

4 It is worthy to mention that although Sa`adi uses pious to describe these two men who keep a hair between them, Dr. Propitious believe that here he means wise men.
According to the poem, first, *Kheradmand* men do not argue with ignorant people. Sa’adi ingeminates this quality in another maxim:

*Be not astonished when a Kheradmand man ceases to speak in company of vile persons, since the melody of a harp cannot overcome the noise of a drum and the perfume of ambergris must succumb to the stench of rotten garlic.*

(Maxim# 35, chapter 8)

*Kheradmand* people are tolerant towards ignorant people and are not contentious, as they know that it is inefficacious. The second quality of *kheradmand* people, which is portrayed in the long poem, is that they people are so level-headed, as in the third couplet Sa’adi uses the metaphor ‘keep a hair between them untorn’. A hair is very susceptible to stretching and if two people want to keep it unharmed between them, they must move very carefully. Since, these people must be tolerant to bear movement of a person who is on the other side of the hair and level-headed to make right decision about that movement. According to the long poem, Sa’adi believes that a *Kheradmand* man can control his anger; he shows restraint. The following couplets also show the importance of this quality for being *Kheradmand*.

*He is not reputed a man by the Kheradmand*

*Who contends with a furious elephant*

*But he is a man in reality*

*Who when angry speaks not idle words.* (Story# 34, chapter 1)

The second couplet is another example that shows a *Kheradmand* man must control himself while he is angry. However, the first couplet refers to another quality of
Kheradmand men as well: a Kheradmand man does not fight with a person who is more powerful than him, as he knows himself and his limitations. In another maxim Sa’adi emphasizes:

*To strike one’s fist on a lion, and to grasp the sharp edge of a sword with the hand, is not the part of a Kheradmand man.* (Maxim# 29, chapter 8)

It *is not the part of a Kheradmand man*, as you will definitely hurt yourself by doing it. A Kheradmand man knows his ability and does not engage in the activity that he does not possess the ability to do it.

Self-consciousness in Kheradmand people is illuminated in long poem’s last couplet in a different way. In this story, a Kheradmand man was insulted by ill-humored person. The Kheradmand man did not become angry as he was so tolerant. He just replied ‘*I am worse than thou canst say that I am, because I know thou are not aware of my faults as I am.*’ This quote shows that together with being tolerant, kheradmand people are conscious about themselves, they are aware of their faults and deficiencies.

Although kheradmand people are soft and tolerant, they are not as soft that people can take advantage of them. In a maxim Sa’adi says that:

*A Kheradmand man uses neither severity to excess
Nor mildness; for it lessens his authority.

He neither exalts himself too much
Nor exposes himself at once to contempt.* (Maxim# 10, chapter 8)

These people are mild and moderate, they do not easily get angry but they are not that extreme that people can take advantage of them. They become angry and react when
it is needed. To sum up, kheradmand people are tolerant, level-headed. They also have accurate self-consciousness.

7. Kheradmand people have forethought; they can imagine what is likely to happen in the future, based on experience, and consider this when planning for the future. In the story of Arab bands, the king said ‘it is not the part of Kheradmand men to extinguish fire and to leave burning coals or to kill a viper and leave its young ones.’ (Story #4, chapter 1) In other words, if you leave the burning coals, after awhile it will catch fire and the fire will spread. Since, a Kheradmand man’s thoughtful anticipation of future event prevents him from leaving the coal burning; the same for the young viper, if they leave him alive he will grow up and become as dangerous. Kheradmand men give advanced consideration and deliberation to possible causes and effects. They achieve this ability based on their experiences. Sa’adi narrates that of one of his friends wished to work for the king and he advised him that ‘Dear friend! Employment by a king consists of two parts, namely, the hope for bread and the danger of life, but it is against the opinion of intelligent men to incur this danger for that hope.’ (Story #16, chapter 1) Sa’adi as a Kheradmand person sees that although it is tempting to work for king and become rich, it poses death threats, as ‘that it is necessary to be on guard of the fickle temper of padshahs because sometimes they are displeased with politeness and at others they bestow robes of honor for rudeness’ (Story #15, chapter 1); it’s not worth the risk.

4.5 Hakim; حکیم /hækim/
I chose the word sage as an English equivalent of Hakim. Hakim has several meanings in Persian such as sage, physician, and dream interpreter. Sa’adi uses three definitions of Hakim
in *The Gulistan*. Hakim has been repeated 36 times in *The Gulistan*, 30 times as sage, 4 times as physician, one time as epithet of God, and one time as a person who interprets dreams. I investigated the 30 times that it means Sage.

