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Well-Being Development: Parents' Perceptions of Gifted Adolescents

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine parents' perceptions of well-being development in their gifted adolescents. This was a qualitative study that used Narrative Inquiry as a research approach. Cloninger's (1993) Psychobiological Model of Temperament and Character the (TCI) and Clandinin and Connelley's (2000) Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space were utilized to address the research questions: What are parents' perceptions of temperament in their gifted adolescent? What are parents' perceptions of character in their gifted adolescent? What are the parents' perceptions of well-being development? Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD) provided an analysis lens for the study.

The framework for gathering data in reference to well-being development included eight parents who were requested to complete the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) (Cloninger et al.,1993) a personality assessment, participate in two semi-structured interview sessions, and share artifacts in regard to their adolescents' well-being in school and outside of school. This study provides a look through the lens of the physical, emotional, social, and universal components of well-being.

A focus of the research was the parent participants' ability to respond to the (TCI) as their gifted adolescent would have responded. Attride-Stirling (2001) Thematic Networks (webs) were used in the analysis of the TCI combined with data from the interviews demonstrated in narrative form throughout this study.

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Well-Being Development: Parents' Perceptions of Gifted Adolescents

A Dissertation in Practice

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the Faculty of the Morgridge College of Education

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Barbara Moncure Washington

June 2022

Advisor: Norma L. Hafenstein, PhD

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

“Why am I so emotional?” A student entering middle school asked this question after experiencing a morning full of emotions. Upon completing a Latin exam, which he was the first one to finish, he broke down in tears, and later, after joyfully collaborating with fellow students as they reasoned over their math computations, excited by the discourse his emotional intensity continued to ebb and flow. He first approached me with a question about the math homework, and then he inquired if he could ask me a personal question. The look on his face showed a seriousness that deserved an answer. He waited patiently for an answer while starting to get emotional once again. Am I qualified to answer this loaded question? I wanted to reach out to him and say your emotions are part of who you are as a person, an individual. Then he asked, in my pausing, “Is there something wrong with me?” I then answered, as calmly as possible, “No, of course not.”

Sensitivity and intensity of emotions are often used to describe gifted children, especially the highly gifted (Silverman, 1983; Piirto, 1992). They see themselves so different from their peers that they doubt themselves and ask, “What is wrong with me? They realize the discrepancy between their feelings and those of others, and to account for the lack of fit they judge themselves to be wanting” (Piechowski, 1997, p. 365).

Only when the social and emotional concerns of gifted adolescents are understood can concerned adults guide the adolescents to effective adjustment – an adjustment that does not necessitate tremendous, stressful, “trial and error,” or “hit or miss” approaches for the gifted...Research has revealed that gifted adolescents in general are not clinically maladjusted; however, they do have unique concerns manifested by a lack of self-understanding and of coping skills in the social and emotional aspects of their lives (Frey, 1991, p. 36).

In extreme cases, when gifted adolescents are lacking in the abilities mentioned above, they can abandon their intellectual abilities and struggle through a seemingly endless adolescence (Buescher, 1985).

Background of the Persistent Problem of Practice

During this stage of development, gifted students reaching adolescence are challenged with fitting in and figuring out their identities, and their strengths and weaknesses all added to their intensities and sensitivities. Their challenges also include a more competitive academic environment as compared to their earlier education where things came easier and took little effort for them to do well (Gross, 1989). The developmental changes that gifted and non-gifted adolescents experience are similar (Erikson, 1965) however, intellectually gifted adolescents may experience other challenges. Buescher (1991) maintained that not only are these individuals dealing with the biological and emotional needs related to the onset of puberty, but they are also faced with unique challenges in terms of fitting in with their peers and meeting internal and environmental educational and intellectual pressures. These gifted traits account for their vulnerabilities in childhood and their troubles in school (Roedell, 1984). Most gifted adolescents continue to be intrinsically motivated to do well academically, while others develop different behaviors that lead them to underachieve and not perform to their

previous high abilities. When students do not fulfill these expectations, it can result in anxiety for the students, parents, and educators (Gross, 1989).

Sylvia Rimm (1991), writes an abstract vignette to communicate challenges parents of adolescents may face in “Parenting the Gifted Adolescent – Special Problems, Special Joys” found in *Understanding the Gifted Adolescent: Educational, Developmental, and Multicultural Issues* (Bireley and Genshaft, 1991):

Imagine driving on a country road on a foggy morning. You turn on your car lights, then turn them off to see if it improves your visibility. You occasionally see familiar landmarks that give you the security that you are continuing on the right route. You emerge from the fog intermittently and see especially clear, blue sky and green fields only to again return to the fog and lose your sense of direction. You feel a tension while you drive, which seems delightfully relieved each time you emerge to patches of clarity. Finally, the fog lifts permanently, and you see the clear day...

The foggy, rural route and the tense parenting drive in the passage between childhood and adulthood challenge parents of average children as well as of gifted children. However, there are some dramatic differences in terms of both the insecurity of the fog and clarity of the magnificent open stretches, which may increase the challenge of steering gifted adolescents through to the clearing of adulthood. (p. 18)

A number of professionals have suggested that gifted adolescents have a unique set of affective needs compared to their nongifted peers (Colangelo and Pfleger, 1979; Silverman, 1983).

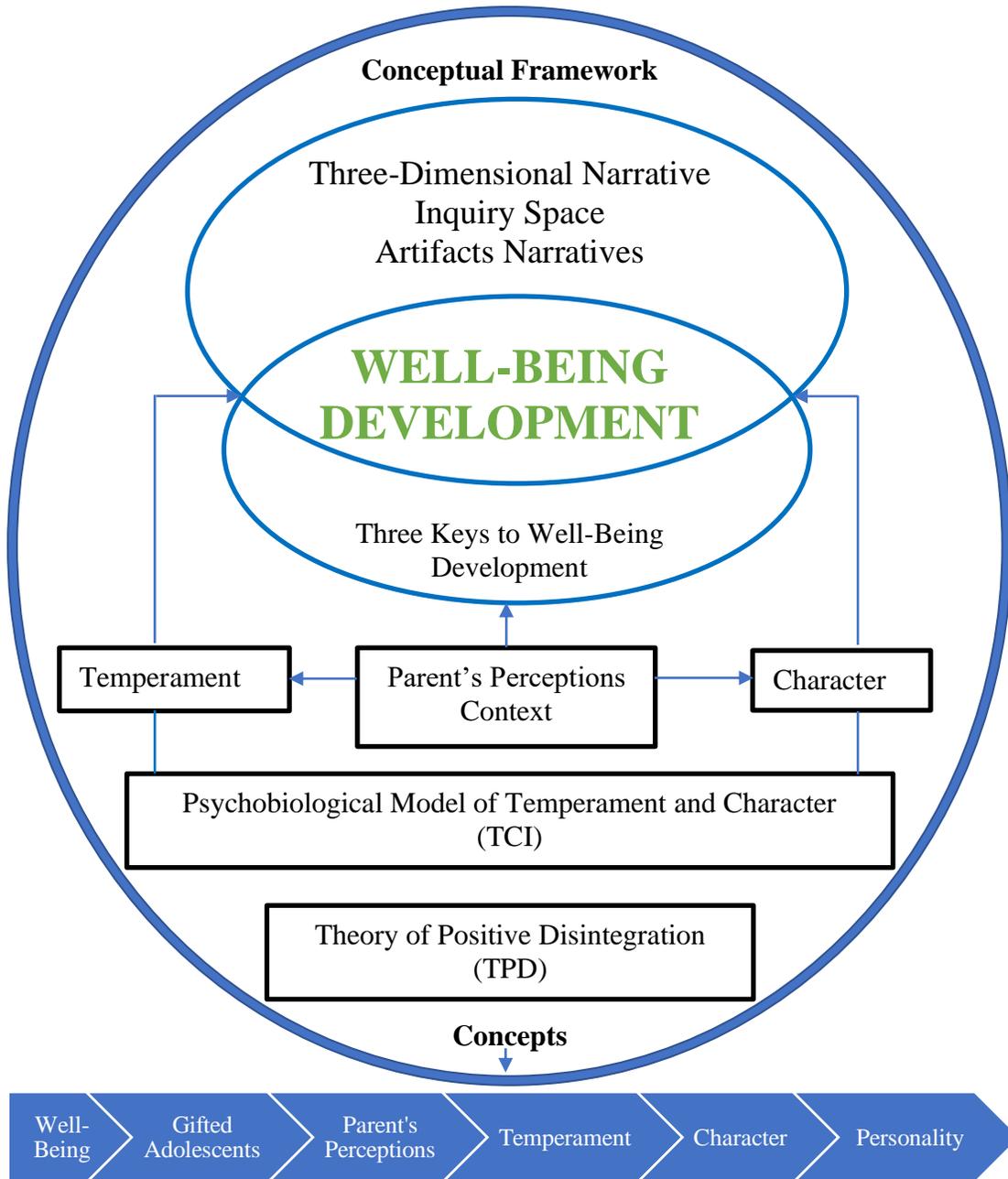
In a proposed definition of giftedness, the authors of *Rethinking Giftedness and Gifted Education: A Proposed Direction Forward Based on Psychological Science* include a mention for affective needs: “...Psychosocial variables play an essential role in the manifestation of giftedness at every developmental stage. Both cognitive and psychosocial variables are malleable and need to be deliberately cultivated (Subotnik et al., 2011, p. 7).

Findings from this research study that address personality, psychosocial, and biological traits through the examination of parents' perceptions of temperament and character provided data on well-being and self-awareness that will help support the gifted adolescent's navigation of life's challenges in the 21st century. As quoted in the book, *Twenty Studies that Revolutionized Child Psychology* (2003), by psychologist Wallace E. Dixon, Jr., "We can only hope that a continued focus on children's individuality will continue sharpening our understanding of the psychological development and well-being of our children" (p. 206).

Statement of the Persistent Problem Practice

The persistent problem of practice is a lack of guidance for the gifted adolescent's well-being development (Bireley & Genshaft, 1991) partnered with the lack of understanding of their personality dimensions such as temperament and character, combined with their gifts and talents. Parents, educators, and other caring adults may or may not have the knowledge needed to guide these adolescents through the ups and downs that they may face during this unique period of human development (NAGC Whole Child Report, 2018; Solow, 1995; Subotnik et al., 2011).

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework 1: Map of Tools for Well-Being Development



Note. Starting with a known theory (TPD) as an analysis lens, the TCI for data collection and analysis, (RQ1) Temperament, (RQ2) Character, (RQ3) Keys to Well-Being Development, and culminating in the development of eight Narratives composed from the parents’ perceptions of their gifted adolescents’ well-being development utilizing the Clandinin and Connelley’s (2000) Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space.

There is a need to increase the knowledge of and tools used to examine the affective needs of gifted adolescents, their social-emotional characteristics, mental health, and well-being (Casino-Garcia et al. 2019; Jen et al., 2016; Neihart, 1999; Plucker & Stocking, 2001; Robinson, 2002). Janos et al. (1985) noted that 40% of gifted children acknowledged feeling different from their peers, indicating low self-esteem and peer relationship difficulties. “The importance of the social and affective needs of high-ability students and the services that can be provided to meet these needs have received increased attention in the field of gifted education,” in the last decade and most recent years (Jen et al., 2016, p. 39). Early measures of the gifted have focused on academic and intellectual traits rather than the social emotional needs of these students (Mueller, 2009; NAGC Report, 2018; Subotnik et al, 2011). There are unwanted consequences of not increasing the level of understanding of optimal well-being with gifted characteristics, according to *NAGC Whole Gifted Child Report* (2018), “gifted children may miss the opportunity to develop their capacity to understand and manage emotions, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” (p. 7).

In the article, *Gifted Adolescents* (Shultz & Delisle) as found in *The Handbook of Gifted Education* (Colangelo & Davis, 2003), the adolescent years witness great turbulence in the emotional and physical characteristics of individuals. Often parents, teachers, and other adults may focus on the challenges associated with the developmental changes from early adolescence to middle adolescence, and the transition to late adolescence. But adolescence also provides opportunities for gifted individuals to gain self-awareness and an understanding of what they have to offer the world. Gifted

adolescents need support and respect on their journey of discovering and asking the question “who am I.”

Some characteristics of gifted adolescents also have aspects that may present negatively in children. Trying to be perfect can be a source of stress, perfectionism. “Research on perfectionism in gifted children estimates that between 20 – 30% of this population of students experience anxiety resulting from self-critical, evaluative concerns” (NAGC Report, 2018, p. 8).

“Gifted children experience different kinds of stresses than other children, and they experience these stresses more intensely than the average child. Other research indicates that gifted children, because of their giftedness, are vulnerable to certain stresses that do not affect other groups of children” (Web et al., 2007. p. 118).

As found in the article, *The Impact of Giftedness on Psychological Well-Being*, Niehart (1999) reports:

There is evidence to support two contrasting views about the psychological well-being of gifted children: that giftedness enhances resilience in individuals and that giftedness increases vulnerability. There is empirical and theoretical evidence to support both views. It is clear that giftedness influences the psychological well-being of individuals. Whether the psychological outcomes for gifted children, adolescents, and adults are positive or negative seems to depend on at least three factors that interact synergistically: the type of giftedness, the educational fit, and one’s personal characteristics such as self-perceptions, life circumstances, and temperament and life circumstances. (p. 123)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, narrative inquiry study is to examine and describe the parents’ perceptions of well-being development in gifted adolescents. In using the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI), a potent instrument for helping individuals grow in self-awareness, this research study will lend a predictive lens of the physical, emotional, social, and universal components of well-being in gifted adolescents (“What

Makes the TCI Unique,” n.d.). It is important to provide information that will give parents, educators, and community members tools to help gifted adolescents become self-aware and in a state of well-being.

In the book *When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers: How to Meet Their Social Emotional Needs*, Delisle & Galbraith (2002) provide questionnaires for teachers if they want to know what their gifted students think about giftedness. “It affects their school experience, their relationships with friends, families, and teachers, their self-esteem, their future plans, their expectations, their goals, and almost everything else about their lives” (pg. 33). Their gifted characteristics, their temperament and character have a part in making up who they are.

This qualitative research study provided a narrative inquiry framework. Narrative research is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single individual or the lives of a small number of individuals (Creswell, 2013), which will best fit this study. Narrative stories occur within specific places or situations. The context becomes important for the researcher’s telling of the story within a place (Creswell, 2013). The writing strategy for the written narratives followed a three-dimensional space inquiry model of Clandinin and Connelly (Creswell, 2013).

Narrative inquiry, in both the collection and presentation of the data, allows a clear arena for addressing questions of the trustworthiness of the data and their interpretations. The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space described by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) prompts researchers to both question explanations and meanings constructed and provide the audience with accounts that uncover and reveal such questions of meaning, value, and integrity. (Clandinin, 2007, p. 21)

The data gathered examined the parent participant’s perceptions of their gifted adolescent’s temperament and character from the parent’s responses to the TCI

Temperament and Character Inventory, looking inward and outward focusing on self-awareness as the participants answer the first set of nine interview questions, and situate the experiences of their gifted adolescent with place (school and outside of school). Data gathering continued as the parent's answer the second set of five interview questions focused on the keys of well-being development, and shared personal-family-social artifacts that demonstrated their adolescent's well-being (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The sharing of artifacts helped the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the parent's perceptions.

Thematic networks an analytic tool, Attride-Stirling (2001), was also used to identify the occurrences of themes found between the individual participants within the research project. Common personality traits found in the results of the parent's perceptions of their gifted adolescent may also prove important in identifying themes to help contribute to current research on the well-being of gifted adolescents.

Research Questions

1. What are parents' perceptions of temperament in their gifted adolescent?
2. What are parents' perceptions of character in their gifted adolescent?
3. What are parents' perceptions of well-being development in their gifted adolescent?

Significance of the Study

This study may lend a perspective of how parents of 13-23-year-old gifted adolescents perceive their children's overall well-being and school experiences, as well as their social-emotional needs through temperament and character. The research will contribute to the professional development of teachers in gifted programs interested in

protective factors, motivation and changing behaviors. “Several researchers have hypothesized that protective factors often fall into three broad categories: personality or individual, family cohesion, and environmental support (e.g., school belonging)” as noted by Mueller (2009, p. 5). It will add to the personality assessments used in gifted education with the use of the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI).

Another significant facet of this study was that it gave the participants a chance to engage in a dialogue about the academic experiences and personality dimensions of their gifted adolescents through their responses to the (TCI) and the interviews related to well-being. As an educator and parent of gifted adolescents the researcher realized that this was an opportunity to gather data from the perspective of parents and communicate out common themes exhibited in individual students to inform future research in this area. This study provided the parent participants with the knowledge of their gifted adolescent’s temperament and character and may provide an awareness of their strengths and challenges, as well as an understanding of the “how” and “why” of their motivations and actions. Parents’ perceptions of temperament and character found in their gifted adolescents will also contribute to the literature concerning personality, emotional, and moral developmental growth.

Definitions of Terms

The key terms used in this study will be defined as follows:

- *Temperament* refers to the automatic emotional responses to experience and is moderately heritable (i.e., genetic, biological) and relatively stable throughout life (tcipersonality.com, “What is the Temperament and Character Inventory”).

- *Character* refers to self-concepts and individual differences in goals and values, which influence voluntary choices, intentions, and the meaning and salience of what is experienced in life. Differences in character are moderately heritable and moderately influenced by socio-cultural learning. Character traits mature in progressive steps throughout life (tcipersonality.com, “What is the Temperament and Character Inventory”).
- *Gifted Adolescents* – seek to discover who they are in all aspects of their being – who they might be, what they are capable of, and how they might interface with and impact the world anew (Daniels & Piechowski, 2008).
- *Adolescence* – A transitional period between puberty and adulthood in human development, extending mainly over the teen years terminating legally when the age of majority is reached (Dictionary.com, unabridged).
- *Early adolescence* begins with puberty which can begin as early as 10 years old (Steinberg, 2014).
- *Middle adolescence* spans a period from 14 to 17 years (Steinberg, 2005).
- *Late adolescence* spans a period from 18 to 22 years. Also referred to as the young adult phase (Steinberg, 2005).
- *Perceptions* – a belief or opinion, often held by many and often based on how things seem (Cambridge.dictionary.org)
- *Theory of Positive Disintegration Theory (TPD)* – based on the idea that development involves becoming aware of the many hierarchies, both in life in general and within oneself, and consciously working to advance from lower to

higher levels with these different hierarchies (Tillier, 2018).

- *Overexcitabilities* – means that reality is experienced in a qualitatively different manner – not just more of curiosity, sensory enjoyment, imagination, and feeling but added dimensions of depth, texture, acuity, and perception (Daniels and Piechowski, 2009).
- *Personality* is the “dynamic organization within the individual of the psychobiological systems by which the person both shapes and adapts uniquely to an ever-changing internal and external environment” (Cloninger, 2004).
- *The Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) - The Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI)* is a set of tests designed to identify the intensity of and relationships between the seven basic personality dimensions of temperament and character, which interact to create the unique personality of an individual (tcipersonality.com, “What is the Temperament and Character Inventory”).
- *TCI* operates with seven dimensions of personality traits: four *temperament traits - our emotional drives* (tcipersonality.com)
 - Novelty Seeking (NS) – anger, behavioral activation
 - Harm Avoidance (HA) – fear, behavioral inhibition
 - Reward Dependence (RD) – attachment, social attachment
 - Persistence (PS) – ambition, partial reinforcement
- and three-character *traits – our goals, beliefs, and values* (tcipersonality.com)
 - Self-Directedness (SD) – quantifies the extent to which an individual

is responsible, reliable, resourceful, goal-oriented, and self-confident.

- Cooperativeness (CO) – quantifies the extent to which individuals conceive themselves as integral parts of human society.
- Self-Transcendence (ST) – quantifies the extent to which individuals conceive themselves as integral parts of the universe as a whole.
- *The TCI* - is based on a psychobiological (the study of biological foundations of the mind, emotions, and mental processes) model that attempts to explain the underlying causes of individual differences in personality traits (Cloninger, 1994).
- *Psychosocial* - of or pertaining to the psychological development of the individual in relation to his or her social environment (Webster's New World College Dictionary, 2014).
- *Self-awareness* - will be defined as the ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior as determined by the results of their TCI.
- *Well-being* - will be defined as a state that allows gifted students to learn how to face their academic and life challenges by focusing on the whole being.

Assumptions

Simon and Goes (2013) notes that assumptions are beliefs that are necessary to conduct the study but cannot be proven. Assumptions can limit a research study if there is not an awareness of what is needed to conduct the study (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991).

Assumptions were made that all of the parent participants' adolescents had been identified as gifted and had similar SES backgrounds. In this study, the parent

participants were requested to take the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) and respond to the questionnaire as their adolescent would respond. It was assumed that all of the parents would be able to give their perceptions of their adolescent's temperament and character while answering the semi-structured questions during the two interview sessions. Assumptions were also made that the parents would be able to share personal-family-social artifacts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) that in some way represented their adolescent's state of well-being.

Delimitations

“The delimitations of a study are those characteristics that arise from limitations in the scope of the study (defining the boundaries) and by the conscious exclusionary and inclusionary decisions made during the development of the study plan (Simon & Goes, 2013, p. 4). The delimitations of this study were a result of the researcher's specific choices made (e.g., the purpose of the study, interest in well-being, the theoretical framework chosen, qualitative method, and the choice made to examine the perceptions of only one parent). Other delimitations would be, not exploring the effect of gender identity or culture on the well-being of gifted adolescents which can be better supported with further research.

