



Research Paper

Flourishing Profile of Gifted Students Based on Seligman's PERMA Model: A Study of Gender Differences

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Abstract

The present study aimed to describe and compare the flourishing profile of gifted male and female high school students (13-15 years old) based on Seligman's PERMA model. This was applied research in terms of purpose and descriptive-comparative study based on research method. The statistical population of the present study consisted of the gifted male and female high school students in the Tabriz province in the academic year of 2009-2010. 592 students (226 male students and 366 female students) were selected by cluster random sampling method from this province's gifted high school students. Respondents completed the PERMA-Profiler (Butler and Kern, 2016), designed to assess the five components of the PERMA model. Data were analyzed using multivariate analysis of variance. The results showed that there is a positive and significant difference in favor of girls in positive emotions and positive relationships and a significant difference in favor of boys in meaning and achievement. However, there was no significant difference in

engagement between male and female students. Also, despite the differences between male and female students in different dimensions of flourishing, their total flourishing scores did not differ significantly. The findings can help teachers and counselors in identifying groups with specific strengths and weaknesses and performing interventions to promote prosperity in educational settings.

Keywords: *Flourishing Profile, Seligman's PERMA model, Gender Differences, Gifted Students.*

Introduction

In Educational systems pay special attention to the gifted students and having a picture of their health and wellbeing is important to them because wellbeing is considered a necessary condition for achieving the highest personal and professional development. There is a long history of interest in how giftedness affects psychological wellbeing. A review of research findings shows that although there is interest in the well-being of gifted students, our knowledge of the subject is still insufficient despite conflicting findings (Neihart, 1999). Gender differences in gifted student wellbeing is also a subject that has not been well addressed in previous research. On the other hand, in recent years, researchers in the field of wellbeing and mental health have focused on the concept of "flourishing". Different conceptualizations of flourishing have been proposed. Seligman's (2011) PERMA model is among the important conceptualizations in this area. This model advocate that flourishing arises from five well-being pillars (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment). Kern, Waters, Alder, and White (2014) argue that this model is an appropriate framework in educational settings to identify groups with specific strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the present study intends to describe and compare the flourishing profile of gifted male and female high school students (13-15 years old) based on Seligman's PERMA model.

Methodology

This was applied research in terms of purpose and descriptive-comparative study based on research method. The statistical population of the present study consisted of the gifted male and female high school students in the Tabriz province in the academic year of 2009-2010. 592 students (226 male students and 366 female students) were selected by cluster random sampling method from this province's gifted high school students. Respondents completed the PERMA-Profiler (Butler and Kern, 2016), designed to assess the five components of the PERMA model. Butler and Kern (2016) developed this scale through extensive theoretical and empirical research based on five components of Seligman's Model of Flourishing (2011). The

scale consisted of 15 items (three items for each component). The measures of multiple dimensions of wellbeing can be mentioned as the outstanding feature of the scale. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed in the present study and the fitness indices were obtained as $\chi^2/df = 1.81$, RMSEA = 0.05, GFI = 0.90, and NFI = 0.94, which were in an acceptable range and the five-factor structure was confirmed. Cronbach's alphas of the entire scale and subscales of positive emotions, engagement, positive relations, meaning and, achievement were reported at 0.96, 0.96, 0.70, 0.84, 0.93, and 0.82 respectively. Data were analyzed using SPSS and multivariate analysis of variance.

Results

In the present study, participants consisted of 226 male and 366 female gifted students ($M = 13/83$, $SD = 0/89$). After the assumptions of multivariate analysis of variance are met, the results of the Pillay test ($F(5,294) = 22/715$, $Value = 0/721$) indicated that this test is significant at the level of $p < 0.01$. Results of paired comparison (Table1) show that there is a positive and significant difference in favor of girls in positive emotions and positive relationships and a significant difference in favor of boys in meaning and achievement. However, there was no significant difference in engagement between male and female students.