**Table 4.5 Themes for Hakim in The Gulistan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Story numbers</th>
<th>Themes in English</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Themes in Persian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Very rare quality</td>
<td></td>
<td>تعداد بسیار کمی به ان مرحله دست پیدا می‌کند.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #19, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #38, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #21, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Admonition #21, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Being scholar</td>
<td></td>
<td>دانشمند است.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #7, chapter 1</td>
<td>Amazing intellectual ability</td>
<td>Solving complex and manifold problems</td>
<td>حل مسائل سخت و پیچیده.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #49, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #7, chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #22, chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Story #13, chapter 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>understanding interrelations</td>
<td>درک روابط مفاهیم انگشته.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #81, chapter 8</td>
<td>between abstract concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #7, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>تجربه دیگران</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #8, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #15, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #16, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #16, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #20, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Story #7, chapter 1</td>
<td>Other’s experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #8, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #15, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #16, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #16, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #20, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #21, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #42, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #8, chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #11, chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #22, chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #9, chapter 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #13, chapter 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #18, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #81, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

85
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Story numbers</th>
<th>Themes in English</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Themes in Persian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Story #38, chapter 1</td>
<td>Speaking habits</td>
<td>Speaks just when it is necessary</td>
<td>فقط وقتی صحبت که که از حرف نزدیک‌شده‌های حاصل شود</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #4, chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>سخن‌ریزی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #10, chapter 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #13, chapter 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
<td>Making wise speech</td>
<td></td>
<td>سخن حکیمانه</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #7, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #8, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #15, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #16, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #16, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #19, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #20, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #21, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #21, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #42, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #4, chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #11, chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #11, chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #22, chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #22, chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #9, chapter 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #13, chapter 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #18, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #18, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #32, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Story #4, chapter 3</td>
<td>Contentment</td>
<td></td>
<td>قناعت</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #7, chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #8, chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #18, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxim #32, chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Story #15, chapter 1</td>
<td>Honorable and graceful life</td>
<td>Having honorable life</td>
<td>رضایت با عزت</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #11, chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #15, chapter 1</td>
<td>Dignity and gracefulness</td>
<td></td>
<td>وقائی داشتن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Story #20, chapter 1</td>
<td>Being advantageous for other people</td>
<td></td>
<td>نفع داشتن برای مردم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #49, chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Story #7, chapter 3</td>
<td>Perceptive</td>
<td></td>
<td>نکته نشی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #10, chapter 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #13, chapter 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Maxim #32, chapter 8</td>
<td>Moderate, mild</td>
<td></td>
<td>تعادل</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Maxim #32, chapter 8</td>
<td>Do not argue with foolish men</td>
<td></td>
<td>با نادان یکی به دو نمی‌کنند</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Story #8, chapter 1</td>
<td>Fore-thought</td>
<td></td>
<td>دوران‌شی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #20, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Story #20, chapter 1</td>
<td>Theism</td>
<td></td>
<td>خدان‌شی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story #24, chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story #24, chapter 1</td>
<td>Can see fundamental/underlying/root cause</td>
<td></td>
<td>علت اصلی را از می‌بیند</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is a close similarity between Hakim and kherdmand. However, a more profound look at how Hakim and kherdmand are portrayed in these stories shows that despite the similarities, there are delicate differences (Table 6). In this section I will discuss the distinguishing features of Hakim: it is a rare quality, Hakims are scholars, they understand interrelations between abstract concepts, they can solve complex and manifold problems, they learn from others’ experiences, they only speak when it is necessary, they subscribe to contentment and simple lifestyle, they have honorable lives, they benefit other people, and they live with dignity.

1. *It is a very rare quality and there are very few people who are deemed to be Hakim.*

The Gulistan names two people as Hakim: Hakim Loqman, Hakim Bozorgmehr. They are historical characters that are characterized for their exceptional wisdom and sagacity. It is the final level of wisdom that one can achieve and there are very few people in the history who become hakim.

2. *Hakims are scholars. In fact, all Hakims are scholar but very few are Hakim.*

Although kherdmand people are educated and learned, Hakims are experts and scholars (Propitious, Interview, 2/28/2013). Indeed, in The Gulistan there is a category of people who are deemed as scholar. These people are experts, researcher, or scientists. However, Hakim is a scholar who possesses extraordinary wisdom and some other special qualities that I will discuss below. Dr. Propitious believes that being scholar is the most important difference between Hakims and kherdmand people.

3. *Hakims can solve complex and manifold problems that other people are not able to solve. They can perceive interrelations between abstract concepts; they also see*
relations between abstract and concrete concepts. In many stories (see table 6) people ask Hakims to answer their questions or make sense of events to them. The following story exemplifies the quality.