Summary and Organization of the Study

In Chapter 1, the study is introduced with a narrative vignette illustrating the uncertainty of one gifted adolescent's social emotional well-being. It has been noted that gifted adolescents do have unique concerns related to the social emotional characteristics of their young lives that develop from a lack of self-awareness and coping skills (Frey, 1991). It is revealed in the background of the study that not all gifted adolescents will

continue to do well academically, and this can result in anxiety for the students, educators, and parents (Gross, 1989). In stating the persistent problem of practice, the literature shows a need for research that addresses the guidance of the gifted adolescent's well-being development (Bireley & Genshafte, 1991). The problem extends to suggest that parents, educators, and other caring adults may need more knowledge to help the gifted adolescent navigate the psychosocial aspects of this unique period of their lives (Solow, 1995; Subotnik et al., 2011).

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry study was to examine the parents' perceptions of well-being development in their gifted adolescent. The study was significant as it provided a window into the parent participants' perceptions of their 13-23-year-old gifted adolescents, and their overall well-being through temperament and character, along with the three keys of well-being development. A benefit is that this study offered the parents a chance to gain a self-awareness and an understanding of their adolescent's strengths and challenges and a purview of the "how" and "why" of their personality. Research questions in this study:

1. What are parents' perceptions of temperament in their gifted adolescent?
2. What are parents' perceptions of character in their gifted adolescent?
3. What are parents' perceptions of well-being development in their gifted adolescent?

Due to the focus of this study, a qualitative methodology was used with a narrative inquiry design. The qualitative method was the best fit for this study, in order to capture the experiences of a single or small number of individual personalities (Creswell, 2013).

Narrative Inquiry was chosen to put the lived experiences in context of specific places and situations. To gain an understanding of each individual parent's perceptions the researcher used the three-dimensional narrative inquiry to look at the personal and social; past, present, and future; and also place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) of the perceived temperament and character, and well-being development of their gifted adolescent.

The data was compiled from three different sources. First, the parents completed the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI). Next, they participated in two interview sessions, and the third source included the sharing of personal-family-social artifacts that demonstrated well-being in their gifted adolescents. The interviews were face-to-face meetings and occurred on two different occasions.

Data from the interviews was audio-recorded and then transcribed. The transcriptions were sent out to the study's participants for member checking. The research analyzed the data gathered to answer the research questions and to identify themes related to the participants' perceptions. The triangulation of the three different sources of data provided the researcher with a greater understanding of perceived temperament and character, and well-being development.

Next, definitions of terms were given. The assumptions and delimitations were acknowledged and along with their importance in explaining and framing the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). The next chapter will explore concepts from the literature related to well-being development.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The previous chapter examines the need for assessing the temperament and character, personality dimensions, of gifted adolescents, well-being development, as well as the need for the adults in their lives to grow in knowledge of how to guide them through this unique time of human development. This literature review was organized thematically to represent the essential areas of focus to assist in understanding the study. The temperament and character inventory focused on the parents' individual perception of their adolescent's personality. "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of the psychobiological systems by which the person both shapes and adapts uniquely to an ever-changing internal and external environment" (Cloninger, <https://tcipersonality.com>).

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry study was to examine the parents' perceptions of well-being development in their gifted adolescent. This chapter addresses descriptions of concepts associated with well-being, gifted adolescents, gifted characteristics, perceptions, temperament and character, and personality assessments.

A conceptual/theoretical framework and a review of the existing literature was included to guide the underlying rationale of this research project. The review of the literature was presented by themes focused on the affective needs and social emotional adjustments (well-being development) of gifted individuals.

This literature review consists of nine topic areas, each dedicated to addressing a major theme significant to the study of well-being and the gifted adolescent. The first section discussed the history and background of gifted education and how its evolution has led to the psycho-bio-social needs of the gifted adolescent, the current problem focused on in the research. The second section identifies a gap in the literature and reveals a need for more information in the area of well-being development that is the basis for this study. The third section focused on the conceptual/theoretical framework, which provided a guiding lens through which to view this study. The fourth section explored the context of well-being. The fifth section is centered around understanding the needs of the gifted adolescent. The sixth section focuses on the concerns and perceptions that parents of gifted children and adolescents have faced in the past and are now facing today. Sections seven and eight focused on the history and nuances of two aspects of personality: temperament and character. The last section identified different personality assessments that have been utilized in research of gifted individuals. Finally, the chapter summary will reaffirm the requisite information previously communicated in the review of the literature.

Historical Background of Well-Being in Gifted Education

Within the body of research focused on affective development, “there is a long history of interest in how giftedness affects psychological well-being” (Neihart, 1999, p. 10). According to Neihart (1999), there continue to be two conflicting views that have predominated the literature. First, some studies have found that being gifted is a protective factor from maladjustment and that children identified as gifted are better adjusted than the general population of students. It is perceived that children who are gifted are more self-aware than their non-gifted peers due to their high abilities and asynchronous development. Research supporting this view shows that stress and coping skills are positively impacted by giftedness.

The second conflicting view, places gifted children more at risk for maladjustment problems such as social emotional challenges, especially during their early, middle, and late adolescent years and adulthood. This view posits that due to the high cognitive abilities of gifted children they are more sensitive to life experiences, social issues, and life stressors than their non-gifted peers (Neihart, 1999).

Historically, Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911), is credited with the earliest significant research and writing on intelligence and intelligence testing. Galton reasoned intelligence was related to the keenness of one’s senses, which would have value for life survival (Colangelo & Davis, 2003). In 2003, Colangelo & Davis wrote, “According to Stanley (1976), Galton was the grandfather of the gifted child movement, Binet the midwife, Terman the father, and Columbia University’s Leta Stetter Hollingworth the nurturant mother” (p. 7).

Terman (1925) investigated the social emotional adjustment of more than 1,000 gifted youth in a longitudinal study. His findings revealed that gifted students were well-adjusted and although he was criticized for his statements about the social emotional needs of gifted individuals, “he remains foundational in establishing research related to the mental health of gifted youth” (Suldo et al, 2018, p. 438). After Terman’s study, Hollingworth (1942) reported that gifted children were emotionally well adjusted. Hollingworth’s longitudinal study of gifted children also found that students who were highly or profoundly gifted were likely to be more vulnerable to maladjustments than their peers with lower IQs (Suldo et al., 2018). For Hollingworth’s study of extremely high IQ children, studying their unique social emotional needs became a focal point (Dai, 2018).

“In contrast with Terman’s accurate conclusion that gifted children, as a group, are more emotionally stable, Hollingworth drew attention to the strong emotional problems and counseling needs of many gifted students, arguing that the greater the gift the greater the need for ‘emotional education’” (Colangelo & Davis, 2003, p. 7).

Suldo et al. (2018) acknowledges that more contemporary research has explored an array of social emotional concerns affecting the gifted learner’s academic and affective development. They list Peterson (2006) who has explored proactive and responsive approaches for a host of social emotional concerns, Neumeister, Williams, and Cross (2009) considered perfectionism among gifted youth, and Mueller (2009) who studied depression in gifted and talented individuals. Also, other affective relationships (e.g., Matthews and Kitchen, 2007), the role that giftedness plays in moderating adverse outcomes for children and adolescents (e.g., Neihart, 1999), and students’ psychological well-being (e.g., Jin & Moon, 2006).

To understand social-emotional development, we need to understand more closely the personal experience of persons who are gifted. The pressures, joy, worries, conflicts and satisfactions of the experience of being a person who is gifted in various settings can become known as we gather evidence from empirical studies, biographies, clinical stories, life stories, etc. (Coleman & Cross, 2000, p. 203).

Stoeger (2009) *The History of Giftedness Research* states that in the empirical phase of research, gifts and talents began to be measured by scientists that interpreted them to be the foundation for exceptional achievement. However, during this phase gifts and talents were equated with a high level of intelligence. Additionally, as time progressed, giftedness became increasingly identified with an interaction with various personality traits.

Stoeger (2009) also notes that “regardless of whether intelligence, cognitive abilities or achievement are included in the conception of giftedness, presently, multi-dimensional approaches to giftedness are highly favored” (p.22). Gagne (2009) advances that these multidimensional models feature additional personality traits such as motivation, creativity, or wisdom. “While the wealth of empirical studies on intelligence theories and the measurement of intelligence is virtually insurmountable, this is not the case for multi-dimensional models of giftedness” (Stoeger, 2009, p. 22).

Identification of the Gap in Literature

Literature aimed at the gifted adolescent is sparse (Maxwell, 2007), and seems to be most lacking in guidance for the gifted adolescent (Bireley & Genshaft, 1991). Despite continued efforts by researchers, a gap still exists in our understanding of the psychological, social, and emotional adjustment of gifted students. Historically, research and education of the gifted has focused on cognitive variables with less attention given to the social and emotional needs of these students (Mueller, 2009).

Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration has been validated through qualitative research and rich case studies (Dabrowski, 1996,1967,1970,1972; Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977; Piechowski, 1978,1990, 2003, 2008); however, few empirical studies specifically examine the levels of development along the Theory of Positive Disintegration continuum (Bailey, 2011).

The National Association for Gifted Children (1995) highlights that 'gifted and talented children, because of heightened intellectual and social-emotional needs, may experience difficulties that require professional intervention'. They assert that it is imperative that those providing such services have expertise in understanding the impact of giftedness on development. However, in-depth examinations of gifted students' experiences in specific developmental domains have been limited, particularly in conjunction with how these developmental domains may be influencing the social, emotional, and behavioral experiences of these students during adolescence. (Bailey, 2011, p. 211)

Measures of well-being (i.e., positive affect, negative affect, and psychological well-being) that until recently have been gaps in the adolescence literature (Garcia, 2011).

Oberle et al. (2011) assert that:

“Much of the research conducted to date on subjective well-being in general and life satisfaction in particular, however, has been carried out primarily with adult populations, and comparatively limited work has examined life satisfaction in children and adolescents” (p. 889).

Causes for concern according to Steinberg (2014) are that American adolescents are not doing well. Many of the encouraging trends in indicators of adolescent well-being that we saw over the past twenty years have leveled off or have even reversed.

“Declines in rates of teen pregnancy and smoking have more or less stalled. Adolescents' drug use is on the rise, as is attempted suicide, bullying, and the need for remedial education among college freshmen. Much of the progress made in the late 1990s has ended, and some of it is actually unraveling” (Steinberg, 2014, pg.11).

Gifted Characteristics

“Gifted children have the same basic needs as other children and progress through the same developmental stages as other children (though often at a younger age) and can be confronted with the same problems (such as family poverty, substance abuse, or alcoholism)” (Assunta Zanetti et al., 2020, p. 20).

The review of literature related to the characteristics and well-being of gifted students suggests that one perspective of gifted children is that they are

“Vulnerable to social and emotional difficulties. Gifted students’ social adjustment may vary depending on the level of giftedness. The criticality can be traced to four factors: (1) Asynchrony; (2) Difficulty in finding peers; (3) Lack of challenge; and (4) Personal characteristics” (Assunta Zanetti et al., 2020, p. 23).

Gifted children’s needs arise because of the interaction with the environmental setting which includes family, school, and culture, and those that arise internally because of the personality of the gifted child. Therefore, their characteristics represent strengths on the one hand, but can also be associated with potential problems. When reflecting on the characteristics of gifted children or gifted adolescents as found in (Davis et. al, 2011) some common characteristics are listed as:

- early and rapid learning
- highly verbal, large vocabulary
- keen observation
- superior reasoning, ability to problem solve
- recognizes patterns, insightful, makes connections
- advanced interests
- high curiosity
- overexcitabilities

- emotional intensity and sensitivity
- high motivation, persists
- perfectionism, can be extreme
- strong empathy, moral thinking, sense of justice, intellectual honesty
- awareness of social issues
- asynchronous development
- interpersonal difficulties
- nonconformity
- self-criticism, can be excessive
- self-doubt, poor self-concept
- depression
- extreme feelings of being different

Some of these characteristics also have aspects that may present negatively in children. Students that are perfectionists may show anxiety when faced with certain tasks or assignments and have challenges getting started or completing the tasks because of this characteristic. Other negative gifted characteristics include “uneven mental development (asynchronous development), interpersonal difficulties, due often to intellectual differences, and underachievement, especially in uninteresting areas” (Davis et al., pg. 33).

Understanding the characteristics of students who are gifted enables educators to design curriculum according to the needs of gifted students. These characteristics and traits can also be a guide in identification of students with special needs.

“In addition, gifted individuals may differ greatly from less able peers and among themselves in the degree of characteristics associated with giftedness, making it difficult to anticipate social and emotional concerns” (Peterson, 2009, p. 280).

The researchers who wrote the article *Relationship between Levels of Giftedness and Psychosocial Adjustment* reviewed the literature from several studies also looking at the children's self-concept, emotional autonomy from parents, and anxiety. It appears that they did find differences between genders. Their findings revealed that girls outscored boys on the honesty-trustworthiness, opposite-sex relations, same-sex relations, and verbal scales. The boys however outscored the girls on the math scale. Both of these outcomes generally have the support from research of the gifted and general education populations (Norman et al., 1999).

Norman et al., (1999) acknowledged in this article several studies in connection with the relationship between intellectual ability and psychosocial adjustment. There were early studies from Terman and Hollingworth that did not go without controversy. The authors of this article stated that more recent research finds the issue to still be unclear (Norman et. al., 1999). The article suggests that these contradictory findings may be a product of the varying definitions and criteria in each study used to identify gifted students (1999). However, in the midst of mixed findings in reference to the adjustment of highly gifted students, studies regarding moderately gifted students are seemingly consistent (1999).

Giftedness manifests itself as a cluster of traits, not as a typical pattern of behavior and development. High-ability youth vary in the range of talents they exhibit and in their emotional, social, and physical development. Gifted students' development is

dynamic and individual according to Assunta Zanetti et. al (2020) in *Understanding Giftedness: A Guide for Parents and Educators*. “Gifted students have keen intellectual intensity and a need to understand themselves (Lind, 2000; Bouchet and Falk, 2001; Silverman, 2002) without self-understanding gifted students may begin to deny their giftedness” (Sisk, 2005, p. 213).

Myths

When navigating through the needs of gifted students the myths regarding giftedness should also be addressed. According to Ellen Winner (1996) *Gifted Children: Myths and Realities*, there are nine myths to be debunked related to giftedness:

1. Glowing with Psychological Health
2. Biology vs.
3. Environment
4. The Driving Parent
5. Gifted Children Become Eminent Adults
6. Global Giftedness
7. Talented but not Gifted
8. Exceptional IQ
9. All Children are Gifted

Five gifted myths were chosen to give better insight into how giftedness and the needs of gifted children can be accurately addressed. This study explored parents’ perceptions of their gifted adolescents’ temperament and character. Psychological well-being was also a focus which led to the selection of the first five myths addressed.

Winner (1996) combined two of the myths on giftedness, Biology vs. Environment in her book. The five myths addressed the psychosocial, nature vs. nurture, parents, and the transition to successful adulthood which relate to the two research questions that guide this study:

RQ 1: What are parents' perceptions of temperament in their gifted adolescent?

RQ 2: What are parents' perceptions of character in their gifted adolescent?

RQ3: What are parents' perceptions of well-being in their gifted adolescent?

Glowing with Psychological Health Myth

Gifted children often face ridicule, taunts about being nerds or geeks. Most children easily pick out the awkward, unathletic loners, or the show-offs with strange interests out of touch with those of their peers. Psychologists have countered this view with an idealized picture of high- IQ children as popular, well-adjusted, exceptionally moral, and glowing with psychological and physical health. In his 1922 address as the president of the American Psychological Association, Terman defined gifted children not only as academically superior but also as “superior to unselected children in physique, health and social adjustment; and marked by superior moral attitudes as measured by character tests of trait ratings” (Winner, 1996, p.10).

But children's prejudices may strike close to the truth. We seem to have a need either to deny or to idealize the gifted child. Gifted children are often socially isolated and unhappy unless they are fortunate enough to find others like themselves. “The vision of the well-adjusted gifted child applies only to the moderately gifted child and leaves out the extremes” (Winner, 1996, p. 10).

Biology Versus Environment

Where does giftedness come from? The commonsense myth is that giftedness is entirely inborn. This folk myth ignores the environment's powerful influence on the development of gifts (Winner, 1996). To further quote Winner:

Diametrically opposed to this view is the myth held by some psychologists that giftedness is simply a matter of intensive training by parents and teachers begun at an early age. In the recent words of one psychologist, 'With sufficient energy and dedication on the parents' part, it is possible that it may not be all that difficult to produce a child prodigy.' This kind of statement suggests that gifted children start out with ordinary brains which are then shaped to become extraordinary. This view ignores the powerful role of biology in determining whether there is any gift for the environment to develop. (p. 8)

Nature versus nurture, in which nature (biology or genetics) and nurture (environment) in the field of gifted education, the contribution of genetics has long been neglected. Plomin and Price (2003) suggest that the field has much to gain by taking a more balanced view that recognizes nature (genetics) as well as nurture (environment) on the origins of giftedness. Stating that:

"Part of the reason for this neglect is the legacy of behaviorism in the behavioral sciences, which led to environmentalism (you are what you learn) and which conditioned behavioral scientists to be uncomfortable with biology. Additionally, the major reason, however, is that many fear that finding genetic influence will mean that nothing can be done environmentally" (Plomin & Price, 2003, p. 113).

Which is more influential, biology versus environment?

"It is not a sign of fence sitting to conclude that nature and nurture are complementary forces in determining IQ scores and lifetime achievement. Not only is the complementarity necessary, but in a practical sense it doesn't matter which of the two is stronger. Neither can function without the other. The strength of both have to be maximized to realize maximal effect" (Tannenbaum, 2003, p. 52).

Nonetheless, the major reason for wanting to understand the genetic and environmental origins of individual differences in intelligence is the basic science goal of explanation. The driving force behind science is simply curiosity, a curiosity that is shared by educators and parents who wonder why children develop the way they do (Plomin & Price, 2003).

The Driving Parent

Winner (1996) notes that some people assert that gifted children are “made” by overzealous parents’ intent on their children’s stardom. Parents are cautioned not to push their children, to let them have “normal” childhoods. Otherwise, they are told, their children will resent them and lose all interest in achieving. She further states that:

“It is true that parents of gifted children are highly involved in the nurturance of their children’s gifts. But such an unusual degree of investment and involvement is not a destructive force. It is a necessary one if a child’s gift is to be developed” (pg. 9).

Worrell (2010) concludes that giftedness must be nurtured appropriately vigorously. Although it is not always clear whether the nurturing will pay off, it is abundantly clear that without the appropriate environmental conditions, the gift will never mature into what it could be.

Gifted Children become Eminent Adults

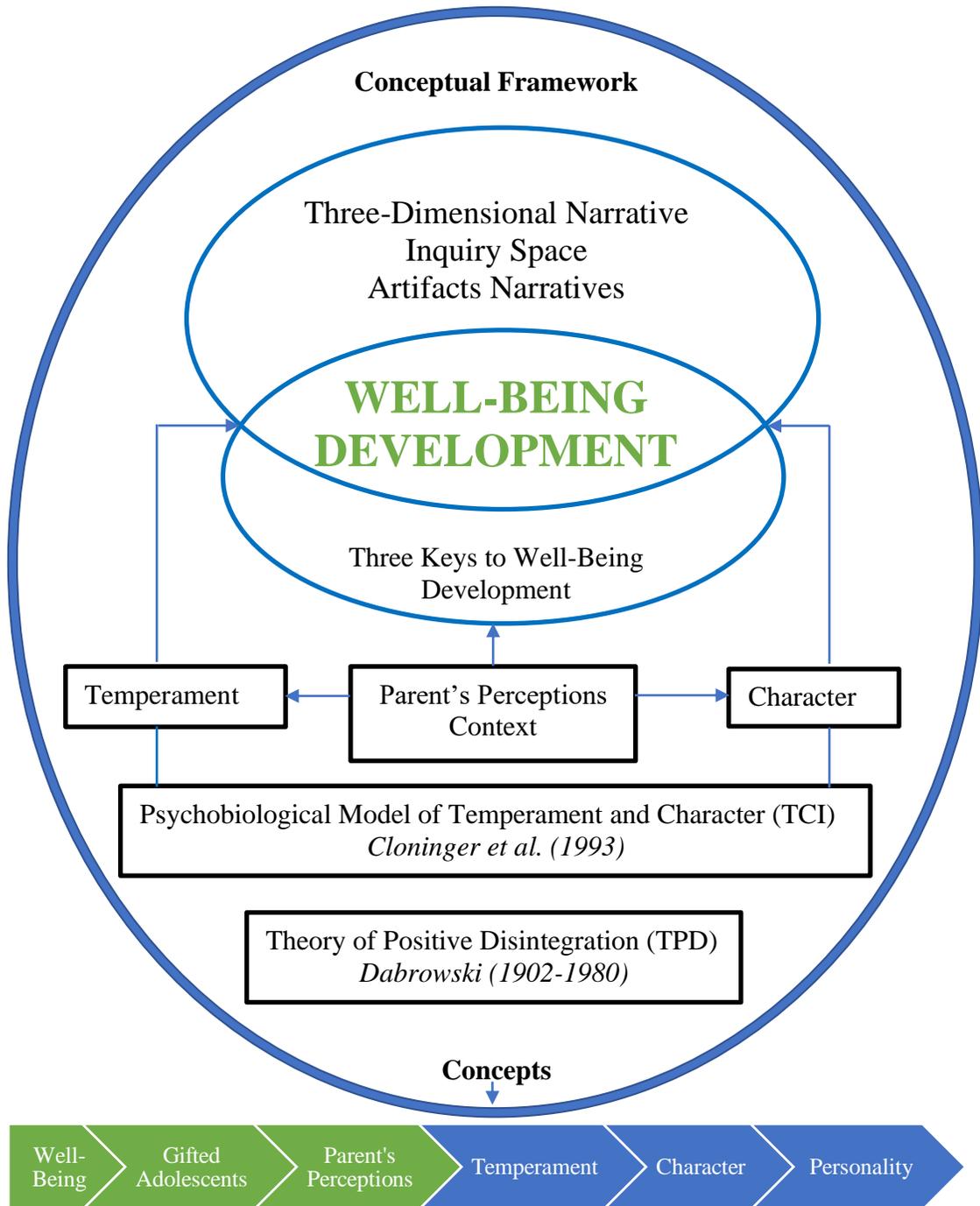
What makes a successful adult? There are some common traits in which they share (Colangelo & Davis, 2003). They are all intellectual, have perseverance, and stimulating social environments. Having a support system from parents, educators, and other accomplished adults (mentors) as well as other driving forces such as investment in their time and earning. We concluded that children that excel at an early age are destined

to become eminent adults. However, we do not think about the reverse – that the gifts of many exceptional children never fully develop (Winner, 1996). We have to consider those gifted children who experience burnout and are broken by societal norms, also those who for whatever reason choose a different path. Most schools are not designed for the gifted learner, which makes it challenging for them to be excited about learning. In the United States some of the most talented chose to drop out altogether (Delisle & Galbraith, 2002).