Table1: Paired Comparison of Study Variables

Dependent Variable	Gender	Gender	Mean Difference	SE	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Positive emotions	1	2	-0/668	0/165	0/001	-0/993	-0/342
	2	1	0/668	0/165	0/001	0/342	0/993
Engagement	1	2	-0/277	0/184	0/134	-0/639	0/085
	2	1	0/277	0/184	0/134	-0/085	0/639
Positive Relationship	1	2	-0/589	0/207	0/005	-0/996	-0/181
	2	1	0/589	0/207	0/005	0/181	0/996
Meaning	1	2	0/827	0/197	0/001	0/439	1/214
	2	1	-0/827	0/197	0/001	-1/214	-0/439
Accomplishment	1	2	0/519	0/163	0/002	0/199	0/839
	2	1	-0/519	0/163	0/002	-0/839	-0/199

Also, based on a one-way analysis of variance ($F(1,298) = 0/061$, $Value = 22/374$) despite the differences between male and female students in different dimensions of flourishing, their total flourishing scores did not differ significantly (Figure1).

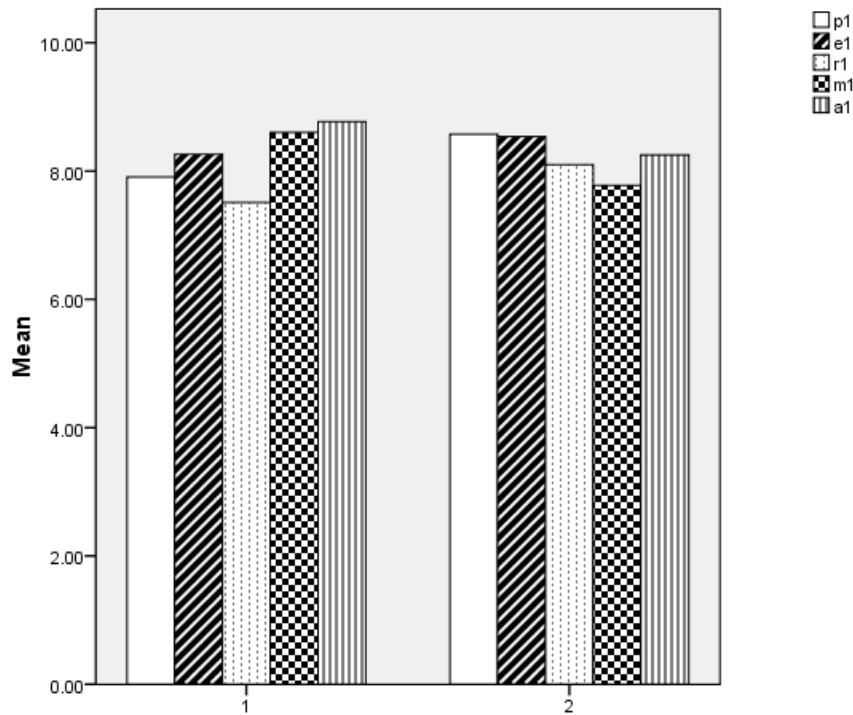


Figure1: PERMA-Profile of gifted students (1: boy and 2: girl)

Discussion and conclusion

The present study aimed to describe and compare the flourishing profile of gifted male and female high school students based on Seligman’s PERMA model. The results showed that there is a positive and significant difference in favor of girls in positive emotions and positive relationships and a significant difference in favor of boys in meaning and achievement. However, there was no significant difference in engagement between male and female students. Also, despite the differences between male and female students in different dimensions of flourishing, their total flourishing scores did not differ significantly. The findings of this study can help teachers and counselors in identifying groups with specific strengths and weaknesses and performing interventions to promote prosperity in educational settings. The statistical population of the present study is limited to the gifted students and the generalization of the results to non-gifted students and other developmental stages should be done with caution.

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