Two dervishes travelled together. One of them, being weak, broke his fast every second night whilst the other who was strong consumed every day three meals. It happened that they were captured at the gate of a town on suspicion of being spies; whereon each of them was confined in a closet and the aperture of it walled up with mud bricks. After two weeks it became known that they were guiltless. Accordingly the doors were opened and the strong man was found to be dead whilst the weak fellow had remained alive. The people were astonished but a Hakim averred that the contrary would have been astonishing because one of them having been voracious possessed no strength to suffer hunger and perished whilst the other who was abstemious merely persevered in his habit and remained safe. (Story # 7, chapter 3)

In this story, the Hakim was the only person who could find the cause of the event.

Hakims also can use abstract concepts to describe concrete ideas to make their speech or advice more effective.

A Hakim was asked: ‘Of so many notable, high and fertile trees which God the most high has created, not one is called free, except the cypress, which bears no fruit. What is the reason of this?’ He replied: ‘Every tree has its appropriate season of fruit, so that it is sometimes flourishing therewith, and looks sometimes withered by its absence; with the cypress, however, neither is
the case, it being fresh at all times, and this is the quality of those who are free.’ (Maxim # 81, chapter 8)

4. Hakims learn from other’s experiences and the world around them; in fact, they see the world as a teacher. Like Kheradmand people Hakims learn from experiences; however, there is difference between what they learn from. Kheradmand men learn from their personal experiences and Hakims learn from others’ experience. As I mentioned before, Loqman is one of the historical people who are known as Hakim. Sa’adi narrates that

Loqman, being asked from whom he had learnt civility, replied: ‘From those who had no civility because what appeared to me unbecoming in them I refrained from doing.’ (Story # 21, chapter 2)

In this story, Loqman did not experience incivility, he just saw it in other people and learned how to be civilized. Likewise, it is narrated in the introductory of The Gulistan:

Hakim Loqman, being asked from whom he had learnt wisdom, replied:

‘From the blind, who do not take a step before trying the place.’ First move about, then stir out.

To sum up, although Hakims and Kheradmand men learn from experiences, the quality of these experiences is different. Kheradmand person, as mentioned in previous section, learns through his personal experience \(^5\) and Hakim does not need to have the experience himself.

---

\(^5\) Refer to story # 15, chapter 1
5. Hakims show other people how to see the world. As mentioned before, Hakims can solve complex and manifold problems. In many stories people asks Hakims to answer their questions or make sense of the events for them. For example:

   A sage having been asked whether liberality or bravery is better replied: ‘He who possesses liberality needs no bravery.’ (Story # 49, chapter 2)

Hakims see the world as a teacher (Number 4) and help other how to see it. They use abstract concepts to influence people better. The maxim about cypress and freedom⁶ is the great example for this argument.

6. They can use abstract ideas in order to help people to understand their advices or speeches better (f. g. Maxim # 81, chapter 8). They also see the world as a teacher and learn from it.

7. Hakims speak just when it is necessary and their silence would result in harm and damage; hence their words are always wise and powerful. Like Kheradmand people, Hakims are orators and make wise speeches. However, there is a difference between the speaking habits of these two categories. Kheradmand men speak timely and perceptively but Hakims only speak when it is crucial. Sa’adi, in this way, positions what Hakims say as wisdom.

   The Hakim begins to speak

   Or points his fingers to the dish

   When silence would be dangerous

   Or abstinence would bring on death.

⁶ Maxim # 81, chapter 8
No doubt his wisdom is in speaking

And his eating bears the fruit of health. (Story # 4, chapter3)

8. They have simple lifestyle and contentment and suggest it to other people. Likewise their speaking habits, they avoid eating until it is vital\textsuperscript{7}.

Not only they subscribe to simple lifestyle and eating little, but also they suggest such lifestyle to other people. For example Sa’adi narrates that:

\textit{One of the Hakims forbade his son to eat much because repletion keeps people ailing. The boy replied: ‘O father, it is hunger that kills. Hast thou not heard of the maxim of the ingenious that it is better to die satiated than to bear hunger?’}

\textit{He rejoined: ‘Be moderate. Eat and drink but not to excess.’} (Story # 8, chapter 3)

Another notable example is maxim 18 of chapter 8.

\textit{Ten men eat at a table but two dogs will contend for one piece of carrion. A greedy person will still be hungry with the whole world, whilst a contented man will be satisfied with one bread. Hakims have said that poverty with content is better than wealth and not abundance.}

\textit{Narrow intestines may be filled with dry bread}

\textit{But the wealth of the surface of the world will not fill a greedy eye.}

\textit{When the term of my father’s life had come to an end}

\textit{He gave me this one advice and passed away:}

\textsuperscript{7} Story # 4, chapter 3
Lust is fire, abstain therefrom,

Make not the fire of hell sharp for thee.

In that fire the burning thou wilt not be able to bear,

Quench this fire with water today.

9. They have honorable and graceful life. According to Hakims, having honorable life and good reputation is more worthy than life. In fact, they believe that it is better to die rather than be seen as dishonorable.