Winner (1996) states that the gifted child is often seen as not only creative but also as becoming creative and eminent adults in the future. While some gifted children become extremely successful in the creative world, others never reach their creative potential. Additionally, the factors that are predictive of adult eminence cannot be assumed, and beyond the scope of ability, other factors are at play by personality, motivation, opportunity, parents, and mental health.

Mendaglio (2008) suggested that the theory that best explains the plethora of mental health problems among creatively eminent persons is Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD). He argues that intense negative emotions, moods, and overexcitabilities set the stage for advanced development, precisely because negative emotions allow creators to achieve more advanced emotional development, and their creative products may be part of that developmental struggle.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework 2: Concepts Covered in the Literature



Note. (1) Well-Being, (2) Gifted Adolescents, and (3) Parent's Perceptions are the first three concepts covered in the literature review.

Themes of the Literature

The body of research focused on gifted, high-achieving, and talented individuals addresses the cognitive and affective needs of these individuals, although the former is more widely discussed than the latter, particularly with respect to the identification of students for gifted programming (Dai et. al, 2011). Pioneers in the research of affective needs of gifted and talented students can be traced back to the early 1900s.

Well-Being

The World Health Organization defines health as “the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (World Health Organization, WHO, 1948). In the absence of a uniform definition of well-being, this definition is widely cited and used, and offers the broadest conceptual definition of well-being (Charlemagne-Badal et al., 2015). *Well-being* in this study will be defined as a state that allows gifted students to learn how to face their academic and life challenges by focusing on the whole being.

Charlemagne-Badal et al., (2015) also notes that the absence of a uniform definition of well-being has resulted in much inconsistency in the operationalization of the concept, also finding other definitions:

Well-being has been defined based on study purpose, sample, setting or scope. for example, some authors have used the term in the context of positive psychological functioning (Ryff, 1989; Stewart et al. 1988; Veit & Ware, 1983) while another defines well-being in broader terms to include physical, social, and environmental aspects of an individual in addition to mental or psychological (Kiefer, 2008). Although there is no single, widely accepted definition of well-being, Keifer (2008, pg. 244) has suggested that well-being may be defined as ‘an individual’s physical, mental, social, and environmental status with each aspect interacting with the other and each having differing levels of importance and impact according to each individual. (p. 307)

“Findings from a growing number of studies that examined youth on a single occurrence or across time have generally confirmed that a core set of variables covary with differences in children’s and adolescents’ levels of subjective well-being” (Suldo, 2016, p. 435). Subjective well-being entails “a person’s cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life as a whole” (Diener et. al, 2009, p. 187). It also is comprised of life satisfaction (i.e., global appraisal of the personally significant domains of one’s life, such as satisfaction with family, friends, and school/work) and frequency of positive emotions and moods (e.g., excited, cheerful, interested) relative to negative emotions (e.g., sad, ashamed, scared) (Suldo et.al, 2018). Growing research in line with mounting support for subjective well-being as a key indicator of mental health, has focused on understanding the average levels of subjective well-being, and the primary factors of it, representatives of youth of interest to educators and psychologists such as gifted students (Suldo et. al, 2018).

“In accord with the understanding that multiple areas of life contribute to students’ happiness, multidimensional approaches to measuring youth life satisfaction consider students’ satisfaction in five key domains: school, family, friends, living environment, and self” (Huebner, 1994, p. 149).

Absent from the literature are comprehensive studies of the extent to which the relationships of these studies predict subjective well-being for gifted students in a manner similar to general samples of students (Suldo et. al, 2018). Ash and Huebner (1998) found that, although gifted and nongifted middle school students reported comparable levels of domain-specific and global life satisfaction, the two groups varied in the way individual domains related to their appraisal of life overall. They also found that satisfaction with school accounted for a greater portion of unique variance in global life

satisfaction among gifted students. Although school satisfaction contributes relatively little to overall life satisfaction among nongifted students (Dew and Huebner, 1994), gifted students attribute more of their overall life satisfaction to school, which is consistent with their heightened academic talents and accompanying success.

Neihart (1999) suggests that the psychological well-being of gifted students is a combination of the “type and degree of giftedness, the educational fit or lack thereof, and one’s personal characteristics” (p. 15). According to Cross et al. (2006) several authors have concluded that gifted adolescents in full-time, homogeneous classrooms have lower self-esteem and competence than students in part-time options (Chan, 1988; Coleman & Fults, 1985; Feldhusen et al., 1990; Karnes & Wherry, 1981; Kolloff, 1989), while other researchers have reported the opposite effect (Allen, 1991, Holloway, 2003, Kulik, 2003, Shield, 2002). This study included parent participants whose adolescents attended a full-time, self-contained school for gifted children.

Two approaches to well-being have been characteristic across studies. Garcia (2011) states that:

Subjective well-being (Diener, 1984) which focuses on assessment of individuals’ own judgements about life satisfaction (LS), the frequency of positive affects (PA) and the infrequency of negative affects (NA) is one of the approaches. The second is psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989) which includes six distinct constructs: autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery, and the ability to have positive relations with others. These six constructs define PWB both theoretically and operationally, and they identify what promotes effective adaptation to life events and emotional and physical health (Garcia, 2011, p. 1209).

Considering the critical elements of contextual factors important for life satisfaction and given that (SWB) has consistently been identified as a significant psychological factor associated with positive growth, health, and well-being in adults

(Diener & Diener, 2009), increasing the understanding of life satisfaction in early adolescence is important because it allows researchers to relate (SWB) to critical parallel developmental characteristics, such as social adjustment, mental health, and school performance (Oberle et al., 2011). Among the personal factors, we consider emotional intelligence (EI) to be relevant. (EI) may play a fundamental role in the academic success of students and in their ability to adjust in the classroom, and it may also be a protective factor in adaptation processes and against aggression, for example (Casino-Garcia et al., 2019).

“It seems evident that giftedness influences well-being. Some authors consider giftedness as a mechanism that promotes individual social adaptation; they highlight the social value of talent and that these individuals better understand each other and have better strategies to resolve conflicts, have a better academic self-concept” (Casino-Garcia et al., 2019, p. 3).

According to Plucker & Stocking (2001) academic self-concept is important for understanding a variety of school-related constructs, including educational and occupational aspirations (Marsh, 1991) and school achievement (Hoge & Renzulli, 1993). Among the affective constructs that have been targeted as important to adolescent well-being, few have received greater attention than self-concept (Plucker & Stocking, 2001). Furthermore, during adolescence, the self-concept becomes more abstract and differentiated, enabling complex forms of self-representation to take shape (Erikson, 1968; Harter, 1986).

The Whole Gifted Child Task Force (NAGC, 2018) reports that empirical studies (Neihart, 1999) suggest that adults are often unaware of gifted students’ psychological distress because gifted students tend to achieve even when they are struggling psychologically.

David (2018) suggests that in addition to the family components of each adolescent, there are external factors typical to each society, religion, and country – all of which are either enhancing or have the potential of harming the adolescent’s emotional stability. Only when the adolescent is strong enough mentally, he or she is ready to face the challenges of adulthood. As Renati et al. (2016) summarize, without a healthy environment a child or an adolescent might adopt behavioral patterns and strategies that might damage their physical, social, and emotional wellbeing.

Gifted Adolescents

Gifted Adolescents seek to discover who they are in all aspects of their being – who they might be, what they are capable of, and how they might interface with and impact the world anew (Daniels & Piechowski, 2008). According to Csikszentmihalyi and Larson:

During the adolescent years, young people go through great emotional, cognitive, and social transformations. Out of these changes emerges a pattern of thought and volition that defines the self. In a constantly changing and diversified society such as ours, it is not easy to attain a consistent, comfortable interpretation of oneself (Glaser, 2003, p.35)

Piechowski (1997) writes that one of the basic human faculties is the capacity for making comparisons and evaluations. In the personal domain this means self-evaluation, comparing ourselves with others and having responsiveness to how others evaluate us (Bandura, 1986). However, this process may be taken a step further, and a very significant step it is, comparing ourselves in the present with what we can become, our potentials, possibilities, and above all, our ideal self. It is also likely that to be emotionally sensitive entails a range and speed of evaluative processes that is greater than

average. Additionally, combined with great imagination and intellectual power this may lead to brooding and devastating self-criticism.

“It may turn morbid or neurotic. Or it may mobilize one’s whole psyche toward the goal of self-realization in creativity; in service to others; or in a higher, transcendent consciousness in which the illusion of separateness gradually lifts” (Piechowski, 1997, pg. 366).

Gifted students, including their non-gifted peers experience similar psychosocial issues during adolescence: “(a) dating, (b) college career choices, (c) puberty, (d) identity formation, (e) self-esteem needs, (f) friendship building, and (g) extreme self-consciousness” (Cross & Frazier, 2009, p. 37). Jackson & Moyle report that:

“Erikson (1950, 1968) described adolescence as a time of identity crisis and conflict, and internal process when an individual acquires a personal identity and seeks a place in the larger world outside of the family. Also stating that whereas puberty refers to biological, sexual maturation, adolescence having a less clear boundary definition – refers to the cultural and psychosocial transition to adulthood” (Daniels & Piechowski, 2008, p. 57).

Steinberg (2014) delineates in his book *Age of Opportunity: Lessons from the New Science of Adolescence* a word or two about terminology:

Much has been written in recent years about what we should call people in their early twenties – ‘emerging adults,’ ‘twixters,’ and ‘adultescents’ have all been suggested – and, as well, whether we should view the early twenties as a unique stage of development, the first part of adulthood, or an extension of adolescence. In this book I use the term ‘adolescence’ to refer to the period from ten until twenty-five. This may come as a surprise to readers who think of adolescents as teenagers and may bother those who balk at the notion of referring to people in their early twenties by the same label that we use to describe people in their early teens. (pg.5)

Jen et al. (2016) found that during adolescence, discovering out “who I am” is a pertinent question (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010). However, the timeframe for adolescence is commonly thought of as ages 12 to 20 (Erikson, 1968; Miller, 2011), but now the parameters are not limited for this age group, because of early onset of physical maturation, and extended reliance on parents. For example, Moon & Dixon (2015) suggested that:

Gifted educators consider the adolescence period as ages 10 to 22 and referred the stages as early adolescence (ages 10-13), middle adolescence (ages 14-17), and late adolescence (ages 18-22). Additionally, Peterson et al. (2015) referred to adolescence as teen years (ages 13-19), which correspond to (Grades 6 through 12) when they discussed the social and emotional development of gifted adolescents. (Jen et al., 2016, p. 41)

Adolescence is significant and plays a role in peer relationships, becoming more difficult to navigate socially in later grades than previously in earlier grade levels (Jen et al., 2016). Peterson et al. (2015) acknowledged that older adolescents need to develop more complex emotional, moral and personal skills socially.

Negative aspects of giftedness included being assigned unflattering stereotypical labels such as “geek” or “snob” and being the target of jealousy or animosity, social exclusion, and unrealistic expectations. Nonetheless, other areas of concern frequently expressed by gifted adolescents are feelings of intense emotional involvement with their environment, stress over high parental expectations, worry over good peer relationships, believing they are different from their peers, and demands related to having a perfectionist attitude (Rinn et al., 2012).

“Educators of the gifted, the link between giftedness and perfectionism is clearly established. The tendency toward perfectionism is an item on the most widely used teacher rating scale for the identification of superior students” (Pyryt, 2008, p. 180). Counseling for gifted students often involves focusing on perfectionism (Kerr, 1991; Silverman, 1993). Underachievement, and emotional stress present as negative aspects of perfectionism:

Whitmore (1980) reported that perfectionistic tendencies make some gifted students vulnerable for underachievement because they do not submit work unless it is perfect. In terms of emotional stress, perfectionism is seen to cause feelings of worthlessness and depression when gifted individuals fail to live up to unrealistic expectations. Delisle (1986; 1990) has provided anecdotal evidence that perfectionism places some gifted students at risk for suicide. (Pyryt, 2008, p. 180)

What can we say about the suicides of gifted adolescents? According to Cross (2011):

- Adolescents are committing suicide.
- Gifted adolescents are committing suicide.
- The rate of suicide has increased over the past decade for the general population of adolescents within the context of an overall increase across all age groups.
- It is reasonable to conclude that the incidence of suicide of gifted adolescents has increased over the past decade, while keeping in mind that there are no definitive data on the subject.
- Given the limited data available, we cannot ascertain whether the incidence of suicide among gifted adolescents is different from the incidence among the general population of adolescents (p. 45).

Additionally, Cross (2011) wrote that Piechowski's treatment of Dabrowski's theories were helpful in interpreting the data collected on gifted adolescent suicide. Some of the characteristics that were found to be beneficial in the data-analysis phase included:

Intellectual-introspection, avid reading, curiosity, imaginal-fantasy, animistic and magical thinking, mixing truth and fiction, illusions, being emotional, strong affective memory, concern with death, depressive and suicidal moods, sensitivity in relationships, and feelings of inadequacy and inferiority" (p.45).

Furthermore, "there is so little evidence available about gifted adolescents on this specific topic that nothing should be concluded. In other words, at this point, we cannot know" (Cross, 2011, p. 45).

Perfectionism

Silverman (2000) states that whereas abstract reasoning is the most accepted aspect of giftedness, perfectionism is the least understood and most maligned, even though the latter is a direct result of the former. Perfection is an abstract concept. It is an awareness of what is possible – and abstract ideal, beyond that which currently exists in concrete reality. Dabrowski's Level III conflict between "what is" and "what ought to be" is the search for ideals of a higher order. From a Dabrowskian perspective, perfectionism is a positive quality in the personality – the striving for self-perfection that propels the individual toward higher level development (Silverman, 1990).

Silverman (2008) found that Dabrowski's theory presents another lens for examining perfectionism in the gifted population. According to Dabrowski (1964, 1972), there are various levels of development, from narcissistic self-absorption to a life of pure service.

This is not an age-related theory of development – we don't start out as sociopaths and end up as saints. Individuals tend to be predominantly at one or two levels throughout the lifespan. Perfectionism looks completely different at each level of development:

Level I. At Level I, the individual is only concerned with the self. They don't see their own imperfections; instead, they focus on the flaws of others. The saying at this level might be "I'm perfect, but you are not" (pg. 154).

Level II. At Level II, individuals are at the mercy of the social group. They continuously ask themselves:

"What will people think of me if I ...? They experience insecurity and feelings of inferiority toward others; they judge themselves as lacking in comparison with others. Polarized "all or nothing" thinking comes into play at this level: Either I am perfect, or I am worthless" (pg. 155).

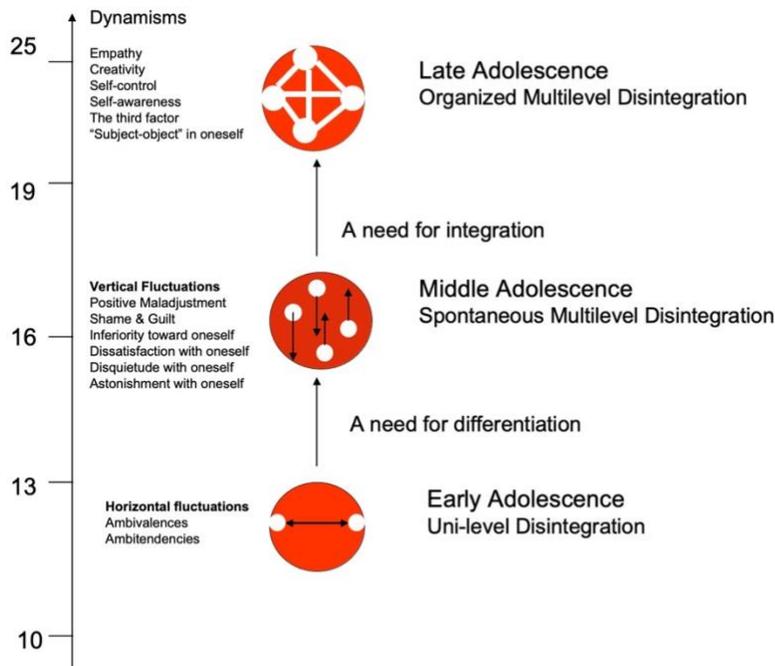
Level III. At Level III, 'multilevel development,' the individual becomes a seeker of self-perfection. Instead of feeling inferior to others or feeling inadequate to meet the expectations of others, the person becomes aware of his or their potential to be fully human and feels inferior to that potentiality. At this level the individual becomes aware of the higher order, but in the beginning is still caught in the lower levels. The saying of Level III individuals could be initially, "I see who I want to be, but I see no way of getting there from here." Though uncomfortable for the person, these inner forces express different ways of evaluating one's personality and reflecting on one's character. They catalyze the work of inner transformation (pg. 156, 157).

Level IV. At Level IV, the individual has transformed much of the inner polarity and is able to commit to living a life permeated by high ideals. One gains greater capacity for self-reflection, for acceptance of others and of self. There is more self-regulation.

Instead of being controlled by dishonorable desires, such as possessiveness or trying to control others, one is able to easily access compassion and understanding of the plight of others. One's perspective is informed by a clearer vision of the meaning of life experiences. Perfectionism at this level is wholeness and the appreciation of the inherent perfection in all of life. The saying at Level IV is, "What ought to be will be, and I will make it so" (pg. 158).

Level V. Level V is the perfection of the personality. It is life without inner conflict. It is a life directed by the highest guiding principles. At this amazing level of human development, the individual becomes a wise teacher, guide, and exemplar for others. Here, one achieves autonomy from the lower layer of reality fraught with confusion and violence. Life is lived in service to all of humanity, not in service of the ego. The saying for this highest level could be, "All is love." This is the transcendent potential for humanity – the greatest gift of Dabrowski's theory (pg. 158).

Figure 2.2 Three Levels of Adolescent Development



Note. Adolescent development can be expressed by the three levels of positive disintegration: the early period of adolescence described by the unilevel disintegration, the middle period of adolescence described by the spontaneous multilevel disintegration, and the late adolescence and young adulthood described by the organized multilevel disintegration. Adapted from Laycraft (2011) Theory of Positive Disintegration as a Model of Adolescent Development. Reprinted with permission from the author.

Laycraft (2011) describes the “developmental” unilevel disintegration as a pattern observed in early adolescence when young people can only think about isolated characteristics of the self (“... I am intelligent, gifted, but then, I see myself as a fool.”) or experience opposing emotions (approach and avoidance or joy and sadness) (Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977). However, the third level – spontaneous multilevel disintegration defines an extensive differentiated mental structure, governed by intrapsychic processes (intensive inner conflicts, self-observation, self-evaluation, and existential anxieties). It is proposed that this level of development describes the behavior

of middle adolescents. Additionally, the fourth level- organized multilevel disintegration is a further expansion of spontaneous multilevel disintegration with some overlap. This level of development characterized by lesser tension and greater ability to systemize experiences, describes behavior of older adolescents and young adults.

Parents' Perceptions

Jolly & Matthews (2012) state that:

The perceptions parents hold about giftedness and ability have been widely studied, relative to other aspects of the literature. Much of the research literature to date has examined parental perceptions in relation to giftedness and addressed issues of the role of parent perceptions in the gifted identification process, parents' views about the concept of giftedness, and their use of labels to describe students with gifts and talents. (p.10).

Also, Solow (2001) reported, "how parents raise their gifted children has a lot to do with how they perceive them" (pg. 15).

The way that parents' perceive their child's giftedness, and their high abilities informs parents' perceptions and understanding of the gifted label (Jolly & Matthews, 2012). Jolly and Matthews also posit that "although parents may think of their child as gifted, they often refrain from labeling their child as such. Cornell (1989) reported that children of parents who did use the term displayed a higher incidence of maladjusted behavior" (p.11).