And Hakims have said: ‘If for instance the water of life were to be exchanged for a good reputation, no wise man would purchase it because it is preferable to die with honor than to live in disgrace.’ (Story #11, chapter, 3)

Moreover, Hakims are recommended to be graceful.

It is also said that much jocularity is an accomplishment in courtiers but a fault in sages.

Abide thou by thy dignity and gravity.

Leave sport and jocularity to courtiers. (Story # 15, chapter 1)

In fact, having graceful and honorable life is another important factor for being Hakim.

Exploring The Gulistan’s stories I found that Sa’adi portrayed five types of giftedness including: Saheb Ferasat, Shukhdideh, Aghel & Dana, Kheradmand, and Hakim. In this chapter I discussed the qualities of each type.
5 Chapter: Discussion

This study explored culturally embedded conceptions of giftedness as evidenced in the Iranian literary canon, *The Gulistan*, in order to guide the development of Iranian conceptions of giftedness, education and programming for gifted and talented students. Using a grounded theory approach, I discovered themes related to Iranian conceptions of giftedness and wisdom from *The Gulistan* and based on these themes I developed a theory. In this chapter, I will discuss a theory of how giftedness and wisdom are conceived, valued, and revered in Iranian culture based on *The Gulistan*. I will discuss this theory in relation to my literature review, particularly in terms of Dai’s tensions and cross-cultural implications for programming.

5.1 Epithets that Depict Gifted and Wise People in The Gulistan

Sa’adi delineates five epithets to describe gifted and wise people: *Saheb Ferasat*, *Shukhdideh*, *Aghel & Dana*, *Kheradmand*, and *Hakim*. Each of these epithets depicts a type of gifted people who have special features and characteristics. First, I will categorize these epithets with regards to being vs. becoming tension.

It is important to note that all depicted gifted and wise people in *The Gulistan* are men. It does not mean that there was no gifted or wise woman. In fact, Iran’s social context in Sa’adi’s time did not allow women to participate in social activities. They were not depicted in such social stories because they were not involved in social events. Moreover, as poets and writers did not encounter many women in society, they did not know much about them. Hence, they couldn’t depict women in their poems and stories (Dr. Propitious, Interview, 2/28/2013).

According to Sa’adi’s theory of giftedness, there are two types of giftedness: intrinsic and extrinsic. Sa’adi believes that *Saheb Ferasat* and *Shukhdideh* people are intrinsically
gifted. The other type of giftedness is an extrinsic quality that is acquired (Table 5.1). That means people become wise through a combination of education and life experiences. However, there is an essential precondition to being Aghel & Dana, Kheradmand, and Hakim: these people have an originally (inherently) receptive nature. The first group of people are intrinsically gifted. In other words they are born with these qualities and disposition. Saheb Ferasat people are the only young gifted people depicted in The Gulistan. Shukhdideh people are adults who have grown up without receiving any education. Although they are gifted, they are not sophisticated and their abilities are limited to being eloquent, perceptive and to have social courage. The second group (Aghel & Dana, Kheradmand, and Hakim) are adults and their qualities are age and experience related. They can obtain wisdom through experience and education. In fact, Hakims, as the rarest and wisest people, are scholars. Consequently, according to Sa’adi, giftedness is an inborn quality that can be developed through education and experience. The following section will briefly review the findings to remind readers of five themes which will be discusses.

Table 5.1 Categories for the Epithets for Gifted and Wise in The Gulistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gifted and Wise People in Gulistan</th>
<th>Extrinsic</th>
<th>Intrinsic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dana &amp; Aghel</td>
<td>Kheradmand</td>
<td>Hakim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saheb Ferasat</td>
<td>Shukhdideh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1.1 Intrinsic Giftedness

*Sa heb Ferasat* and *Shukhitedide* are two epithets that depict gifted people who have this quality intrinsically. These two types of giftedness have some similarities; however, it is important to notice the differences. I will define these epithets below.

- **Sa heb Ferasat**: *Sa heb Ferasat* people are very young; teenagers. They can understand what other people think and foresee what is going to happen in the future based on analyzing the situation. They demonstrate bravery and courage not only in social situations but also in dangerous, conflicting, and battling situations. *Sa heb Ferasat* people are eloquent, perceptive and have the ability to engage in witty repartee.

- **Shukhidedide**: *Shukhidedide* people are adults who are not educated and have the lowest-class occupation (e.g. slave or servant). They are known for their perceptiveness, arch humor, and recognition of opportunities. *Shukhidedide* people are eloquent and they have the ability to engage in witty repartee. They have social courage and bravery.

As mentioned above, both *Shukhidedide* and *Sa heb Ferasat* people are eloquent and perceptive. They are both brave in social situations; however, a *Sa heb Ferasat* person demonstrates bravery in dangerous, fighting, and war situations. The most important distinction between these two types of giftedness is their age; a *Sa heb Ferasat* person is a teenager and a *Shukhidedide* person is an adult. Moreover, a *Sa heb Ferasat* person can foresee and guess thoughts of other people based on scrutinizing people’s faces and expression. *Sa heb Ferasat* people are predicted to have good fortune.
5.1.2 Extrinsic Giftedness

Sa’adi uses four epithets to describe three types of extrinsic giftedness: *Aghel and Dana*, *Kheradmand*, and *Hakim*, as the epithets *Aghel and Dana* represent the same type of giftedness. These people are good natured people who obtain the quality through education and different experiences. Indeed, Sa’adi believes that one can obtain wisdom through education if one has an *originally receptive nature*.

These four epithets are describing three levels of wisdom. This hierarchy can be portrayed in the shape of a pyramid in which the largest and most common levels of wisdom, *Aghel and Dana*, are at the bottom and the rarest one, *Hakim*, is at the top (see Table 5.2). In fact, being *Hakim* is a very rare quality and there are very few people in history who become *Hakim* such as Loqman, Bozorgmehr, Omar Khayyam, and Ferdowsi.

**Table 5.2 Hierarchy of Wisdom Levels' Rarity**

In this section I defined these epithets:

- **Aghel and Dana**: *Aghel and Dana* people have intellectual abilities that are above average. Becoming a *Dana or Aghel* person is about using experience and age in combination with a good nature.
• **Kheradmand**: Kheradmand (wise) people have a particular disposition. Education, experience, and age are seen as key component of wisdom. One of main distinguishing features of wise men is their habits of speaking: they speak timely and perceptively and they make wise speeches. A wise person is able to see the fundamental, underlying cause of something rather than the symptoms. They are self-controlled, level-headed and tolerant; they also have an accurate self-awareness and know their own intellectual and physical abilities. Wise people have forethought; they can imagine what is likely to happen in the future, based on experience, and consider this when planning for the future. Wise people are perfect for government positions; however, they usually avoid that as they are free-spirited and they are aware of the kings’ fickle temper.

• **Hakim**: Hakim is the rarest quality. All Hakims are scholars, but very few scholars are Hakim. Hakims can solve complex and manifold problems that other people are not able to solve. They can perceive interrelations between abstract concepts; they also see relations between abstract and concrete concepts. Hakims learn from others’ experiences and the world around them; in fact, they see the world as a teacher. Hakims show other people how to see the world. They can use abstract ideas in order to help people to understand their advice. Hakims speak just when it is necessary and their silence could result in harm and damage; hence their words are not only wise, but powerful. Hakims have a simple lifestyle and are content. They suggest the same lifestyle to other people. Hakims have an honorable and graceful life.

According to the definitions, Hakims have the highest ability level (Table 5.3). As it is shown in a stacked Venn diagram, Hakims not only have the Kheradmand’s abilities but
also more specific abilities. In the same way, Kheradmand’s abilities involve Aghel and Dana’s abilities and some further specific talents (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Stacked Venn diagram for the Abilities of Different Levels of Wisdom
5.2 The Theory and the Major Tensions

In chapter 2, I discussed Dai’s (2010) categories of major tensions and themes in gifted studies:

- Ontological tensions: being vs. becoming, domain general vs. domain specific, and qualitative vs. quantitative.
- Epistemological tensions: aptitude test vs. authentic achievement, nomothetic vs. idiographic, and reductionism vs. emergentism.
- Normative tensions: expertise vs. creativity, gifted child vs. talent development, and excellence vs. equity.

I also described major theories in the field of gifted education and how these theories meet the tensions. In this section I will discuss how this theory of giftedness meets these major tensions, as it gives further details of the theory. I will also provide a detailed comparison of Sa’adi’s theory with the major western theories in the field in table 5.4.

As I mentioned above, this theory meets being vs. becoming tension somewhere in between. According to *The Gulistan’s* stories, being *Saheb Ferasat* and *Shukhdideh* are intrinsic qualities; however, others are extrinsic. Moreover, although the second group can obtain wisdom through education and experience, it is important to have a receptive nature.

In Sa’adi’s time, giftedness counted as a domain general quality. A gifted person was great in most fields. For example, *Hakims* as the most gifted people, knew about math, astronomy, physics, literature, philosophy, and more. Hence, Sa’adi sees giftedness as a domain general quality because of the features of his time.

Gifted people are different from their average peers in both kind (qualitative) and degree (quantitative). For example, *Saheb Ferasat* people have the ability to predict what is
likely to happen based on the situation and the appearance of people. This quality is extremely unique. However, they are not the only people who have bravery in social contexts as well as during war. Sa’adi believes that they are braver than their average peers. Consequently, this theory is located on qualitative vs. quantitative continuum.

Sa’di believes that each type of gifted person has a particular disposition. He makes universal assumptions about gifted people, hence, the theory is categorized as a nomothetic theory.