Parental authority and setting boundaries with gifted adolescent behaviors is one of the challenges adults encounter (Mesch, 2006; Wolf, 2013). Parents of gifted adolescents have a tendency to let them make decisions about matters more than parents of their non-gifted peers (David, 2018; Rim, 2008). Davis (2018) reports that:

This tendency might be harmful both to the adolescent and to their parents, as being a high ability learner does not necessarily mean being mature enough to be treated as an adult, and without parental authority the adolescent's ability to conform to certain rules will not get enough practice. In addition, if the gifted adolescent has siblings, it is the duty of the parents to give all of them the same opportunity to exhibit their maturity and offer advantages only upon good behavior and not because of a high cognitive level. (p. 6)

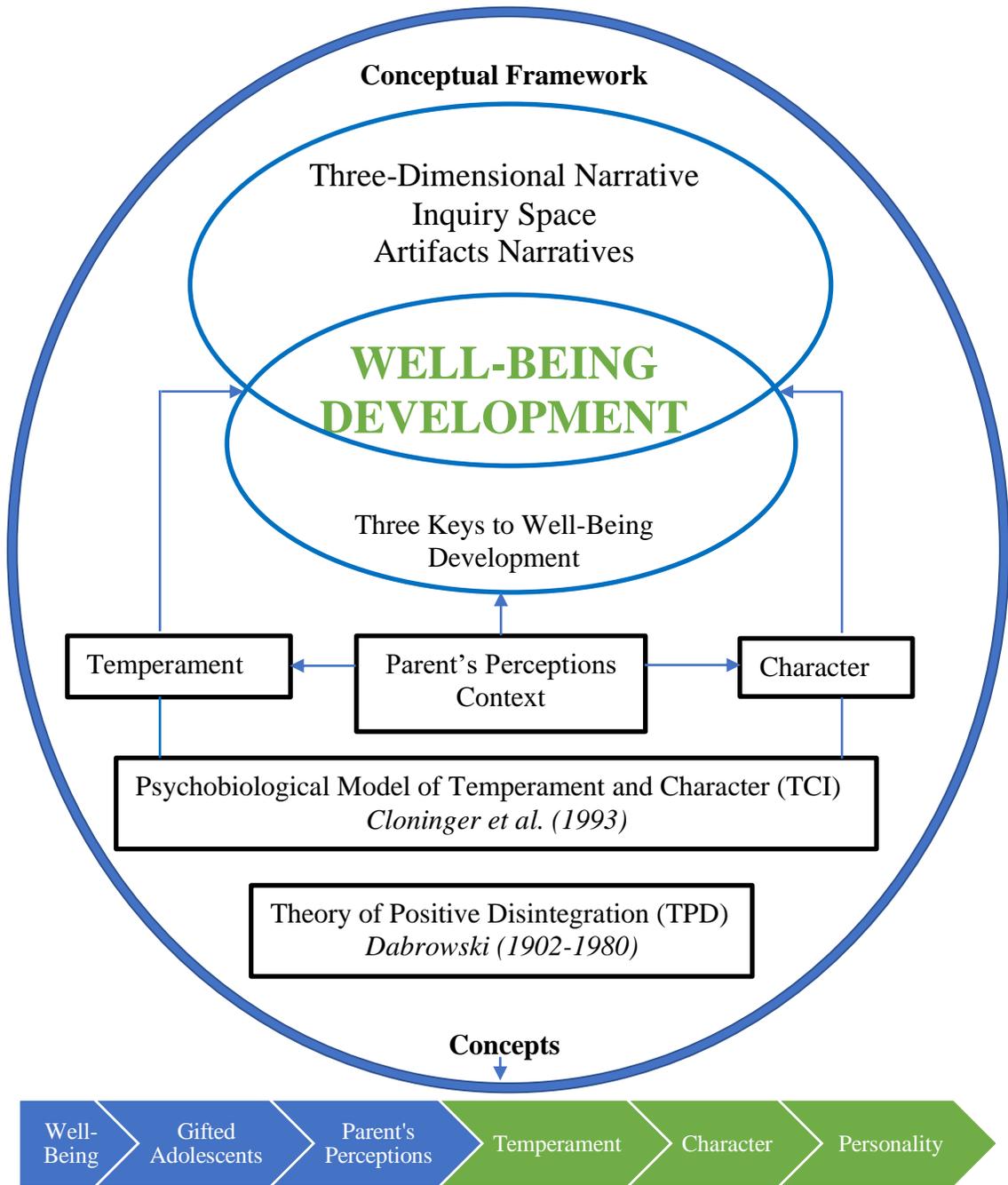
There are three areas where information in the research literature about parenting of gifted children is lacking, according to Morawska & Sanders (2009):

1. Gifted children are vulnerable to the development of emotional and behavioral problems; however, there is little evidence available as to the nature of this vulnerability as well as the factors contributing to it.
2. Parents of gifted children often experience additional challenges in their role as parents, however; these challenges are not well-understood and described.
3. There are no empirically supported parenting interventions to assist parents in parenting their gifted child. (p. 163)

Possible considerations that may cause behavioral and emotional challenges in children include asynchronous development (Roedell, 1984; Webb, 1993), high expectations of parents and teachers, along with misplaced and improper praise, as well as parents' overinvolvement (Webb, 1993; Pfeiffer & Stocking).

Parents may also not know how they should respond to their child's behavior. As they lack a framework for understanding the developmental issues affecting a gifted child and have particular concerns about their child's emotional difficulties (Morawska & Sanders 2009).

Figure 2.3 Conceptual Framework 3: Concepts of Study Continued



Note. Literature review continues covering concepts (4) Temperament, (5) Character, and (6) Personality of the study in the exploration of well-being development.

Temperament

The scientific study of early temperament can be traced to the seminal work of Thomas and Chess, who initiated the New York Longitudinal Study to study the significance of biologically based temperament in infancy and childhood (Thomas, Chess, Birch, Hertzog, & Korn, 1963). Thomas and Chess viewed temperament as a style of behavior and abilities. Their work challenged the way social development was studied at the time because they emphasized the two-way interaction of biology and environment in shaping children's outcomes. Prior to this view, many researchers and clinicians viewed child personality and outcome as being influenced almost exclusively by rearing environments. Thus, the work of Thomas and Chess was an important step in research because it suggested that there are preexisting personality styles from which individuals then operate (Salekin & Averett, 2008).

Temperament has been defined differently by different researchers, and the link between temperament and personality is not fully understood (Frick, 2004). The different perspectives regarding temperament include: (a) that temperament is different from personality, (b) that temperament is linked to certain personality traits, and (c) that temperament is personality. Salekin and Averett (2008) state that developmental and child psychologists describe visible and consistent changes in young children by relying on temperamental theories such as negative affect (Thomas & Chess, 1977) or emotionality (Buss & Plomin, 1984), sociability (Buss & Plomin, 1984) or high activity level (Rothbart & Derryberry, 1981), task persistence (Thomas & Chess, 1977) or ability to regulate emotions and behavior (Rothbart & Derryberry, 1981).

The differences in temperament have been thought to be expressions of the nervous system and how the brain works and have a strong hereditary foundation (Mervielde, De Clercq, De Fruyt, & Van Leeuwen, 2005).

In contrast, personality traits are mainly used to chart stable underlying differences in adults, presumed to be partly influenced by temperament and interaction with the environment. According to this model, temperament can be considered a direct precursor to personality and, thus, is the earliest expression of individual difference (Salekin and Averett, 2008, p. 353).

Cloninger (2004) *Feeling Good: The Science of Well-Being*, writes:

Temperament is described in terms of habits and skills that are elicited by simple stimuli perceived by the physical senses. Temperament is the model of human personality described by materialists, such as William James, and materialistic rationalists, like Locke, who believe that all thought is a consequence of sensory experience or reflection on sensory experience. Temperament has usually been defined as those components of personality that are heritable, developmentally stable, emotion based, or uninfluenced by sociocultural learning. (p.53)

Cloninger distinguished three dimensions of temperament based on prior research on the genetic structure of personality in humans, studies of the nervous system and how the brain works, the study of evolutionary development of a species or a particular characteristic, and behavioral condition while developing his model of temperament (Cloninger 1986,1987).

The three initial dimensions of Cloninger's temperament model were described as Novelty Seeking (exploratory impulsiveness versus stoic frugality), Harm Avoidance (anxiety-proneness versus outgoing vigor and risk taking), and Reward Dependence (social attachment versus aloofness). Additionally, Persistence (industry versus under-achievement) emerged as an independent fourth dimension of temperament in Cloninger's model (Cloninger, 2004). Furthermore, Cloninger (2004) found that through his empirical findings and the research of others that the variation in temperament alone

could not account for personality development. Accordingly, he extended his temperament model to include three-character traits called Self-Directedness (self-concept), Cooperativeness (concept of relations with others), and Self-Transcendence (concept of our participation in the world as a whole). The Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) measures the four temperament dimensions and the three-character traits and provides a dual-aspect description of self as the marriage of temperament and character. This instrument is listed in Table 2.1 the Temperament Theories and Instruments Timeline.

Table 2.1 Temperament Theories and Instruments Timeline

350 B.C.E.	Hippocrates, Four Humors
150 A.D.	Galen, Four Temperaments (Choleric, Phlegmatic, Melancholic, Sanguine)
1921	Ernest Kretschmer, <i>Physique and Character</i> Rorschach, <i>Psychodiagnostik</i> (Extroversion/Introversion) Carl Jung, <i>Psychological Type</i> (Extroversion/Introversion, Sensing/Intuition, Thinking/Feeling)
1940	William Sheldon, <i>Atlas of Men</i>
1940s	Katherine Briggs (adds Judging/Perceiving to Jung's theory)
1942-1944	Isabel Briggs-Myers develops MBTI test items
1949	Raymond Cattell, I 6PF Questionnaire
1956 - 1975	MBTI published as research instrument first, then made available to the public
1950s – 1970s	Alexander Thomas and Stella Chess, NYLS <i>New York Longitudinal Study</i>
1978, 1998	David Keirsey & Marilyn Bates, <i>Keirsey Temperament Sorter</i> (Artisan, Guardian, Rational, Idealist)
1978, 1982	William Carey devised measurement instruments for NYLS dimensions
1975 - 1984	Arnold Buss & Robert Plomin, <i>EAS Temperament Survey</i>
1993	C. Robert Cloninger, <i>Temperament and Character Inventory</i> (TCI)
1996	Thomas Oakland, Joseph Glutting, & Connie Horton, <i>Student Styles Questionnaire</i> (SSQ)

Note. Adapted from Joyce (2010) *Essentials of Temperament Assessment*

Character

Character emerges from one's essence (genetics) but is shaped by conscious and volitional existential choices to create an autonomous personality (Tillier, 2018).

Goleman (1995) cites:

There is an old-fashioned word for the body of skills that emotional intelligence represents: *character*. Character, writes Amitai Etzioni, the George Washington University social theorist, is 'the psychological muscle that moral conduct requires.' And philosopher John Dewey saw that a moral education is most potent when lessons are taught to children in the course of real events, not just as abstract lessons – the mode of emotional literacy.

If character development is a foundation of democratic societies, consider some of the ways emotional intelligence buttresses this foundation. The bedrock of character is self-discipline; the virtuous life, as philosophers since Aristotle have observed, is based on self-control. (pg.285)

One of the most famous studies in the history of psychology is widely known as the "marshmallow test" that measures what psychologists call "delay of gratification," an important aspect of self-control (Steinberg, 2014). Also, the marshmallow test seems to gauge something about people that stays with them as they grow up. According to Steinberg (2014) the individuals who waited to get the marshmallow when they were four years old became more successful in life as well as during the experiment. As teenagers, they had higher SAT scores and were more resilient. As young adults, they stayed in school longer, had less stress, and higher self-esteem.

A related keystone of character is being able to motivate and guide oneself, whether in doing homework, finishing a task, or getting up in the morning. Also, having the ability to defer gratification and to control and channel one's urges to act is a basic emotional skill, one that in a former day was called will (Goleman, 1995).

Personality and Assessments

Personality can be defined as the combination of characteristics or qualities that form an individual's distinctive character. It derives from Latin (*persona*) via old French (*persone*), meaning "mask" or "role," which suggests that an individual's personality is the outward appearance or role they adopt in life. However, a personality assessment is designed to help a person understand their real qualities and to develop their personality in ways that will enhance well-being. So, personality is simply a way of describing the way people learn and adapt (The Center for Well-Being).

Personality refers to an individual and his or her unique adaptive qualities. Hence, personality is more than a mask of the individual self. Personality is the self plus all the internal and external forces that pull on the self, so personality is the self and its way of adapting to internal and external influences. In other words, it involves adaptation to both a person's internal environment (e.g., feelings and motivations related to fears, desires, hopes, and aspirations) and their external environment (e.g., family, and social relations, job conditions, exposure to crime and violence, climate change) (tcipersonality.com).

Dabrowski (1972) defined personality as: "A self-aware, self-chosen, self-affirmed and self-determined unity of essential unity of essential individual psychic qualities. Personality as defined here appears at the level of secondary integration" (pg. 301). Dabrowski (1973) suggested that personality is the aim and outcome of development and is the product of a long and painful process of self-creation, self-education, and autopsychotherapy: "Man becomes more truly himself having passed through a variety of painful experiences, having exercised his own will and having made his own choices" (Dabrowski, 1970, pg.78). In this developmental process, Dabrowski

(1973) emphasized the creation of one's inner psychic milieu (environment), including features like a unique sense of self, elaboration of one's values, taking the perspective of the other, and self-control. Tillier (2018) notes that as these psychological features strengthen and work together, one's energies focus on expression of one's identity and purpose in life. "This identity is reflected by the conscious choices one makes, especially in arriving at one's values – a major component in the creation of the ideal personality that eventually forms to uniquely reflect an individual" (p. 25). In turn, this personality ideal shapes and forms the development of one's values

"The personality ideal is derived from a combination of one's initial essence – the genetic underpinnings of one's character – and the conscious, volitional day-to-day choices one makes in life" (Tillier, 2018, p.25).

Cross et al. (2006) reports that the Myers-Briggs type Indicator (MBTI) has been the one of the most popular personality characteristics assessments in the traditional and gifted communities. MBTI was based on the work of Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung and portrays the way one interacts with the world. The four dimensions of the MBTI are:

Extraversion/introversion, sensing/intuition, thinking/feeling, and judging/perceiving. Extraverts (E) are described as oriented to the outside world, outgoing and involved in a variety of things around them, while introverts (I) have a more internal orientation and are resistant to being involved in social activities. Sensing (S) types focus on information they gather directly from their senses and tend to be concrete in their perceptions. On the other hand, the intuitive (N) types enjoy dealing with abstractions and hidden meanings in situations. Thinking (T) types tend to be logical, objective, organized, and see things in bipolar dimensions, while feeling (F) types are skilled in analyzing and understanding other people's feelings and tend to make their judgements based on personal values. Finally, judging (J) types tend to plan, be organized, and enjoy being in control, which contrasts with perceiving (p) types who are more curious, open-minded, flexible, spontaneous, and demonstrate adaptability to life. (p. 298).

Neihart (1999) reports that “early research on psychological well-being used broad measures of personality or behaviors such as the Rorschach, the MMPI, or a behavior checklist” (p.11). Welsh (1969) used the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), and the Adjective Checklist to measure the capacity to adapt of more than 1000 gifted adolescents who attended the Governor's School of North Carolina. “Whereas Gair (1944), Gallagher and Crowder (1957), Mensh, (1950) and Jacobs (1971), each studied the psychological wellbeing of high ability children by analysis of Rorschach responses” (Neihart, 1999, p.11).

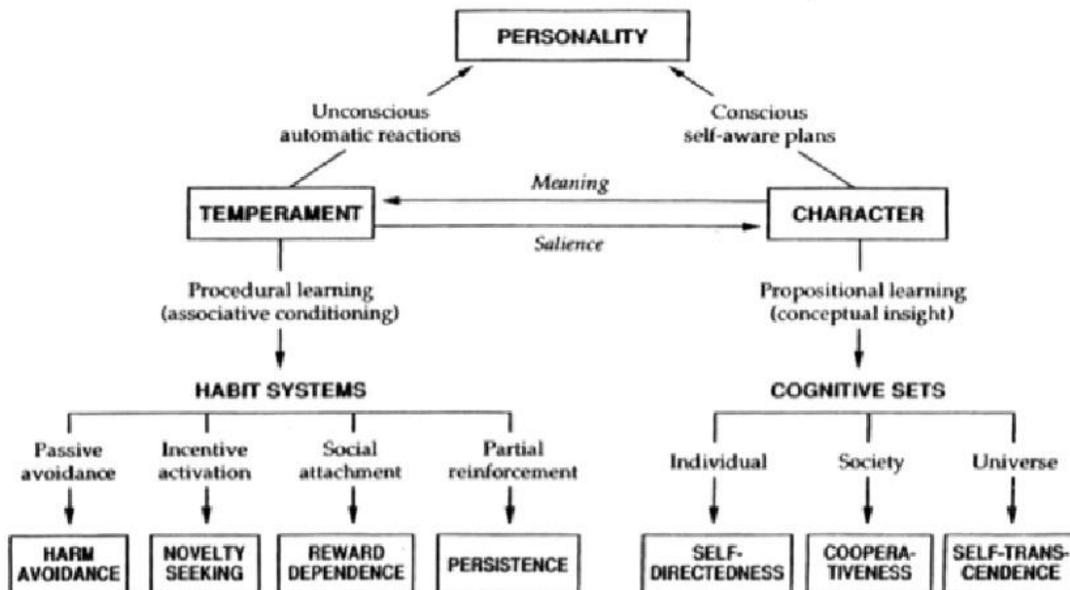
More recent research continues to examine global measures of adjustment. Howard-Hamilton and Franks (1995), for instance, administered the Ego Identity Scale (EIS) to 167 gifted high school seniors and observed that EIS scores overall were above normative mean scores. Cornell (1989) administered the Harter Self-Perception Profile for Children, sociograms, and the Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale and found that use of the gifted label was negatively correlated with indicators of adjustment. Gallucci (1988) administered the Children's Behavior Checklist (CBCL) to 90 gifted children with IQ 135 or more who were participants in a summer enrichment program. Also reported, is Nail and Evans' (1997) study that compared 115 gifted adolescents with 97 nongifted students from high schools in Atlanta on the Self-Report of Personality (SRP) of the Behavioral Assessment System for Children (BASC). One of the significant differences between the two groups was that the gifted showed fewer indicators of maladjustment. (Neihart, 1999, p. 11)

Feldhusen et al. (2000) acknowledges the Sixteen Factor Questionnaire (16PF) that was developed by Raymond Cattell as a multipurpose measure of primary personality traits based on his general theory of personality and extensive factor analytic research. Tillier (2018) mentions that in the last 20 years, the Five-Factor Model (FFM) has become very popular. The FFM proposes the domains of Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness as the basic dimensions underlying individual differences. Five-factor scores are obtained with the NEO-PI-R

(Costa & McCrae, 1992). Cloninger's Temperament and Character personality dimensions are assessed with the Temperament and Character Inventory (Cloninger et al., 1993). Cloninger's psychobiological model identifies four dimensions of temperament (Novelty seeking, harm avoidance, Reward Dependence, and Persistence) and three dimensions of character (Self-directedness, Cooperativeness and Self-transcendence).

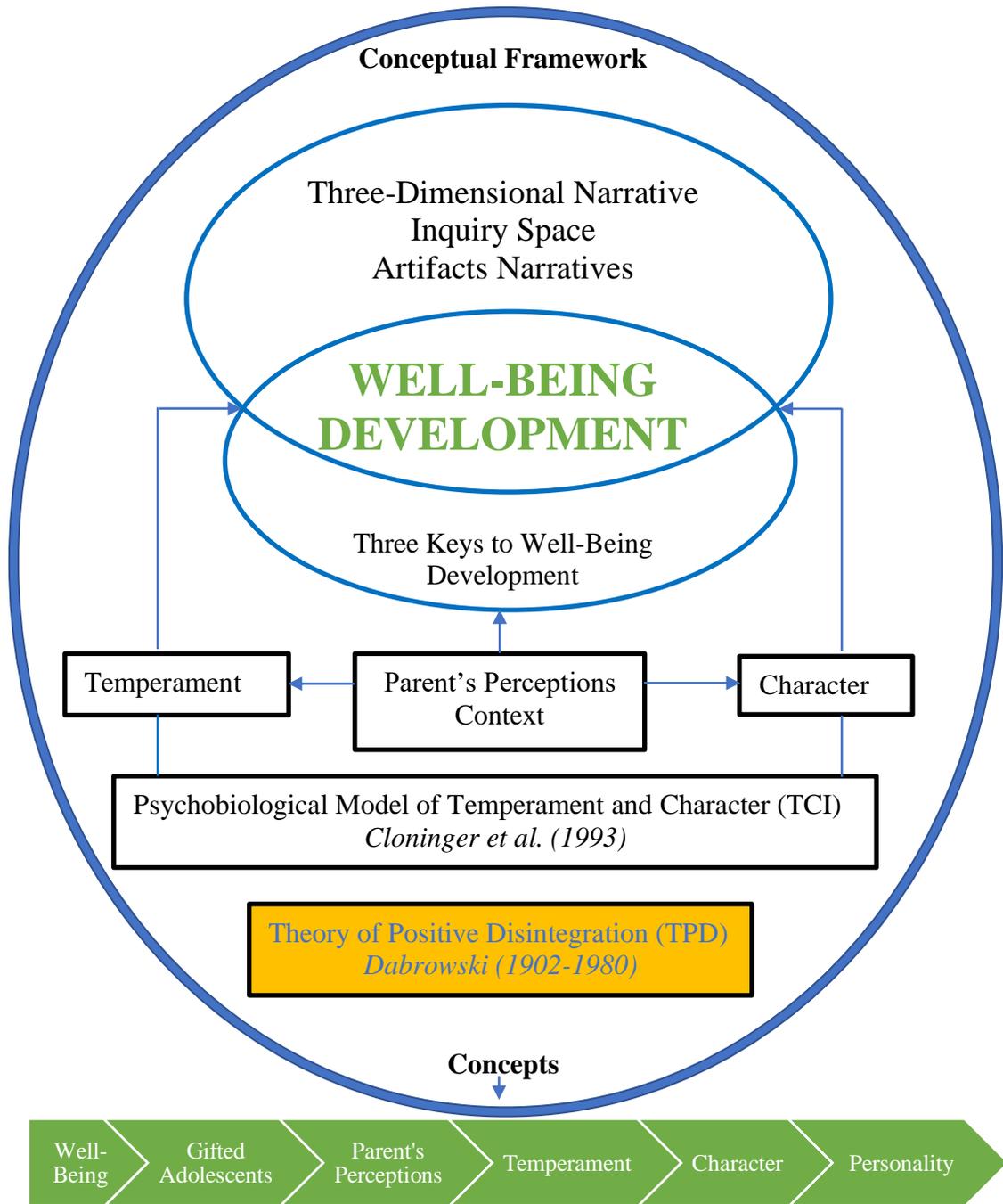
De Fruyt et al., (2000) suggests that "although Cloninger's seven-dimensional model and the FFM have a different basis – the first developed by consideration of the underlying biological and social determinants of individual differences, the second derived from a careful analysis of the personality assessment literature – the two models have several characteristics in common.