The theory is emergentist as it sees giftedness as “higher-order organizational principles … and there are emergent properties that cannot be reduced to isolated lower-level components” (Dai, 2010. P. 39). Sa’adi does not break giftedness into simpler components. He depicts different types of giftedness and describes the characteristics of these people. According to Sa’adi, giftedness is “higher-order organizational principles that reflects a new level of complexity” (p. 44)

There is no emphasis on creativity in The Gulistan’s stories. Proficiency is more important to Sa’adi than creativity. As an illustration, Sa’adi believes that wise people are appropriate for government positions. A wise person exhibits a higher level of self-control and learns speaking habits through experiences and education. In fact, the theory is located on the expertise point.

Finally, the theory meets excellence vs. equity tension at the excellence point. Although Sa’adi underscores the importance of education, he supports the idea that nature (what we refer to as intellectual capacity and motivation or receptivity to learn) is the major determinant of being educable. He claims that education is not efficient for some people. He also believes that wise people are appropriate for government positions. In fact, Sa’adi
believes in “cultivating high potential for excellence … for the welfare of individuals as well as for society at large” (Dai, 2010, p.40)

**Table 5.4 Comparing How Renzulli's, WICS, Pentagonal, and Sa'adi's Theories Meet Major Tensions in the Field**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tensions</th>
<th>Renzulli’s theory</th>
<th>WICS</th>
<th>Pentagonal</th>
<th>Iranian theory based on the Gulistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontological</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being vs. Becoming</td>
<td>In between</td>
<td>In between</td>
<td>In between</td>
<td>In between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General vs. Domain Specific</td>
<td>In between</td>
<td>Domain specific</td>
<td>Domain specific</td>
<td>Domain general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative vs. Quantitative</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemological</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nomothetic vs. Idiographic</td>
<td>In between</td>
<td>In between</td>
<td>In between</td>
<td>Nomothetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reductionism vs. Emergentism</td>
<td>Reductionism</td>
<td>Reductionism</td>
<td>Reductionism</td>
<td>Emergentism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience vs. Creativity</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellence vs. Equity</td>
<td>Excellence</td>
<td>Excellence</td>
<td>Excellence</td>
<td>Excellence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Conclusion

To sum up, in this thesis I investigated how Sa’adi portrayed gifted people in The Gulistan as a step towards understanding Iranian conceptions of giftedness. Sa’adi uses five epithets to describe gifted and wise people: Saheb Ferasat, Shukhdideh, Aghel & Dana, Kheradmand, and Hakim. Each of these epithets depicts a type of gifted person who has special features and characteristics. Saheb Ferasat and Shukhdideh are inborn qualities and the others, Aghel & Dana, Kheadmand and Hakim, are extrinsic, which means that these people become wise through a combination of education and life experiences. However, there is an essential precondition to being Aghel & Dana, Kheradmand and Hakim: these people have an originally (inherently) receptive nature. These epithets (Aghel & Dana, Kheradmand, and Hakim) describe three levels of wisdom. This hierarchy can be portrayed in the shape of a pyramid in which the largest and most common levels of wisdom, Aghel & Dana, is at the bottom and the rarest one, Hakim, is at the top. There are very few Hakims throughout history. In fact, being wise is extremely highly regarded and being Hakim is the most admired quality among these five epithets.

Despite the importance of wisdom in this Iranian theory of giftedness, it is not as emphasized in Western theories of giftedness. WICS (Sternberg, 2003) is one of the few examples in Western theories that highlight the role of wisdom. However, there is a difference between the roles of wisdom in these two theories. WICS is a reductionist theory which sees wisdom as an essential element of giftedness, while the theory emerging from Sa’adi’s text posits these three levels of wisdom (Aghel & Dana, Kheradmand, and Hakim) as types of giftedness not elements of it. These three levels of wisdom are very important to Iranian culture; hence, they must be considered in Iranian gifted education.
It is important to understand an Iranian concept of giftedness, because the definition of giftedness is the first factor that must be considered in both the identification processes and in the programming (Renzulli, 2005). Although Iran is one of the first countries (since 1968) to offer gifted education, it has not defined giftedness based on Iranian specific culture. Iran usually uses identification instruments and programs that have foundations in western definitions of giftedness.

As most authorities are unanimous on the importance of the logical relationship between the definition, identification and programming for gifted education (Renzulli, 2005; Feldhausen et al, 1984), this study could make a contribution to Iranian gifted education. Through 17 years at NODET as a student and then as the program designer, I came to see a need for a cultural definition of giftedness and a need for programming based on that definition. Most of the programs had arisen from Western definition and theories of giftedness. Some of those programs were beneficial; however, they did not address qualities that are culturally-based. For example, there are many key social-emotional qualities in Hakim’s and Kheradmand’s qualities that could be considered in gifted programs such as contentment, having an honorable life, being moderate, and being advantageous for others.

Moreover, Western definitions might clash with the context of nonwestern countries. For example, productivity is seen as the most important aim of giftedness in many major theories (see table 5.2) (Renzulli, 2005; Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigirenko, 2011); however, it is not prioritized in this theory emerging from Sa’adi’s text. Silence is another instance for such a clash. As described in Kheradmand and Hakim section, silence is valued in Iranian culture. It is recommended not to answer the question until you are sure about your answer. This can create a serious problem in multiple choices exams, which is very common in Iran.
As you can see in stories about wisdom, answering fast is not part of being wise. It is not important to answer fast but rather to answer perceptively and when one is sure about the answer. However, time is the key component in Western IQ tests. Such fallacies in identification process and programming might prevent a society from achieving gifted education’s purposes. This perspective on gifted education would be a compass for policy makers. It could help policy makers distinguish the definition of giftedness in Iran from other definitions. In fact, this study suggests that identification of giftedness needs to move beyond a focus only on the academic or intellectual dimensions (IQ) to include other dimensions. This might encourage program designers to create programs that fit with Iranian special contexts.

This study seeks to make shifts in perceptions of giftedness and encourage other researcher to conduct similar culturally-embedded studies. Such “cross-cultural research can make contribution to theory development” (Brislin, 1976, p.215) and it is necessary for each country to have its own theory of giftedness. Khaleefa’s study (1999) illuminates that “practice of importing methods of studying creativity, intelligence and giftedness without rigorous conception is handicapping” (p. 25).

These findings could be applied in terms of culturally defining giftedness and could in this way make a significant contribution to Iranian gifted education. This study, as the first step towards Iranian conceptions of giftedness, will bring this subject to the attention of scholars, policy makers, and educators in various roles.

5.4 Limitations and future research
This study is located in the field of gifted education which is primarily informed by psychology. I use the literary canon of The Gulistan to develop a culturally responsive typology of giftedness. This is not intended to offer definitive conceptions of giftedness; but
rather to open a pathway to alternative approaches to understanding this concept. There is a need for further studies that examine other Iranian literary texts (Shahnameh, Kelileh va Demneh, Hafiz, and Rumi) to compare and contrast conceptions of giftedness and refine this emerging typology. Of particular interest would be an examination of the gender differences implicit in conceptions of giftedness. For example, the stories in The Gulistan describe men, whereas other texts such as Shahnameh and Kelileh va Demneh provide stories that provide evidence of the characteristics of wise or gifted women. Secondly, using literary analysis of these sorts of literary canons would enrich our understanding of culturally embedded conceptions of giftedness. The intent of this study is to open the pathway to these other forms of analysis to embrace a broader understanding of giftedness and to create more inclusive programs for gifted students that many not be identified based on traditional tests of intellectual ability.

Moreover, this study investigated giftedness in a specific literary canon (The Gulistan); however, Iranian culture cannot be reduced to the texts. Giftedness exists everywhere; in fact, educators and lay people have their own implicit definition as well. That is to say, there are formal, explicit definitions of giftedness, but there are also implicit working definitions people uses in everyday life. Later research can investigate Iranian educators’ and lay people’s implicit definition of giftedness. Moreover, more books and canons, TV shows, magazines, and other pop culture’s elements can be explored in later studies. This study is just a step towards the conceptions of giftedness in Iran. Such research can deepen our understanding of cultural conceptions of giftedness in Iran.
Furthermore, this study investigates *The Gulistan* which is a Persian canon. Although Persian is Iranian dominant culture, there are other ethical minorities in Iran. Further research can explore those cultures as well.

This study creates the beginning step for exploring Iranian conceptions of giftedness. It provides methodology and initial frame work. Future studies in Iran can investigate other texts, other cultures rather than dominant culture, media, and lay people’s implicit theories. Moreover, other countries can use such a methodology and explore their own cultural definition.
References


Lim, W., Plucker, J. A., & Im, K. (2002). We are more alike than we think we are: Implicit theories of intelligence with a Korean sample. *Intelligence*, 30(2), 185-208.


Appendices

Appendix A: Ethic approval

The University of British Columbia Okanagan
Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
3333 University Way
Kelowna, BC V1V 1V7  Phone: 250-807-8832
Fax: 250-807-8438

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - MINIMAL RISK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:</th>
<th>INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT:</th>
<th>UBC BREB NUMBER:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Bosetti</td>
<td>UBC/UBCO VP Academic (Academic Units)</td>
<td>H13-00081</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sareh Karami</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPONSORING AGENCIES:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT TITLE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Towards an Iranian Conception of Giftedness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE: March 8, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:</th>
<th>DATE APPROVED:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document Name</td>
<td>March 8, 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assent Forms:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assent form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire, Questionnaire Cover Letter, Tests:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Research's Interview Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>persian version of interview guide NODET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>persian version of interview guide 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter of Initial Contact:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assent form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board Okanagan
Appendix B: Consent Forms