Figure 2.4 Dr. C. Robert Cloninger's Psychobiological Model of Personality



Note: Biopsychosocial model of temperament and character. Reprinted with permission from K. Cloninger PhD.

Figure 2.5 Conceptual Framework 4: Theoretical Framework



Note. The theoretical framework guiding this study is Dabrowski’s Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD). Michael Piechowski introduced the theory to the field of gifted education.

Theoretical Framework

Dabrowski

Kazimierz Dabrowski (1920-1980) who had a very challenging young life, a psychiatrist and psychologist that dedicated most of his life to the inquiry of personality development (Tillier, 2018). Daniels & Piechowski (2008) noted that he had a master's degree in Education and had a strong interest in observing and understanding the intellectual and artistic development of gifted youth. However, Dabrowski's life experiences were the impetus that influenced his writings and work to understand the development of human nature. Due to the fact that he lived through both World Wars, and as an adolescent witnessed violence and cruelty during WWI and was imprisoned for performing a notable act of humanity by helping the Jewish people hide. His lived experience during this time of unrest, his observation of this broad range of human behavior, ranging from war brutalities to acts of heroism and self-sacrifices, his theory of personality was born (Tillier, 2018). Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration provided a framework for better understanding the sensitivities of overexcitabilities (OE's) inherent to gifted adolescents and the impact these characteristics may have on their developmental potential and developmental growth (Bailey, 2011).

Theory of Positive Disintegration

“Dabrowski (1967, 1972) studied the mental health of intellectually and artistically gifted youths. Recognizing that creative individuals tend to live more intensely, Dabrowski took the intensity of their emotions, their sensitivity, and emotional extremes, as part and parcel of their psychophysical makeup” (Piechowski, 1997, p. 366).

In their intensified manner of experiencing, feeling, thinking, and imagining, he perceived a potential for further growth. Inner forces were at work that often-generated overstimulation, conflict, pain, but also a search for a way out of it. An escape route may lead to addiction, or to inner growth and transformation. This inner growth and transformation can be seen as self-awareness and well-being.

By what developmental process is the mature self-realized? What has to take place in a person's development to make gaining advanced self-knowledge and wisdom possible? To fill this gap, we must turn to Dabrowski's theory of emotional development, and particularly to his concept of multilevel development. By multilevel, Dabrowski meant the type of inner growth in which a split between the higher and lower in oneself is strongly felt. The split is healed by concerted emotional labors of aligning one's life with the ideal of becoming a better human being.

The examination of the nature of this process of inner transformation is the core of Dabrowski's theory of emotional development, which he called "positive disintegration" (Dabrowski, 1967; Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977). Dabrowski's theory of positive disintegration was first introduced to the field of giftedness in 1979, along with his two main aspects of the theory: developmental potential and multi-levelness (Jackson et al., 2009). This contradictory name emphasized the dismantling and tearing down that takes place in one's inner being once the process of emotional growth is launched in earnest. What is experienced as "lower" gradually is removed and replaced by what is "higher." Self-evaluation and self-judgment play a strong part. Since the process is usually experienced as a movement from a lower to a higher level, it has been called "multilevel." The split between higher and lower in oneself takes many forms but

is distinctly and spontaneously experienced by emotionally gifted people (Piechowski, 1997). "Multi-levelness presents the bold idea that human experience varies according to level or type of development. Human emotions, motivations, values, desires, and behaviors are expressed in strikingly different ways" (Daniels & Piechowski, 2008, p. 7).

There are five levels of mental development represented by the multi-level approach, and Dabrowski distinguished these levels of mental development with three important categories: (Tillier, 2018)

- An initial integration (Level I)
- Three types of disintegration (Levels II, III, and IV)
- A second integration (Level V)

Piechowski (1979) gives a brief picture of the characteristics associated with five levels of mental development as defined by the theory:

Level I. Absence of emotional dynamisms, absence of reflection, absence of self-observation and self-evaluation; absence of inner conflict; orientation toward external standards; self-interest as primary motivation; lack or little feeling for others and lack of insight into others.

Level II. Fluctuations between opposite feelings and extremes of mood; changeable and contradictory courses of action' dependence on social opinion ("what will others say") coupled with feelings of inferiority, sometimes alternating with feelings of superiority. Plenty of feeling but going in all directions, often confused.

Level III. Experience of conflict between "what is" (the lower) and "what ought to be" (the higher); feelings of inferiority toward oneself – frustration with what is

lacking in one's character structure, frustration with not being all that one can become; dissatisfaction with oneself – frustration and anger with the lower in oneself and with lack of development in oneself; feelings of guilt – discomfort and anguish over moral failure with determination to make up for it; strong appreciation and defense of individual values and of the value of each individual.

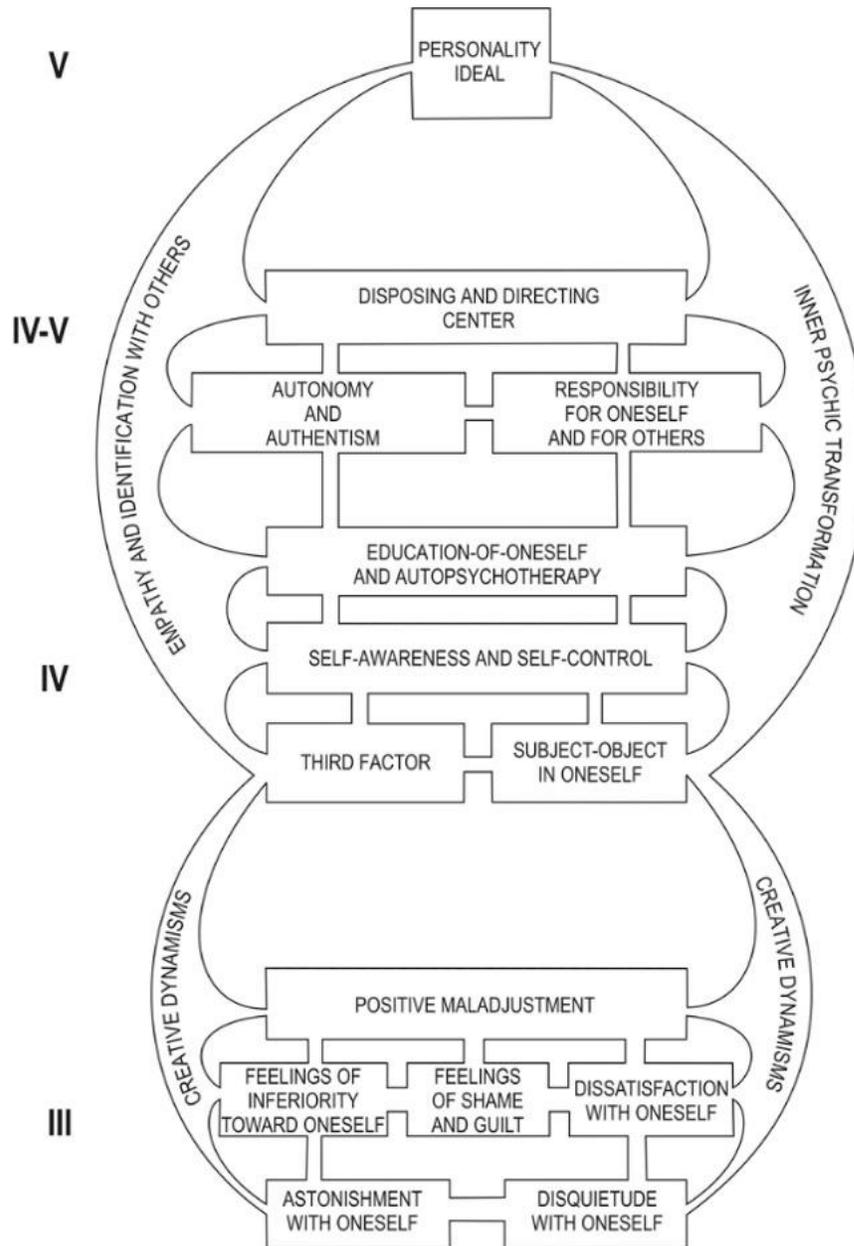
Level IV. Conscious choice in the development of one's inner standards and steadfast adherence to one's ideal of development; inner restructuring – by transcending age-related changes and built-in personality traits; responsibility – taking on tasks for the sake of others and for the sake of one's development; strong sense of universal values.

Level V. The highest level of development. Those who achieve it epitomize universal compassion, self-sacrifice, and total dedication to the service of others.

(p 138)

Piechowski (2008) created a visual picture of the dynamisms of the theory that would place them in the order that Dabrowski felt they tended to emerge (see Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.6 Dynamisms of Positive Disintegration



Note. From Chapter 3. Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration, Piechowski (2008), *Discovering Dabrowski's Theory* (Dabrowski, Kawczak, & Piechowski, 1970). Reprinted with permission from the chapter's author.

Dabrowski (1972) described developmental potential as the “constitutional endowment that determines the character and the extent of mental growth possible for an individual" (Tillier, 2018, p. 79). There are three groups which Dabrowski calls factors that control development and the psychic *overexcitability (OE)* (Laycraft, 2011). *Developmental potential (DP)* measures the actions of the three factors and their connections: (1) *heredity* – innate, genetic influences; (2) *externality* – the influence of the external, family, and social environment; and (3) *internal autonomous* factor of self-directed development (Tillier, 2018).

In 2018, Tillier noted that Dabrowski’s made the following observations of (DP):

- The degree of developmental potential varies among people and strong developmental potential is the exception, not the norm.
- Developmental potential may be positive or negative; may be general or specific; and may be strong, equivocal or weak.
- Strong (DP) causes an individual to rebel against the common determining factors in his external environment” (Dabrowski, 1970, p.32).
 - If the potential is positive, one develops an individually chosen set of values reflecting how one can best be oneself and best work to elevate one’s society.
 - If negative, the individual rejects social prohibitions and allows base instincts to run amok, injuring those who are unfortunate enough to be caught in his or her path.

- Strong developmental potential (either positive or negative) is expressed regardless of the environment. Mild (DP) may not be expressed unless the environment is optimal. If the potential is “not universal and of weak tension, the environmental influence is to a very great degree responsible for the path which will be taken” (Dabrowski, 1972, p.12).
- Although Dabrowski identified the third factor as a means to assess (DP), no test or measure of this factor has yet been developed, and none of the subsequent research on (OE) has included the third factor as a component.

Starting with Dabrowski’s overexcitabilities, the (OE’s), are the heightened intensity and sensitivity displayed in gifted students’ behaviors when responding to the stimuli in the environment (Silverman, 2016). Daniels & Piechowski (2008) found that behaviors and characteristics that correlate with the five domains of overexcitabilities were:

- Psychomotor – movement, restless, drive, and augmented capacity for being active and energetic
- Sensual – enhanced refinement and aliveness of sensual experience
- Intellectual – thirst for knowledge, discovery, questioning, love of ideas and theoretical analysis, search for the truth
- Imaginational – vividness of imagery, richness of association, facility for dreams, fantasies, and inventions, endowing toys and other objects with personality (animism), preference for the unusual and unique

- Emotional – great depth and intensity of emotional life expressed in a wide range of feelings, great happiness to profound sadness or despair, compassion, responsibility, self-examination (p.9)

Silverman (2016) also notes that it is a misunderstanding of the “over” in overexcitability to represent OE as a burden or a deficit of some kind. The term literally means “superstimulatabilty” of the nervous system. Gifted adolescents may wonder, “Why do I feel this way?” Knowing and understanding their temperament and character of their personality will help foster understanding of self.

The OE’s can be thought of as an abundance of physical, sensual, creative, intellectual, and emotional energy. Kazimierz Dąbrowski, gave us the concept of OEs as part of his Theory of Positive Disintegration. The theory describes a process of personality development, the creation of a unique, individual personality:

The propensity for changing one’s internal environment and the ability to positively influence the external environment, indicate the capacity of the individual to develop. Almost as a rule, these factors are related to increased mental excitability, depressions, and dissatisfaction with oneself, feelings of inferiority and guilt, states of anxiety, inhibitions, and ambivalences – all symptoms which the psychiatrist tends to label psychoneurotic. Given a definition of mental health as the development of the personality, we can say that all individuals who present active development in the direction of a higher level of personality (including most psychoneurotic patients) are mentally healthy.” (Dabrowski, 1964, p.112)

Another important quote from Dabrowski’s Theory of Positive Disintegration (1972), acknowledges that personality is: “A self-aware, self-chosen, self-affirmed, and self-determined unity of essential individual psychic qualities. Personality as defined here appears at the level of secondary integration” (p. 301). Goldie (2004) writes about the

connection between personality and narrative. “The ways we tell the story of our and other people’s lives reflect, and are expressive of, our individual personalities” (p.126).

Narrative Inquiry

Clandinin (2007) notes that qualitative researchers often use words in their analysis, and they often collect or construct stories about those they are studying. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) posited a definition for qualitative research:

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive naturalistic approach to its subject matter...qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use of and collection of a variety of empirical materials...that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals’ lives. (p.2)

Narrative inquiry supports narrative as both the method and phenomena of study.

“Through the attention to methods for analyzing and understanding stories lived and told, it can be connected and placed under the label of qualitative research methodology”

(Clandinin, 2007, p.5). Narrative inquiry starts with an experience shared through lived and told stories, where the method and the inquiry always have exploratory starting points that are informed by and intertwined with theoretical literature that informs either the methodology or an understanding of the experiences that the inquirer started (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space

The narrative inquiry approach used by Clandinin, and Connelly (2000) started with their personal stories and were accomplished by telling stories about “people living storied lives on storied landscapes” (p.145). By listening to, telling, and writing about their own and others’ stories in a certain place, they connect the internal and the

existential, as well as the past, the present, and the future. Their narrative texts and the contexts they gathered and constructed narratively shape each other in a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. “Context makes all the difference.” (p.26).

Clandinin & Connelly (2000) wrote that the answer to the question, “why narrative?” is because of experience according to John Dewey. Dewey’s writings on the nature of experiences influenced their conceptual framework, and allowed one to say more than “because of their experiences” when answering the question why a person does what they do?

With this sense of Dewey’s foundational place in our thinking about narrative inquiry, our terms are personal and social (interaction); past, present, and future (continuity); combined with the notion of place (situation). This set of terms creates a metaphorical three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, with temporality along one dimension, the personal and the social along a second dimension, and place along a third. Using this set of terms, any particular inquiry is defined by this three-dimensional space: studies have temporal dimensions and address temporal matters; they focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry; and they occur in specific places or sequences of places (p. 50).

Summary

This review of the literature suggested that addressing the affective, biopsychosocial needs of gifted adolescents is important, as well as addressing the need for their parents to grow in knowledge and gain an awareness of how to provide their adolescent guidance as they discover who they are in this 21st century. The organization

of the literature review focused on the concepts essential to the interpretation of this study of parents' perception of temperament and character of their gifted adolescents.

The historical background of well-being in gifted education reported the findings of Neihart (1999) that explored the two conflicting views that have prevailed in the literature to this day. The first being that gifted children are better adjusted than their non-gifted peers, and the second view stating that gifted children are more at risk for maladjustment than their non-gifted peers. Also, historically, Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) is credited with the earliest research on intelligence and intelligence testing. Stanley (1976) noted that Galton was the grandfather of the gifted child movement, Binet the midwife, Terman the father, and Leta Stetter Hollingworth the nurturant mother. Discussions of the work of Terman (1925) and Hollingworth (1942) followed accordingly.

Suldo et al., (2018) acknowledges more contemporary researchers that have explored social emotional concerns and affective development, listing Peterson (2006), Neumeister, Williams, and Cross (2009), Mueller (2009), Matthews and Kitchen (2007), Jin & Moon (2006), and Neihart (1999). This is not an exhaustive list of researchers historical or contemporary. Additionally, Stoeger (2009) suggests that the empirical literature and research of giftedness continues to evolve by including multidimensional approaches. Gagne (2009) further suggests that these multidimensional models include personality traits.

The next section identifies gaps in the literature aimed at gifted adolescents and the understanding of psychological, social, and emotional adjustment of gifted students. Mueller (2009) points out the lack of attention given to the social and emotional needs of gifted students. Bailey (2011) also notes that few empirical studies specifically examine

the levels of development along the Dabrowski Theory of Positive Disintegration continuum. Furthermore, the National Association for Gifted Children (1995) highlighted that in-depth examinations of gifted students' experiences in specific developmental domains have been limited and their influence on the social, emotional, and behavioral experiences during adolescence. Diner et al., (1999), Garcia (2010), Oberle et al. (2011), Gaderman et al. (2010), Huebner (2004), and Steinberg (2014) reports on measures of gifted adolescent psychological well-being are noted.

The review of literature continues covering aspects of *gifted characteristics*. Ellen Winner's (1996) *Gifted Children: Myths and Realities* is noted for highlighting the myths (*glowing with psychological health; biology versus environment; the driving parent; and gifted children become eminent adults*). The review then addressed the theoretical framework for the study.

The theoretical framework explored the work of Kazimierz Dabrowski and his Theory of Positive Disintegration in relations to personality development. The examination of the nature of this process of inner transformation is the core of Dabrowski's theory of emotional development, (TPD) (Dabrowski, 1967; Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977). TPD was first made known to the field of gifted education in 1979, introducing his two main aspects of the theory: developmental potential and multi-levelness (Jackson et al., 2009). Dabrowski's overexcitabilities (OE's) also play a role in examining the behaviors and characteristics of gifted individuals (Daniels & Piechowski, 2008). The five domains of OE's are the heightened intensity and sensitivity displayed in gifted individual's behaviors as they respond to environmental stimuli (Silverman, 2016).

Chapter 2 continued to explore the concepts essential in guiding this study through discussing the topics of: *Well-being, Gifted Adolescents, Parents' Perceptions, Temperament, Character, and Personality & Assessments*. Subjective and psychological well-being are two approaches that have been distinctive across studies. Gifted adolescents not unlike all adolescents face typical psychological issues (e.g., identity formation) (Cross & Frazier, 2010). There is limited information found on parents' perceptions concerning the temperament and character of their gifted adolescents, however much of the research literature found is related to perceptions of gifted identification, the concept of giftedness, and the use of gifted labels. Temperament and character are discussed as two traits and their genetic and environmental influences of personality.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative, narrative inquiry study is to examine and describe the parents' perceptions of well-being development in gifted adolescents. Chapter 3 presents the applicability of the method and design. Research questions selected to produce information exploring the parent participants' perceptions of their gifted adolescents' temperament and character, along with well-being development perceptions will also be presented. The study's population, sample, and sample selection process will be included. Also, included was the geographical location, and the way confidentiality was given to the study participant's data collection will be incorporated in Chapter 3. Data analysis and qualitative validity will also be covered in Chapter 3.

Persistent Problem of Practice

The persistent problem of practice is a lack of guidance for the gifted adolescent's well-being development (Bireley & Genshaft, 1991) partnered with the lack of understanding of perceptions of their personality dimensions such as temperament and character, combined with their gifts and talents.

Parents, educators, and other caring adults may or may not have the knowledge needed to guide these adolescents through the ups and downs that they may face during this unique period of human development (NAGC Whole Child Report, 2018; Solow, 1995; Subotnik et al., 2011).

There is a need to increase the knowledge of and tools used to examine the affective needs of gifted adolescents, their social-emotional characteristics, mental health, and well-being (Casino-Garcia et al. 2019; Jen et al., 2016; Neihart, 1999; Plucker & Stocking, 2001; Robinson, 2002).

Research Design

This research design of inquiry from the humanities in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives (Reissman, 2008). Narrative research was best suited for this study due to capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single individual or the lives of a small number of individuals (Creswell, 2013).

According to Creswell (2013) there are a specific set of features that help to define boundaries of narrative studies:

Narrative stories are gathered through many different forms of data, such as through interviews that may be the primary form of data collection, but also through observations, documents, pictures, and other sources of qualitative data (p.72).

This study utilized different types of data gathering in the form of a personality assessment, interviews, and artifacts.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) report that “narrative stories are often heard and shaped by the researchers into a chronology although they may not be told that way by

the participants(s). There is a chronological (temporal) change that is conveyed when individuals talk about their experiences and their lives. They may talk about their past, their present, or their future” (Creswell, 2013, p. 72). During the interview sessions that were conducted in this study the parent participants shared their perceptions of their gifted adolescent’s temperament, character, and well-being development in their responses to the interview questions. As they answered questions, they described lived experiences that happened when their adolescent was younger, present times, and also, they spoke of future hopes and dreams.

Narrative stories are analyzed in varied ways. An analysis can be made about what was said (thematically), the nature of the telling of the story (structural), or who the story is directed toward (dialogic/performance) (Reissman, 2008). In this study the dialogue that transpired between the researcher and the parent participants during the parents’ sharing of artifacts was compiled into narratives using Clandinin and Connelly’s three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. “Narrative stories occur within specific places or situations. The context becomes important for the researcher’s telling of the story within a place” (Creswell, 2013, p. 73).

The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space: personal and social (the interaction); past, present, and future (temporality); and place (situation) Creswell (2013) was used to review the data before it was compiled into narrative form. A narrative inquiry design is more of a theoretical way of interpreting talk (Stephens, 2011). It is one in which the researcher collects stories about individuals lived and told experiences. The data was collected through various forms, a questionnaire, two interview sessions, and through artifacts. Narrative studies are collected stories told by individuals’ experiences;

perceptions told in a chronological fashion (Creswell, 2013). Because this narrative study research design focused on the individual as opposed to a group of individuals, this design was appropriate. Each parent participant explored their perceptions of their gifted adolescents' lived experiences.

“Meaning is made of these experiences through an individual’s unique perceptual lens. The meaning-making occurs within the child and because the experience is so personal and influenced by values and beliefs, to date, the human experience has not been defined, modeled, or understood” (NAGC Whole Gifted Child Report, 2018, p, 5).

Research Questions

1. What are parents’ perceptions of temperament in their gifted adolescent?
2. What are parents’ perceptions of character in their gifted adolescent?
3. What are parents’ perceptions of well-being in their gifted adolescent?

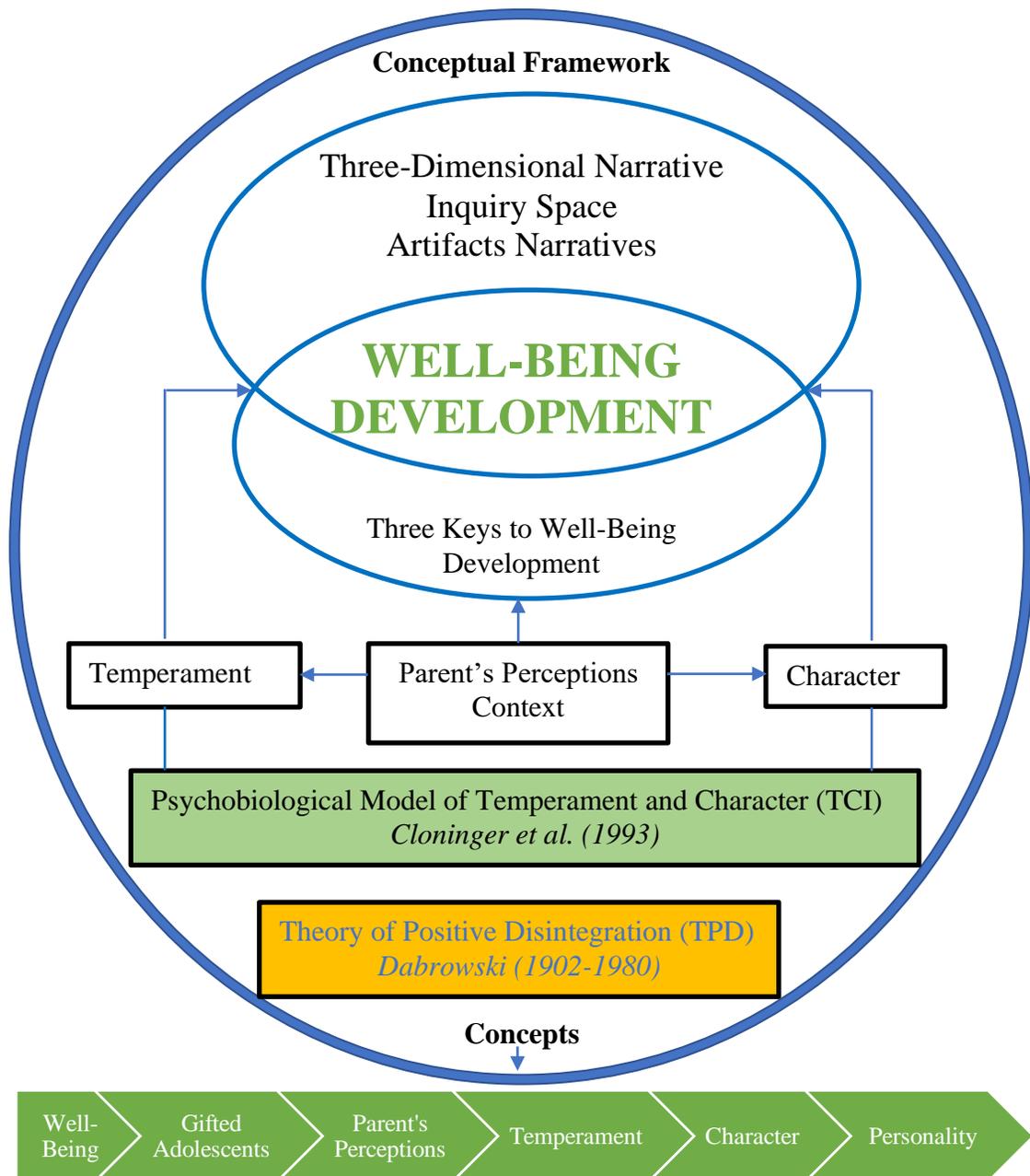
Community Partner

My community partner was Dr. Kevin Cloninger, co-founder of the Anthropedia Center for Well-Being, located in St. Louis, MO, and the provider of the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) the instrument used in this research project. The Anthropedia Foundation is an organization that teaches individuals, professionals, and nonprofits ways to cultivate mental health and well-being in order to decrease rates of lifestyle and stress related illness.

As an individual teacher/researcher, the researcher has been a participant of Anthropedia’s Well-Being Coaching and Resilience Training seeking to grow in health and well-being. Dr. Cloninger agreed verbally and in writing to partner with this research study focused on well-being and temperament and character (Appendix A). He and his organization provided the Temperament and Character Inventories (TCI), the instrument

that the researcher used in this study, along with the use of Anthropedia's scoring and results computer program. This community partner has dedicated their resources to helping and educating others on their path to well-being. Their mission statement reads, The Anthropedia Foundation is an educational organization that teaches individuals, professionals, and nonprofits ways to cultivate mental health and well-being in order to decrease rates of lifestyle- and stress-related illness. We can help you express your human potential (anthropedia.org).

Figure 3.1 Conceptual Framework 5: The Study Used the (TCI) as an Instrument



Note. Cloninger's Psychobiological Model of Temperament and Character (TCI) was used to collect data and also analyze the data in this study. Data collection with the (TCI) personality assessment and research questions.

Instrument

Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI)

The research instrument used to collect data and analyze well-being development in this study was the (TCI). The Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) is an inventory designed to identify the intensity of and relationships between the seven basic personality dimensions of Temperament and Character, which interact to create the unique personality of an individual, devised by C. Robert Cloninger (1993).

Each of these personality dimensions have a varying number of subscales. The dimensions are determined from a 140-item inventory, and the subscales are as follows: The dimensions are determined from an inventory of situations. A 140-item TCI was used in this research study and is based on a psychobiological (the study of biological foundations of the mind, emotion, and mental processes) model that attempts to explain the underlying causes of individual differences in personality traits (Cloninger et al., 1994). This inventory is available through the Anthropedia Foundation. A TCI Training Program is offered for researchers interested in using the TCI in their work (anthropedia.org/tci-training-programs).

The Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) is a self-reported dimensional questionnaire constructed to assess the seven basic dimensions of personality. Kose (2003) reports that the TCI evaluates four higher order temperament and three higher order character traits. Additionally, each of the seven temperament and character traits is multifaceted, consisting of several subtraits. Thirty-one subtraits altogether (16 for temperament and 15 for character) make up the TCI.

Temperament Dimensions

The *Temperament* dimension refers to the automatic emotional responses to experience and is moderately heritable (i.e., genetic, biological) and relatively stable throughout life (tcipersonality.com).

The four temperaments:

- *Novelty seeking (NS)*
 - Exploratory excitability (NS1) – excitability surrounding novel experiences (Cloninger et al., 1994)
 - Impulsiveness (NS2) – impulsive decision making (Cloninger et al., 1994)
 - Extravagance (NS3) – in approach to reward cues (definitions.net)
 - Disorderliness (NS4) – a lack of order or regular arrangement (thefreedictionary.com)

- *Harm avoidance (HA)*
 - Anticipatory worry (HA1) – focusing on things you cannot predict or control (healthline.com)
 - Fear of uncertainty (HA2) – feeling that you can't tolerate not knowing the outcome of a situation (verywellmind.com)
 - Shyness (HA3) – feeling uncomfortable, self-conscious, nervous, bashful, timid, or insecure (kidshealth.org)
 - Fatigability (HA4) – tendency to get tired or lose strength (vocabulary.com)

- *Reward dependence (RD)*
 - Sentimentality (RD1) – excessive tenderness, sadness, or nostalgia (dictionary.com)
 - Openness to warm communication (RD2) – may seek social contact and communication with other people (the-mouse-trap.com)
 - Attachment (RD3) – an emotional bond being vital for one’s normal behavioral and social development (dictionary.com)
 - Dependence (RD4) – the state of relying on or needing someone or something for aid, or support (dictionary.com)

- *Persistence (PS)*
 - Eagerness of effort (PS1) – a positive feeling of wanting to push ahead with something (finedictionary.com)
 - Work hardened (PS2) – increase in strength (dictionary.com)
 - Ambitious (PS3) – very driven, eager, and motivated (yourdictionary.com)
 - Perfectionist (PS4) – refusing to accept any standard short of perfection (dictionary.com)

Temperament Novelty Seeking

Novelty seeking measures the degree to which a person seeks out new or novel experiences, despite any possible consequences. Those with low scores in novelty seeking are described as systematic and meticulous which may prove to be advantageous for specific tasks or occupations. People with low scores in novelty seeking are also

described as reflective and resilient. On the other hand, their tendency to lack enthusiasm may lead them to stick to strict routines. For this reason, people low in novelty seeking may be described as regimented. A low score in Novelty Seeking would also mean that you are more patient, but also less inquisitive.

Cloninger et al. (1993) reports that:

“Novelty seeking is viewed as a heritable bias in the activation or initiation of behaviors such as frequent exploratory activity in response to novelty, impulsive decision making, extravagance in approach to cues of reward, and quick loss of temper and active avoidance of frustration” (p. 977).

Temperament Harm-Avoidance

Harm Avoidance measures the degree to which a person restrains their urges, drives, and impulses. Those with low scores in harm avoidance are described as relaxed, carefree, courageous, bold, energetic, outgoing, and optimistic even in situations that worry most people. These individuals are able to face situations of uncertainty with optimism and energy when others may not. On the other hand, individuals with low scores in harm avoidance may show unrealistic optimism in a potentially unfavorable situation. Thus, a low score would indicate that you are usually outgoing, but, since you would be a risk taker, you would also tend to be more careless.

Kose (2003) reported that “behavioral inhibition occurred in response to signals of punishment or nonreward, so individual differences in inhabitability were called Harm Avoidance” (p. 87).

Temperament Reward-Dependence

Reward Dependence measures the degree to which a person is sensitive to or dependent on the responses of others and/or seeking their approval. Those with high

scores in reward dependence are described as sentimental, warm, open, dedicated, attached, and dependent. They build social relationships easily, but they may become excessively socially dependent. Being high in Reward Dependence would show that you are warm and caring; at the same time, it would also mean that you depend on the approval of others, and so you can easily be taken advantage of.

“Behavior that was previously rewarded was later maintained for a while without continued reinforcement, and individual differences in such maintenance was called Reward Dependence” (Kose, 2003, p.87).

Temperament Persistence

Persistence measures the degree to which a person perseveres in the face of difficulties or obstacles. Those with high scores in persistence are described as industrious, hardworking, ambitious, and overachieving. This is advantageous for those who need to get a task completed, however it may lead them to overwork themselves causing fatigue in the long run. When you are high in Persistence, you are driven to achievement, but you are also easily led to perfectionism.

Cloninger et al. (1993) found that:

“Persistence, originally thought to be a component of reward dependence, was measured in terms of perseverance despite frustration and fatigue; it was uncorrelated with other aspects of reward dependence (sentimentality, social attachment, and dependence on approval)” (p. 978)

Character Dimensions

Character refers to self-concepts and individual differences in goals and values, which influence voluntary choices, intentions, and the meaning and salience of what is experienced in life. Differences in character are moderately heritable and moderately

influenced by socio-cultural learning. Character traits mature in progressive steps throughout life (tcipersonality.com). In contrast to the temperaments, Novelty Seeking, Harm Avoidance, Reward Dependence, and Persistence which involve differences in one's automatic emotional drives and habits, character aspects of personality involve self-concepts about one's goals and values.

The three-character traits:

- *Self-directedness (SD)*
 - Responsibility (SD1) – the quality or state of being responsible, answerable, or accountable for something within one's power or control (dictionary.com)
 - Purposeful (SD2) – having meaning through having an aim (vocabulary.com)
 - Resourcefulness (SD3) – able to meet situations (merriam-webster.com)
 - Self-acceptance (SD4) – an individual's acceptance of all of his/her attributes, positive or negative (PositivePsychology.com)
 - Enlightened second nature (SD5) – emergence of one's own understanding without another's guidance (Kant, 1784)
- *Cooperativeness (C)*
 - Social acceptance (C1) – a process of learning about, accepting, and adapting to an innovation (sociologydictionary.org)
 - Empathy (C2) – empathy is the ability to recognize, understand, and share the thoughts and feelings of another person, animal, or fictional

character (psychologytoday.com)

- Helpfulness (C3) – the property of providing useful assistance (vocabulary.com)
- Compassion (C4) – sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it (merriam-webster.com)
- Pure-hearted conscience (C5) – without malice, treachery, or evil intent; the inner sense of what is right or wrong (dictionary.com)

- *Self-transcendence (ST)*

- Self-forgetful (ST1) – having or showing no thoughts of self or selfish interests (merriam-webster.com)
- Transpersonal identification (ST2) – denoting the states or areas of consciousness beyond the limits of personal identity (languages.oup.com)
- Spiritual acceptance (ST3) – embraces the bigger picture; understanding that this life situation is just a piece of the puzzle (selfgrowth.com)
- Contemplation (ST4) – deep reflective thought (languages.oup.com)
- Idealism (ST5) – emphasizes the mind

Character Self-Directedness

Self-Directedness measures the ability of an individual to control, regulate and adapt their behavior to fit a situation in accordance with their goals and values. It is also a measure of a persons' ability to be self-sufficient, responsible, reliable, resourceful, goal-oriented, and self-accepted; it is our capacity for self-determination. People with high scores in self-directedness tend to believe that their success is controlled by their own efforts (an internal locus of control). For that reason, they tend to be as interested in their mistakes as they are in their successes, and they feel that their mistakes and limitations make life interesting and challenging. This attitude provides opportunities for personal development. Self-directed people also take responsibility for their problems, rather than lying or blaming them on other people or bad luck. They also work toward goals in their lives that give them purpose and meaning.

Kose (2003) notes that Self-directedness is “based on the concept of the self as an autonomous individual; from this self-concept are derived feelings of personal integrity, honor, self-esteem, effectiveness, leadership, and hope” (p.88).

Character Cooperativeness

Cooperativeness measures the degree to which an individual identifies with, supports, and accepts others as well as their needs. It is also a measure of a person's ability to be empathetic, tolerant, compassionate, supportive, and principled. People with high scores in cooperativeness are highly attuned to the needs of other people, giving help and support to others and bringing out similar attitudes in others. They tend to be widely appreciated for their compassion and are sometimes described as wise and

charismatic. A high score in Cooperativeness means that you are usually helpful and tolerant, and that you can work well with others.

According to Kose (2003) “cooperativeness is based on the concept of self as an integral part of humanity or society; from this self-concept are derived feelings of community, compassion, conscience, and charity” (p. 88).

Character Self-Transcendence

Self-Transcendence measures the degree to which people identify themselves as an integral part of the universe as a whole. Everyone has a need for self-transcendence, which is the experience of something elevated, something that goes beyond ourselves. There are different ways of experiencing self-transcendence. For some, it’s an intuitive understanding of elevated aspects of humanity, like compassion, humanism, ethics, art, and culture. Others may also describe experiences of a divine presence. People with high scores in self-transcendence can easily get absorbed in work or in life and experience states of flow, and may experience a strong connection to nature, society, and/or the universe. They may have a sense of spirituality that pervades life and practice some form of humanitarian service, creative art, prayer and or contemplation. They also tend to strive for high ideals as a part of their search for transcendence. When we experience self-transcendence, we become aware of the unity and connectedness of all things. These self-concepts are derived feelings of mystical participation, religious faith, and unconditional equanimity and patience (Cloninger et al. 1993).

Another aspect of the TCI are the descriptions of each trait for temperament and character depending on an individual’s score ranging from very low to very high (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 The 7 Main Traits of the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI)

Temperament	Descriptor (Very Low - Low Average)	Descriptor (High Average - Very High)
Novelty Seeking	Attentive to details, Frugal, Orderly & Regimented	Exploratory & Curious, Impulsive, Extravagant, Dislikes rules
Harm Avoidance	Relaxed & Optimistic, Bold & Confident, Outgoing, Vigorous	Worrying & Pessimistic, Fearful & Doubtful, Shy, Fatigable
Reward Dependence	Unsentimental, Independent, Cool & Distant	Sentimental & Warm, Dedicated & Attached, Likes approval
Persistence	Inactive & Indolent, Gives up easily, Modest & Underachiever	Industrious & Diligent, Hard-working, Ambitious & Overachiever
Character	Descriptor (Very Low - Low Average)	Descriptor (High Average - Very High)
Self-Directedness	Low self-esteem, Unlucky, Victimized, Unclear goals	Mature & Strong, Responsible & Reliable, Purposeful, Self-Accepting
Cooperativeness	Intolerant, Critical, Unhelpful, Revengeful	Tolerant, Empathetic, Helpful, Compassionate & Principled
Self-Transcendence	Practical, Skeptical, Objective	Imaginative, Idealistic, Spiritual, Contemplative

Note. Adapted from Anthropedia.

Data Collection

Administering the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) along with the narrative inquiry approach benefited the goals of this research examining parents' perceptions of temperament and character in their gifted adolescents. Creswell (2013) noted that "narrative stories tell of individual experiences, and they may shed light on the *identities* of individuals and how they see themselves" (p.71).

This qualitative research study provided a narrative inquiry framework. Narrative research is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single individual or the lives of a small number of individuals (Creswell, 2013), which was the best fit for this study. Narrative stories occur within specific places or situations. The context becomes important for the researcher's telling of the story within a place (Creswell, 2013). The proposed writing strategy will follow a three-dimensional space inquiry model of Clandinin and Connelly (Creswell, 2013).

The TCI was the instrument that the researcher used to initiate the data collection after the parent participants signed and received a copy of the informed consent letter. This inventory was provided to the researcher by the Anthropedia Foundation. Expenses included a minimum cost for the TCI 140-item booklets plus shipping. Anthropedia also provided a link to their software program for the researcher to enter the data collected for scoring the parent participant's responses to each inventory. Only the researcher received the results of each parent's assessment. The results of the TCI, a five-point Likert scale, ranged from 1-5 (see Table 4.1). Parents responded as they perceived their gifted adolescent would respond to the items on the inventory. The parents circled a number from 1-5 for each item: (1) Definitely false, (2) Probably or mostly false, (3) Neither true

nor false, or about the same, (4) Probably or mostly true, and (5) Definitely true.

Participants were given approximately 30 minutes or as much time as needed to complete the inventory, while the researcher waited outside of the private study room. Upon completion of the TCI the researcher returned to the room and asked if the participants had any questions. The next phase of the first meeting was Interview #1 Temperament and Character Protocol.

Qualitative Narrative Research Steps

The first initial meeting with the first parent participant was April 22, 2019, for the first interview session, and the last meeting with a parent participant for the second interview session was on May 24, 2019. One week between interview sessions was suggested by the researcher for planning purposes to continue the momentum that was gained in the first session and allow the researcher to listen to the recorded responses. However, the researcher adjusted the time span to meet the needs of the participants. The next steps are outlined in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Timeline of Qualitative Research Steps with Parent Participants

Steps	Methods	Dates
1. IRB Approval		April 1, 2019
2. Informed Consent Letter	The researcher handed parent participants Informed Consent Forms to read and sign before research began.	April 22 – P1 April 23 – P2 May 2 – P3 P4 May 3 – P5 May 4 – P6 May 5 – P7 May 22 – P8
3. Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) Personality Assessment	Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) 140-item inventory taken by parent participants as they perceived their gifted adolescents would respond	
4. Interview Session #1	Interview Protocol 9 Questions	
5. Interview Session #2	Interview Protocol 5 Questions	May 8 – P3 May 9 – P4 May 10 – P2 May 13 – P1 May 15 – P7 May 17 – P5 May 18 – P6 May 24 – P8

6.	Artifacts	Parent Participants shared Artifacts (Personal-Family-Social)	
7.	Transcripts Shared	Member Check for accuracy of transcribed interviews were sent out by email. Parent participants responded by email if there were any discrepancies.	July 31, 2019 (All of the transcriptions were sent out on the same day. Some interviews took longer than others to transcribe.)

Participants and Setting

Recruitment of Participants

This research study was approved by the University of Denver’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) on April 1, 2019 (see Table 3.2) giving the researcher authorization to recruit research participants. The participants for this research study were parents of gifted adolescents, who are former students at a private school for gifted children in the Denver Metro area. The parent participants were identified and recruited by the researcher. “A purposeful sample that will intentionally sample a group of people that can best inform the researcher about the research problem under examination” (Creswell, 2013, p.147) was employed. Recruitment letters describing the research project were sent through email to parents of former students at the school, in which the researcher knew having been a former teacher at this private school for gifted learners. The recruitment letter can be found in (Appendix B).