Participants Assent/Consent Form

TOWARDS AN IRANIAN CONCEPTION OF GIFTEDNESS

Principal Investigator: Dr. Lynn Bosetti, PhD
Professor, Faculty of Education,
University of British Columbia Okanagan

Co-Investigator(s): Sareh karami, BA, MA
Graduate Student, Faculty of Education
University of British Columbia
(250) 300 8980, sarehkarami@yahoo.com

This research is part of a thesis in partial fulfillment of a Master of Arts in Education.
Findings of this research will be published in a thesis, which is a public document. The
identity of participants will be confidential as assigned numeric or pseudonyms will be used
throughout.

Purpose
Despite the strong agreement on the important role of culture in defining giftedness, there is a
lack of research on how a specific culture defines giftedness and to what extent different
cultures define giftedness differently

A cross-cultural perspective on gifted education would be a compass for policy
makers in the field. This understanding might help program designers to invent programs
which fit with their special contexts. Moreover, it will equip educators in various roles with
“cultural competence”. Cross-cultural research can make contribution to theory development.
Regarding the importance of cross-cultural thinking about giftedness, the following research questions will be explored.

- Based on Iranian literary canons, what does it mean to be gifted in Iranian?
- How do Iranian canonical stories inform beliefs related to giftedness?
- How might an Iranian conception of giftedness inform educational policy?

The purpose of this study is to develop culturally appropriate policy that is grounded in Iranian conceptions of giftedness, to guide education and programming for gifted and talented.

**Study Procedures**

This mixed methods study has multiphase sequential design and will develop themes from the data. The study intends to do content analysis of key readings from Iranian literary canons to discern the culturally embedded notions of giftedness and compare it with NODET’s definition of giftedness. Historically these texts describe gifted and wise people who proud insight as guidance into how to live. Investigating conceptions of giftedness in these texts will tell us what historically counted as giftedness in the Iranian culture. The phases of the study will be:

1. Iranian literary canons
   1.1. Conducting interviews with experts on literary canons.
   1.2. Analyzing interview data and representative stories from canons for themes.

2. NODET documents
   2.1. Conducting interview with expert from NODET.
   2.2. Analyzing data from interview with NODET and relevant policy documents.

3. Comparative analysis of literary canon themes and policy themes.

4. Member-checking with participants on accuracy of themes from both stages of analysis.
At any point during the study, if you want to withdraw from the study, you are free to do so. Any data collected about a withdrawing participant will not be included in the study and will be destroyed.

To ensure protecting privacy of the participants, they will be assigned random numeric codes and will not be identified. The study will take place between February 20 and April 10, 2013.

**Study Result**

The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books.

**Potential Risks and Benefits**

There are no potential risks to the participants. We do not think there is anything in this study that could harm you or be bad for you. Participants will not be rewarded for participation, because participation needs to be completely voluntary. No special treatment or special consideration will result from participation in the study. At the end of the study, the findings will be made available to the participants.

**Confidentiality**

The participants’ identities will be kept strictly confidential, as well as the school’s name and location. All assessments and other documents related to the study will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the school, and after the study is complete, they will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in Dr. Bosetti’s office (EME #3141) at UBC-O for a period of five years. When those five years are past, all documents and assessments will be destroyed. If any electronic record is made, it will be destroyed as well. Participants will not be identified by name.

**Contact for Concerns about the Rights of Research Subjects:**

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research subject and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598. Additional queries may be made to
Kristen Korberg in the UBC Okanagan Research Services Office, or by e-mail, kristen.korberg@ubc.ca.

Participants Assent/Consent:

Giving consent will allow Mrs. Sareh Karami to conduct this research. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time with no consequences. Once you have returned the assent form, a copy will be made and returned to you for your records.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records. Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

'I consent or I do not consent (circle one) to my participation in this study.'

________________________________________________________________________
Signature                     Date
________________________________________________________________________

Printed name of the participants signing above

116
Appendix C: Interview Guide

The Research’s Interview Guide

Name of Study: TOWARDS AN IRANIAN CONCEPTION OF GIFTEDNESS

Semi-structured interview with scholars and leading experts in literary canons

1. In reviewing the work of Sadi how are gifted individuals portrayed? What are the essential qualities of what these authors deems as a gifted person?

2. Can you identify key examples of stories by these authors that would most exemplify the qualities of gifted individuals in Iranian society?

3. What are the predominant images, metaphors or words used to described gifted people in these canons?

4. In your expert opinion, how have these conceptions of giftedness, as evidenced in these canons, influenced how Iran culture views giftedness and what they value in terms of gifted individuals?

5. In your expert opinion, to what extent does the Iranian education system value giftedness and what aspects are most valued? Please provide examples.