The recruitment letter was emailed out to 63 families on April 16, 2019. A total of 110 emails were sent inviting parents of students, who were identified as gifted adolescents that had attended this particular private gifted school, to volunteer for the study. Responses from families came immediately, however only 16 families responded that were interested in volunteering to participate in the study. The researcher started with the first families to respond, and eight families were chosen for the purposeful sample. The researcher's criteria included: parents of gifted adolescents whose ages represented the early teenage years through young adulthood (2-3 adolescents from each group), parents of students who attended the self-contained school for gifted children, and an equivalent number in gender of their adolescents. A small purposeful sample was selected by the researcher from the families that volunteered. Initially two adolescents' parents from each group (early, middle, and late) were chosen, and two more parents were later added to the sample group providing the ages of 13 and 23 to round out the range of adolescent developmental growth (see Table 3.3). Creswell (2014) stated in regard to the number of sites and participants in one can have in a qualitative study:

There is no specific answer to this question: although I have taken a position (Creswell, 2013) that sample size depends on the qualitative design being used (e.g., ethnography, case study). From my review of many qualitative research studies, I have found narrative research to include one or two individuals; phenomenology to typically range from three to ten; grounded theory, twenty to thirty; ethnography to examine one single culture-sharing group with numerous artifacts, interviews, and observation; and case studies to include about four to five cases. (pg. 189)

Participants

The eight parent participants that volunteered to be part of the study have identified gifted adolescents ranging in ages from 13-23 years of age. This sample number of participants met the criteria for the study set by the researcher, and their children represented the population needed for early, middle, and late – young adult gifted adolescents. According to Creswell (2014) “The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (pg. 189). The study included 4 parents of adolescents identifying as female, and 4 parents of adolescents identifying as male. Within the sample group of the parent participants, there were 6 mothers and 2 fathers (see Table 3.3). Each parent participant came from a similar SES background whereas their gifted adolescents also attended the same private school in this study.

Table 3.3 Parent Participant Study Codes and Demographics

Participant	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Adolescent	Gender	Age
P1	Female	54	Other	Son	Male	14
P2	Female	57	White	Son	Male	15/16
P3	Female	62	White	Daughter	Female	18
P4	Female	52	White	Son	Male	20
P5	Male	60	White	Daughter	Female	17
P6	Female	45	White	Daughter	Female	19
P7	Female	58	White	Son	Male	23
P8	Male	49	White	Daughter	Female	13

Permission to record interviews was asked in the letter of Informed Consent (Appendix C) which was sent by email to the selected parents who volunteered to participate in the study. Additionally, permission was also asked in the letter of Informed Consent (see Appendix C) to take pictures of the artifacts that were shared by the parents to help with the analysis of the data.

The Informed Consent letter also stated that the research project was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time that they felt uncomfortable with the process. A

description of the research study and the (TCI) were also sent through email in the letter of Informed Consent, and the participants were requested to complete the 140-item (TCI) and demographic information collected on the first page of the inventory (see Table 3.3). The researcher contacted the parent participants to arrange a time to meet at the Anderson Academic Commons on the University of Denver's campus to conduct the first interview and complete the inventory. The signed Informed Consent letter was collected at the first meeting and any questions the participants had were answered before any data collection began. The participants were given a copy of the consent form to keep for their personal records.

There were no known risks or discomforts associated with well-being in this research project. Also, there were no psychological or physical risks anticipated. Personal data was de-identified. The participants were not harmed in any way by the information presented in this research project. An application was filed with the institutional review board IRB on the University of Denver campus. The application contained procedures and information about participants so that the board could review the extent to which the researcher placed participants at risk in a study (Creswell, 2014).

Only the researcher had access to the data, which was de-identified and coded. Safeguards were taken while analyzing and studying data. All data was stored on one computer that was password protected. The computer was the property of the researcher and in their possession at all times. Hand-written notes and memos were kept in notebooks and locked in a desk drawer in the researcher's home office.

Setting

The data was collected at the Anderson Academic Commons on the University of Denver's campus. The site was a familiar setting for the researcher and the parent participants. Access to private study rooms were reserved by the researcher who emailed the meeting rooms and times to each participant for their separated face-to-face interviews. Not all of the meetings took place in the same room. However, all of the rooms provided the privacy needed to conduct the research. The rooms were equipped with a large table, chairs, a telephone, projector, a whiteboard, electrical outlets, and appropriate wireless connections for internet capabilities. During the face-to-face interviews with each parent participant, the researcher sat directly across the table from the interviewee. A bottle of water, and materials for note taking were provided for the participant. The researcher used two audio recording devices that were spaced to accommodate each voice. There were multiple visits: two interview sessions that included the parent participants completing the (TCI) inventory during the first visit and the sharing of artifacts during the second visit. The third visit was to consist of verifying that the interviews have been transcribed accurately representing the parent's perceptions (see Table 3.2). At the last interview session each participant was asked to set a date to member check the written transcripts from our interviews, and it was decided that we could conduct this step through email (see Table 3.2). The member checking that occurred involved interview transcript approval by the parent participants. The researcher used an AI transcription service Trint.com and received the transcribed recordings back within 24 hours or less. Once the researcher received the transcripts back from Trint, they proceeded to check the accuracy of the text. Trint allowed the researcher to listen and

follow along with the time stamped text and correct any mistakes that the software transcribed incorrectly. After the transcription of approximately 16 hours of audio, the eight parent participants all received their transcripts on the same day. The parents were to reply back by email if they found any discrepancies. Only four of the eight participants returned a response. Others stated that they did not need to see the transcripts from the interview sessions.

Interview Protocols

The researcher handed the parent participants a copy of the nine interview questions and began the interview protocol after preparing the audio devices to record. The questions were created from the definitions of the four temperament and three-character dimensions provided by Anthropedia. The first question set the atmosphere for building a level of comfortability and trust, along with the last question that invited the parent participants to contemplate perceptions that were not previously shared (see Appendices D).

4.	Reward Dependence measures the degree to which a person is sensitive to or dependent on the responses of others and/or seeking their approval. Please respond to this statement with your adolescent in mind.	To collect parent perceptions of their gifted adolescent's temperament Reward Dependence	Open-ended response – allowing parent an outlet to expand upon closed responses from the TCI	Cloninger, 1993; Cloninger et al., 1994; Kose, 2003
5.	Please describe the degree to which your adolescent might persevere in the face of difficulties or obstacles.	To collect parent perceptions of their gifted adolescent's temperament Persistence	Open-ended response – allowing parent an outlet to expand upon closed responses from the TCI	Cloninger, 1993; Cloninger et al., 1994; Kose, 2003
6.	Self-Directedness measures the ability of an individual to control, regulate and adapt their behavior to fit a situation in accordance with their goals and values. How does your adolescent demonstrate self-directedness?	To collect parent perceptions of their gifted adolescent's character Self-Directedness	Open-ended response – allowing parent an outlet to expand upon closed responses from the TCI	Cloninger, 2004; Cloninger et al., 1994
7.	Cooperativeness measures the degree to which an individual identifies with, supports, and accepts others as well as their needs. Please respond to this statement with your adolescent in mind.	To collect parent perceptions of their gifted adolescent's character Cooperativeness	Open-ended response – allowing parent an outlet to expand upon closed responses from the TCI	Cloninger, 2004; Cloninger et al., 1994

8.	Self-Transcendence measures the degree to which people identify themselves as an integral part of the universe as a whole. How does your adolescent see themselves in the world, or their connections with people, nature, etc.?	To collect parent perceptions of their gifted adolescent's character Self-Directedness	Open-ended response – allowing parent an outlet to expand upon closed responses from the TCI	Cloninger, 2004; Cloninger et al., 1994
9.	Is there anything else that you would like to share related to temperament, character, or well-being that we have not covered in this interview?	To collect any information that the parent participants wanted to share other than what was previously disclosed	Closing format	Creswell, 2014

Interview #2 questions focused on three key practices of well-being: Working in the Service of Others, Letting go, and Growing in Awareness. Similar to the first interview, the first question was posed to foster rapport and also answer any questions or concerns before starting the dialogue between the researcher and interviewee (see Appendix E).

Table 3.5 Interview #2 Protocol – Three Keys for Well-Being Development

	Question	Rationale for Question	Rationale for Format	Literature
1.	This second interview will help put in context the experience of your gifted adolescent with place (school and outside of school) as we discuss the questions and the artifacts that you are sharing today to gain a deeper understanding of well-being. Do you have any concerns or questions before we start?	To explain the difference between Interview #1 and Interview #2, and to address any questions or concerns before moving forward	Opening format	Creswell, 2014
2.	How would you reflect on the phrase “Working in the Service of Others?” Please respond to this question about demonstrating love and kindness with your adolescent in mind?	To collect parent perceptions of their gifted adolescent’s actions towards love and kindness	Open ended response – allowing parent to reflect on their adolescent’s lived experiences	Cloninger, C. R., & Cloninger, K. M., 2013
3.	“Letting go” is a practice of well-being. How would you describe your adolescent’s ability to let go of personal struggles, if there are any, with others and themselves?	To collect parent perceptions of their gifted adolescent’s ability to “Let go” of internal and external challenges	Open ended response – allowing parent to reflect on their adolescent’s lived experiences	Cloninger, 2004; Cloninger, C. R., & Cloninger, K. M., 2013

4.	Please reflect on any times that you observed your adolescent “Growing in Awareness.” When were they more attentive to whatever was happening, accepting reality without complaint, and adapting to it?	To collect parent perceptions of their gifted adolescent’s ability to accept and adapt to what’s happening around them	Open ended response – allowing parent to reflect on their adolescent’s lived experiences	Cloninger, 2004; Cloninger, C. R., & Cloninger, K. M., 2013
5.	What artifact did you want to share and how do they exhibit your adolescent’s well-being? Please elaborate on the context of the artifact(s): personal and social, time (past, present, and future), and places. Thank you for sharing.	To gain a deeper understanding of the parent perceptions of their gifted adolescent’s well-being	Closing format	Clandinin & Connelly, 2000

The second meeting of face-to-face interviews, and the sharing of personal artifacts related to well-being, temperament and character provided purposeful data to answer the research questions in the study (Miles et al., 2013). The researcher recorded the interview sessions using technology for audio-recording and transcribed individual interviews of the participants' own words in the study.

Additional data was collected through the artifacts shared by the participants (e.g., photos, school projects, journals, speeches, artwork, music, and letters of their gifted adolescents). Data was collected from eight parent participants that shared their perceptions of the experiences of their gifted adolescents.

Data Analysis

The data gathered examined the parent participants' perceptions of their gifted adolescent's temperament and character from the parents' responses to the (TCI) Temperament and Character Inventory, looking inward and outward focusing on self-awareness as the participants answer the first set of nine interview questions, and situated the experiences of their gifted adolescent(s) with place (school and outside of school) as the parents' answer the second set of five interview questions and share personal-family-social artifacts that demonstrated their adolescent's well-being development. The sharing of artifacts helped the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the parent's perceptions. Data triangulation included three data sources that were used to address the research questions of the study: (1) TCI questionnaire results, (2) transcripts from two interviews, and (3) shared artifacts. The analysis of the shared artifacts in this inquiry is "defined by a three-dimensional space: studies have temporal dimensions and address temporal matters; they focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry; and they occur in specific places or sequences of places" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narratives were written using the data from the parents' dialogue of their perceptions of their gifted adolescents' well-being demonstrated through the shared artifacts.

Data Triangulation

The researcher actively incorporates validity strategies into their study (Creswell, 2014). In this research study, the researcher will:

Triangulate different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes. If themes are established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives from participants, then this process can be claimed as adding to the validity of the study." (pg. 201)

Brown et al. (2015) defined triangulation as the use of multiple sources of data to promote rigor and to develop a thorough understanding of a phenomenon under investigation. Carter et al. (2014) described triangulation as a qualitative research strategy for improving the trustworthiness of findings through the convergence of evidence from different sources. According to Carter et al. (2014) Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999) “identified four types of triangulation: (a) method triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) data source triangulation” (p. 545). This study used the first type of triangulation, which was method triangulation. During data collection, “method triangulation (using multiple methods, such as interviews and observations, to collect data about the same phenomenon” was used to validate conclusions (Polit & Beck, 2012, p. 554).

Triangulation of three data points following a three-dimensional space-inquiry model to describe well-being in gifted adolescents through parents’ perceptions of their adolescents’ temperament and character.

- 1). TCI Inventory – Analysis of personality and behaviors
- 2). Interviews – Qualitative Narrative Inquiry of language
- 3). Artifacts – Observations and meanings of personal-family-social photos, documents, etc.

Clandinin & Connelly (2000) suggest collecting field texts through a wide array of sources-autobiographies, journals, researcher field notes, letters, conversations, interviews, stories of families, documents, photographs, and personal-family-social artifacts (Creswell, 2013).

A thematic analysis was conducted with the aid of a thematic networking approach and was used as a guide in the analysis of data in the study. The data was analyzed using a linear, hierarchical approach building from the bottom up (Creswell, 2014). Transcripts were organized and read, data coded, themes identified, narrative inquiry utilized, and the meaning of the themes were interpreted as they related to the research questions as part of the data analysis by the researcher. The thematic analysis web was used to identify the occurrences of themes and patterns found between the individual participants within the research study. Common personality traits found in the results of the parents' perceptions of their gifted adolescents may also prove important in identifying themes to help contribute to current research on the well-being of gifted adolescents.

The theoretical framework used for this research study, the Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD), a theory of personality development developed by Kazimierz Dabrowski guided the study by focusing on concepts and viewpoints that the researcher took in analyzing and interpreting the data gathered from the three data sources. TPD allowed the researcher to look at the data gathered through a developmental potential (DP) lens being aware of overexcitabilities (OEs), unilevel and multilevel disintegration, dynamisms, and the three factors of development (Wells & Falk, 2021). Miller Assessment Coding System (MACS) culminated and aligned the emerging themes from the triangle data sources (see Table 3.6).

Table 3.6 Categories and Expressions for each Level of Personality Development

Level	Values	Self	Others
I	Self-Serving	Egocentric	Superficial
II	Stereotypical	Ambivalent	Adaptive
III	Individual	Inner Conflict	Interdependent
IV	Universal	Self-Directed	Democratic
V	Transcendent	Inner Peace	Communion

Note. Adapted from Miller & Silverman (1987) Miller Assessment Coding System.

Summary

The rationale for conducting this qualitative narrative inquiry study research was to examine and describe (1) parents' perceptions of temperament in their gifted adolescent, (2) parents' perceptions of character in their gifted adolescent, and (3) parents' perceptions of well-being development in their gifted adolescent. To examine these questions, it was necessary to understand and describe participants' lived experiences and how they perceived their gifted adolescent's personality development, which represented a vital way to discuss temperament and character. This study used the qualitative methodology because of its capacity to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between researcher and the participants in a study (Creswell, 2013).

The qualitative approach allowed for the examination of how participants create and give meaning to their experiences of the phenomena under study (Samra, 2015).

This study focused on examining the parent participants' perceptions of well-being in their gifted adolescents. Creswell (2013) defines qualitative research as "an inquiry process of understanding based on a distinct methodological approach to inquiry that explores a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture; analyzes words; reports detailed views of participants; and conducts the study in a natural setting. Given the study's focus, a narrative inquiry research design seemed appropriate for this study.

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary and participants were allowed to discontinue if they were uncomfortable with the process. Prior to becoming a participant in the study, each parent was requested to complete, sign, and submit an informed consent form agreeing to their voluntary participation. The informed consent form briefly stated the purpose of the research, that their participation was voluntary, the amount of time that would be required of them, and they were also asked if they would agree to audio- recording of the interviews and for photos to be taken of the artifacts.

The parents who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study were also informed that the study would ensure their confidentiality. Participants names were not used in any report, and identifiable research data was kept on one computer that was password protected. Responses were assigned a code number, and the list connecting their names to the code was kept in a password protected file. Only the researcher had access to the file. When the study was completed and the data analyzed, the list was destroyed. However, the participants were informed that there may be circumstances where this information

must be released or shared as required by law. Representatives from the university may also review the research records for monitoring purpose.

To ensure the quality of the study, the researcher put personal opinions, assumptions, and their own perceptions aside to collect and present data in an unbiased way. The research questions appropriateness was approved beforehand by the professor and faculty advisor for this research study. This supported the study's trustworthiness.

This research did not expose participants to any known risks or discomforts associated with well-being in the research study. The participants were not harmed in any way by the information presented. Also, there were no psychological or physical risks anticipated. This research followed the principles of the Belmont Report to ensure respect for participants, beneficence, and justice for all participants (Belmont Report, 1979).

Chapter 4 reported findings of the research based on the analysis of data collected. A discussion was provided of the data gathered from the TCI results, the two interview sessions, and the shared artifacts related to the well-being development of gifted adolescents as seen through the perceptions of their parents. Chapter 4 also contains an analysis of the data collected in the study and the answers they provide to the research questions.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

The persistent problem of practice made known by Bireley & Genshaft (1991) that the literature on the gifted seemed to be most lacking in guidance for the gifted adolescent. This problem results in the lack of understanding of the gifted adolescent's personality dimensions – temperament and character, combined with their gifts and talents. NAGC Whole Gifted Child (WGC) Report (2018) states, also as a result, not only do parents of gifted adolescents need support, but they also need a voice at the table.

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry study was to examine and describe the parents' perceptions of well-being development in gifted adolescents. A convergence of findings from three different sources was used in the triangulation of the data gathered in this study. Data was collected and analyzed from three sources; individual face-to-face interviews, shared personal-family-social artifacts, and the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI). The instrument used in the study was the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI). This study used a qualitative narrative inquiry study methodology. The qualitative methodology was necessary to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under inquiry (Carson et al., 2001). The narrative inquiry design was particularly appropriate using Clandinin & Connelly (2000)

three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, with temporality (past, present, future) along one dimension, the personal and the social along a second dimension, and place along the third. This study was exploratory in nature; therefore, the qualitative methodology and narrative inquiry design was best suited for the study.

The research questions that guided this qualitative study were intended to address the purpose of the study that was to examine and describe the parents' perceptions of well-being development in their gifted adolescents. This study included the central research questions:

1. What are parents' perceptions of temperament in their gifted adolescent?
2. What are parents' perceptions of character in their gifted adolescent?
3. What are parents' perceptions of well-being development in their gifted adolescent?

To answer the research questions, the researcher gathered data from three different sources. The first data source, the parent participants answered a 140-item questionnaire the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI). Next, the second data source was two open-ended, semi-structured individual face-to-face interviews of eight parents of gifted adolescents whose ages ranged from 13 – 23 years of age. Lastly, the third data source was the sharing of personal-family-social artifacts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) that belonged to their gifted adolescent that the parents perceived to demonstrate well-being development. Triangulation of the data from these three sources permitted the comparison and contrast of pertinent information in the study regarding the parents' perceptions of temperament and character and well-being development of their

adolescents. The three sources of data also permitted the triangulation of data in ways that improved the trustworthiness of the study (Yin, 2014).

In this qualitative narrative study, the focus of the collected data sources focused on the parent participants' perception of the personality dimensions, temperament and character. Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD), a personality theory, served as a guide for this research with an awareness of overexcitabilities and the five levels of human functioning. Tillier (2018) states that TPD comes from the idea that personality development includes an awareness of the many hierarchies that occur within oneself and in life, fostering the progression from one's lower self to one's higher self.

Chapter 4 posits the explanation of the findings of this qualitative narrative inquiry study. The chapter explains the thematic analysis method with the aid of thematic networks that were employed to analyze the data collected in the study. Finally, the chapter provides a succinct summary of the results from the study.

Descriptive Findings

This section provides a narrative of the characteristics of the sample, and the type and amount of data collected in the study. A purposeful sample of 8 parents of gifted adolescents was selected from parents that volunteered to participate in the study.

Participants included those who met these criteria: (a) parents of gifted adolescents who attended or previously attended a private school for gifted children; (b) the adolescents ages ranged from 13 - 23 years of age meeting the age requirements for early, middle, and late-young adult adolescents; and (c) a balance of gender between the adolescents. This study was limited to only include parent participants whose children were from a single self-contained private school for gifted children in Denver, Colorado.

Data Analysis Procedures

Preparing the Data

The researcher used a professional transcription service company, Trint.com, to obtain transcripts of audio-recorded interviews of each parent participant. The transcripts were reviewed and corrected for accuracy. The researcher listened to the audio recordings very carefully and repeatedly and verified that the final transcripts accurately reflected the participants' words. The transcripts were exported into Word documents and sent to the parent participants for member checking. Information from the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) was loaded into DEDOOSE software to analyze the results from the personality assessment that the parents completed using their perceptions of how their gifted adolescents would have responded to each item.

Analyzing the Data

This section covers the data analysis procedures discussed in Chapter 3. The data collected from the TCI assessment results, the interviews, and the personal-family-social artifacts were coded separately using descriptive and In Vivo coding. Descriptive coding summarizes a passage of qualitative data in a word or phrase; In Vivo coding uses a word, or a phrase contained in the qualitative data (Saldana, 2015). Codes from the three data sources were combined, categorized, and analyzed across all data, with thematic analysis to generate themes, which conveyed meaning in these data related to the research questions of the study.

Thematic networks analysis systematizes the extraction of: (1) lowest-order premises evident in the text (Basic Themes): (2) categories of basic themes grouped together to summarize more abstract principles (Organizing Themes): and (3)

superordinate themes encapsulating the principal metaphors in the text as a whole (Global Themes) (Attride-Stirling, 2001). These are represented as web-like maps illustrating the relationships between the three levels found in the text.

Data Triangulation

The researcher used “different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes. If themes are established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives from participants, then this process can be claimed as adding to the validity of the study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 200).

The themes that were presented in the thematic network analysis web maps for the different data sources were converged to show the relationships between them and their alignment with TPD, the theory guiding the study (see Table 4.34).

Results

The results of the analysis of data collected through the three data sources related to the parent participants’ perceptions of their gifted adolescents’ temperament and character, and their well-being. Each participant was assigned a study code, P1 to P8, and were referenced as such in all documentation throughout the study. The results of the data analysis are organized by research questions and explored through the themes and categories observed in the data. The data collected (TCI) results, Interview 1 & 2, and the Artifacts were reviewed and analyzed until no new themes emerged from the information gathered from the parent participants’ perceptions.

Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) Results

In the article, Personality and well-being in adolescents “temperament refers to the individual differences in behavioral conditioning of responses to basic emotional stimuli related to fear, anger, disgust, and ambition” (Moreira et al., 2015).

Research Question 1: What are parents’ perceptions of temperament in their gifted adolescent?

The eight parent participants responded to the 140-item Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI). Each parent’s TCI responses were recorded in a spreadsheet and entered into a software program provided by the Anthropedia Foundation by the researcher. The inventory instructed the parent participants to respond to statements that their gifted adolescent might use to describe their attitudes, opinion, interests, and other individual feelings. There were five possible choices to choose from that represented the parents’ perceptions of their gifted adolescent’s actions and feelings constructed to measure temperament and character: (1) Definitely false, (2) Probably or mostly false, (3) Neither true nor false, or about the same, (4) Probably or mostly true, and (5) Definitely true.

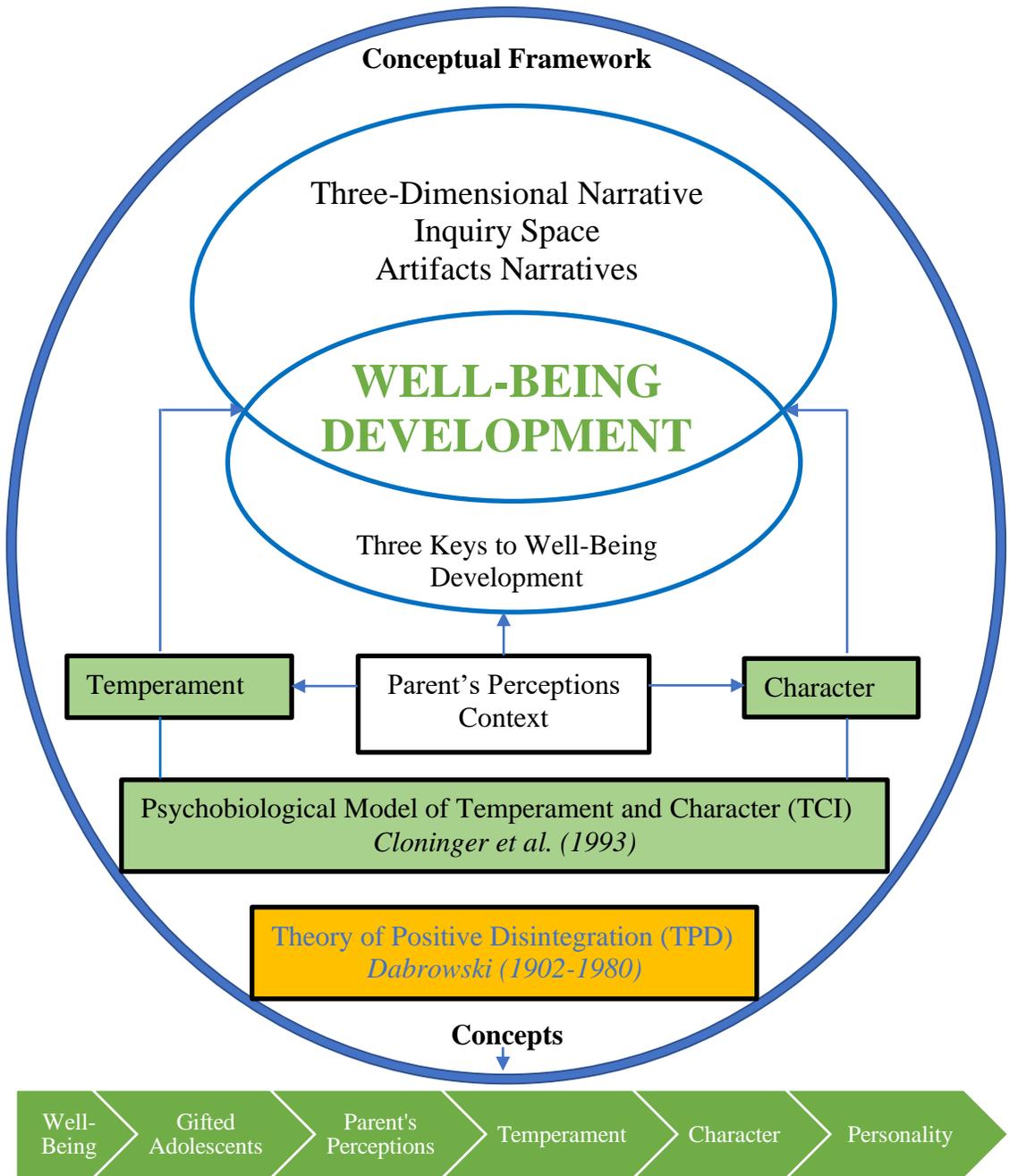
An analysis of the four dimensions of temperament occurred first: Novelty Seeking, Harm Avoidance, Reward Dependence, and Persistence. The parents P1- P8 responded to each item as they perceived their adolescent would have answered. Scores ranging from 1-5 represent the averaged temperament in each of the four dimensions: NS, HA, RD, and PS. Scores ranging between 1-3 can present as (Very Low, Low, or Low Average), and scores ranging between 3-5 can indicate (High Average, High, or Very High). Each of the four dimensions for temperament has a set of descriptions for the

range of scores (see Table 3.1). Each score at either extreme of temperament has advantages and disadvantages depending on the context (Cloninger et al., 1993). Table 4.1 displays the results from the parent participants P1-P8 upon completing the TCI. In the second column are the ages of the participant's gifted adolescent, and the next column shows the gender. Columns three, four, five, and six displays the average scores for Novelty Seeking, Harm Avoidance, Reward Dependence, and Persistence respectively.

Table 4.1 Parents' Perceptions of their Gifted Adolescents Temperament

Parent	Adolescent Age	Adolescent Gender	Novelty Seeking (NS) Avg Raw Score	Harm Avoidance (HA) Avg Raw Score	Reward Dependence (RD) Avg Raw Score	Persistence (PS) Avg Raw Score
P1	14	M	2.7	4.15	2.4	1.4
P2	15/16	M	2.95	4	2.3	1.7
P3	18	F	2.45	3.9	3.05	4.9
P4	20	M	2.4	2.8	2.8	4.85
P5	17	F	3.5	3.6	3.75	3.05
P6	19	F	3.1	3.95	3.55	2.5
P7	23	M	2.55	4.3	2.55	4.35
P8	13	F	2.6	1.6	4.35	4.7

Figure 4.1 Conceptual Framework 6: Interview #1 Temperament and Character



Note. The (TCI) grounded the questions for (RQ1) What are parents' perceptions of temperament in their gifted adolescent? And (RQ2) What are parents' perceptions of character in their gifted adolescent?

Interview 1: Temperament and Character Dimensions

Research Question 1: Parents' Perceptions of Temperament

Parents participated in separate face-to-face interviews after completing the (TCI). Interview protocol #1 consisted of 9 questions: 4 questions covering Temperament, 3 questions covering Character, and opening and closing questions (see Appendix D). The interview questions echoed the Temperament and Character Inventory 140-items personality assessment. The (TCI) used a 5-point Likert scale limiting the range of the participants responses from “definitely false to definitely true.” Following the (TCI) with the interview protocol allowed the participants and the researcher to ask more descriptive questions about temperament and character. The parents were requested to respond to the (TCI) how they perceived their adolescent would have responded if they would have completed the personality assessment themselves. In the interview that followed the (TCI) the parents were also asked to respond with their perceptions of their adolescents Novelty Seeking (NS), Harm Avoidance (HA), Reward Dependent (RD), Persistence (PS), Self-Directedness (SD), Cooperativeness (CO), and Self-Transcendence (ST).

Excerpts were taken from the parents first interview relating to the 4 dimensions of Temperament and the 3 dimensions of Character. The eight parent participants will be referred to as P1-P8 in the following excerpts of their perceptions and thinking about the personality development of their gifted adolescents.

Novelty Seeking

According to Dr. C. Robert Cloninger, “Novelty Seeking (NS) reflects a heritable bias in the initiation or activation of appetitive approach in response to novelty, approach to signals of reward, active avoidance of conditioned signals of punishment, and skilled

escape from unconditioned punishment. They are observed as exploratory activity in response to novelty, impulsiveness, extravagance in approach to cues of reward, and active avoidance of frustration. Individuals high in Novelty Seeking are quick-tempered, curious, easily bored, impulsive, extravagant, and disorderly. Persons low in Novelty Seeking are slow tempered, non-inquiring, stoical, reflective, frugal, reserved, tolerant of monotony, and orderly” (tcipersonality.com).

An analysis of the descriptive findings to help the researcher gain an understanding of the parents’ perceptions of temperament was gathered from the participants’ responses to Interview Protocol #1 (see Appendix D). The findings revealed three emerging themes for the Temperament trait Novelty Seeking: (1) Impulsivity, (2) Cautious, and (3) Risk Taking. The descriptors for Novelty Seeking representing scores 1-3 ranging from Very Low - Low Average are: attentive to details, frugal, and orderly and regimented. Scores between 3-5 ranging from High Average - Very High are representative of one who has demonstrated being: exploratory, curious, impulsive, extravagant, and dislikes rules. Excerpts were chosen to represent the parents’ perceptions of Novelty Seeking as a temperament trait in their gifted adolescents (see Tables 4.2-4.4).

Table 4.2 Temperament - Novelty Seeking Impulsivity

Impulsivity was discussed as occurring or not occurring as a sub trait in their gift

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P1	“I think that he leans more towards impulsivity. I think that he would only seek it out if he knew there was some sort of benefit for him. I don’t know if it’s being a teenager, or you know, just with his temperament that it’s always – it’s more self-centric. He’s slowly growing out of that, and he may not be as impulsive now.”
P3	“So, if it had to do with an animal or in nature if it stimulated her intelligence like technology, but if it had something to do with someone else and peer pressure - the answer would be never, almost never. She is not motivated by that at all. So, we’ve actually had experience with her in the past where she’s done things and just jumped in and said, ‘Oh, why did I do this?’ So, it would be hiking in the mountains to see a big boulder that she would climb up, and she’d figure out how to do it.”
P6	“As soon as she had to sit and take a test with another two hundred people in the same room, she went, ‘I can’t actually do this... I’m literally not capable.’ So, that came to us in high school, and she was pretty worried about how she was feeling. So, I think that’s where some of that without thinking of the consequences of Novelty Seeking for her is that impulse piece. Which is why I don’t think it comes into play in her bigger picture of Novelty Seeking because she can’t impulsively go after her goals that takes effort, and by the time you get there, the impulse is gone for her. But if somebody says here, try this, that’s the here and now. ‘I don’t even need a plan,’ then she goes to that. That’s what I think I would see in those.”

Table 4.3 Temperament - Novelty Seeking Cautious

Parents' perceptions of Cautious as an emerging theme of Novelty Seeking

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P2	“So, I feel like he’s always kind of jumped in and tried things in a cautious way. But whether its rock climbing or ziplining or whatever, he’s doing so in a cautious way. That’s why I don’t worry about it. He’s smart about it, common sense.”
P5	“Oh yeah, there has been a big change in her in regard to Novelty Seeking. I think when she was younger, she was much more reticent to be involved in things. She was more concerned about failure when she was younger. This even goes into the beginning of high school, I would say her freshman year and even much of her second year, she still was pretty cautious and didn’t have a whole lot of confidence.”

Table 4.4 Temperament – Novelty Seeking Risk Taking

Parents' perceptions of the emerging theme Risk Taking

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P4	“When he was younger, he was a risk-taker? You know what, I think he was sometimes, but academically he didn't do it. He was such a perfectionist that he wouldn't necessarily take a risk academically, but he was a rule follower even when he was younger.”
P7	“I think that he was risk averse as a small child. He never put anything in his mouth. He never did any of those things because he was very thoughtful. But he would seek out new things like pursuing his passion in front of an audience. To me, that would feel very uncomfortable. But he felt comfortable doing that. So, I see him seeking novelty in a more positive way, very cautious, anxious, and introverted. But then there are other ways where he's just totally, and I'll go and do that. I think that now he's more open to exploring new things now that he's older and has become more confident meeting new people. So, I'm going to think about this, he was never impulsive.”
P8	“She's pretty open to new experiences, and she definitely likes to be sort of looking forward to the next thing. So, she's somewhat restless, I guess in that regard. She seeks new experiences, and she likes to try new things, but she doesn't do it without deliberation and thinking about it. So, for example, 'can I fit this into my schedule...if I do this, I might not be able to do the other thing that I like.' But I don't see that as far as dangerous risk-taking behaviors.”

Harm Avoidance

Dr. C. Robert Cloninger notes that, “Harm Avoidance (HA) involves a heritable bias in the inhibition of behavior in response to signals of punishment and frustrative non-reward. It is observed as pessimistic worry in anticipation of problems, fear of

uncertainty, shyness with strangers, and rapid fatigability. People high in Harm Avoidance are fearful, socially inhibited, shy, passive, easily tired, and pessimistic even in situations that do not worry other people. People low in Harm Avoidance are carefree, courageous, and optimistic even in situations that worry most people” (tcipersonality.com).

The next Temperament trait, Harm Avoidance, was analyzed and the emerging themes were: (1) Confidence, (2) Worried, and (3) Consequences. The descriptors for Harm Avoidance representing scores 1-3 ranging from Very Low - Low Average are: relaxed and optimistic, bold and confident, outgoing, and vigorous. Scores between 3-5 ranging from High Average - Very High are representative of one who has demonstrated being: worrying and pessimistic, fearful and doubtful, shy, and fatigable. Excerpts were taken from the parent participants’ responses during the first interview session (see Tables 4.5-4.7)

Table 4.5 Temperament - Harm Avoidance Confidence

Parents' perceptions of Confidence as an emerging theme of Harm Avoidance

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P1	“I think that being fearful of not being able to do things is something that will haunt him for the rest of his life unless there’s some coping that needs to occur, or something, in general, let’s break this down into smaller bites to get started. It’s like not knowing how to do that, and everything seems so overwhelming. I think that because as a gifted kid or a gifted adult, you see all the potentials and the possibilities of what it can be and being fearful that you’re not going to be able to do those, or it’s just too much to break down into chunks, even in life.”
P4	“He’s neither relaxed nor optimistic, except about his chosen field of study. Like life in general, he’s pretty down on life, whatever politics. I think he’s very optimistic about his own personal life, and yes, he has hope for his future. I think in any type of engineering or science-based realm, he’s very confident, no problems. It’s those other situations where he has no confidence. He doesn’t attend to things that aren’t important or relevant to him at that moment. He’s got way more things going on in his head. But it’s the everyday stuff he flounders with the everyday.”
P8	“I feel like she takes appropriate risks. In other words, I think that she likes trying new things, and she likes putting her stuff out there. If she has to do an audition or something, I’m really always so impressed by how calm she is. She might have little nervous butterflies going into it, but as soon as she gets there, she just switches it on, just executes, and just does it really well. So, she likes to challenge herself and put herself out there and take sort of academic, social, and sort of performance-oriented types of risks. I also think that she doesn’t have these urges to do things that would harm her or be detrimental to her.”

Table 4.6 Temperament – Harm Avoidance Worry

Parents' perceptions of Worry as an emerging theme of Harm Avoidance

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P2	“Those are the traits that you worry about the most, the Harm Avoidance. I’m glad he’s trying to come up with strategies. But I’m worried that they aren’t going to work. He had some really bad downer thoughts this winter, really dark and where there was no purpose, no connection to people, not feeling passion or anything. Is it one of those things, or is this just teens and hormones? Or is this really what he’s feeling? I also wonder if it’s the sign of the times when adults are not feeling too good right now, and I feel like there’s a collective unconscious feeling, and it’s kind of pervasive, and people don’t have to say anything to feel that. I worry about these kids growing up during this time, especially as teens where they see we’re kind of doubting the future. So, what do you do?”
P5	“On some things, she’s got... she can be very forthright about doing things and very confident about it, ‘this is what I want to do.’ On the other hand, she’s always talking about how she’s worried about one thing or another, and much of it is school-related, an exam coming up, or a performance. Whatever it is, she’s always concerned about it. She mostly thinks that she’s not going to be able to do as well as she would like. So, she is concerned about it. I think that with her being able to do these things, especially over the last year. But, even throughout her high school career, she’s done fine in school. She’s doing well, so she shouldn’t have to worry about it, as she gains more of a track record. So, I think that slowly her confidence starts to develop so that she may be is not as worried as she was before, but even today, she still is very worried about things in general, and she doesn’t think that she’s good enough to be able to do whatever it is.”

P7	<p>“Oh, I think that he worries a lot. He is getting his doctorate that he started at twenty-two years old. He said, ‘I can’t believe...what am I doing with my life?’ Yes, he’s worrying that he’s not doing enough with his life. He’s getting a doctorate, and he can actually make a difference in his field. Yet he’s thinking, ‘what am I doing with my life?’ So yes, I think he worries. Yes, he’s totally doubtful. I mean, he plunges ahead anyway. Harm avoidance prevented him from doing things when he was younger. He has said, ‘Oh, I wish I had joined more things and been more outgoing in high school. I wish I had tried that when I had the chance, and I wish I had done a whole lot more at my undergrad university.’”</p>
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Table 4.7 Temperament – Harm Avoidance Consequences

Parents' perceptions of Consequences as an emerging theme of Harm Avoidance

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P3	<p>“So, anything to do with her safety, she probably would avoid that. Anything that would cause her harm, someone she cared about, or an animal harm, she would restrain from participating in those situations. But then she would also if an animal was suffering and hurting, she would immediately go and help, that’s just who she is. The consequences would be big for her. So, if there were rules that she was breaking, she wouldn’t do it. If there is an audience of people that she’s not comfortable with, or she feels like she’s being evaluated, it would be very, very difficult for her to do that even though she may really want to do it.”</p>
P6	<p>“When she’s in situations of that impulse piece when there can be others involved, that’s really hard. I’m trying to think of when she is cautious. I think she’s cautious when she is in a situation where she’s already experienced something similar, for example, if something has happened and it was not good. She had some behaviors in high school for a couple of months, and for the next two years, she was able to resist all potential negative influences and activities. But she couldn’t until somebody said these are the consequences of this behavior if you do this. If they say, this is what will happen, and then she can do it. If she doesn’t have that directly spelled out for her, I don’t know how much she processes it on her own in group situations. I think she does it on her own if she’s by herself. I don’t know the answer. I mean, I don’t know that she does on her own, by herself.”</p>

Reward Dependence

“Reward Dependence (RD) reflects a heritable bias in the maintenance of behavior in response to cues of social reward, as noted by Dr. C. Robert Cloninger. It is observed as sentimentality, social sensitivity, attachment, and dependence on approval by

others. Individuals high in Reward Dependence are tender-hearted, sensitive, socially dependent, and sociable. Individuals low in Reward Dependence are practical, tough-minded, cold, socially insensitive, irresolute, and indifferent if alone” (tcipersonality.com).

An analysis of the third Temperament trait, Reward Dependence, also unveiled three emerging themes: (1) What others are thinking, (2) Approval of others, and (3) Dependent. The descriptors for Reward Dependence representing scores 1-3 ranging from Very Low - Low Average are: unsentimental, independent, and cool and distant. Scores between 3-5 ranging from High Average - Very High are representative of one who has demonstrated being: sentimental and warm, dedicated and attached, and likes approval. The emerging themes were also expressed in excerpts depicting the study’s participants’ words (see Tables 4.8-4.10).

Table 4.8 Temperament - Reward Dependence What Others are Thinking

Parents' precipitations of What Others are Thinking as an emerging theme of Reward Dependence

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P5	<p>“I think she has major Reward Dependence. She is very attuned to what others are thinking, especially those who are in positions who are grading her or assessing her. She’s always concerned about what the people in her talent area are thinking about her and their reactions to almost an obsessive point that she feels that way. She might say, ‘Oh yeah, I have to make sure that they like what I’m doing, that what I’m doing is favored by them, and that they feel good about it.’ I think that’s also true in her other classes as well. I think she feels that when she does get a positive response, she’s just over the moon, and when she gets a negative response, it really does hit her pretty hard. So, she’s down in the dumps when that happens. The same thing is true for us as parents, just having that approval and reaction to things that she’s doing. She’s very concerned about going to college and going to a good college. She wants to make sure that she’s doing what needs to be done to be able to do that. So, whatever feedback she gets from her teachers, mentors, and parents, I mean those things she’s very attuned to, and it makes a big difference to her.”</p>

P7	<p>“So, some of it was seeking approval in college. As an adolescent, he had a disastrous thing happen. We left for a year, and when he came back to his school, his best friends all turned on him. It was hideous. It literally destroyed him. His friends turned on him. I would pick him up from middle school, and it was like scraping him off the sidewalk. It was horrible. We left in January when he was in seventh grade. He had friends and everything was fine. He comes back after a year, and they destroy him. It took him years to reestablish himself as a human being. And so, some of it was that the people that he trusted the most turned on him. So that’s some of the reason why he became closed off like that. It took him a long time to pull out of that. Even at eighth-grade graduation, it was miserable for him personally, and there was nothing that I could do. You know that feeling. It’s my kid, and my kid is destroyed. I can’t fix it. What can I do?”</p> <p>“I think, professionally, he’s not worried about what others are thinking. At his undergrad university, he was very into group discussions. He was always very vocal about stuff. He has super great letters of recommendation even in high school. His teachers would say how awesome he was. He participates, he’s intelligent, he’s perceptive, he’s all of those things. So, on his own, out-facing to the world, I don’t think he’s afraid. Whereas interpersonally walking into a room where he doesn’t know anybody – so there are two very different things.”</p>
P2	<p>“I think that he has said yes to doing something that he didn’t want to do. I don’t know what his reason was. He probably had a reason for it. I haven’t seen him do this. He’s gone along with things, but not without a lot of caution and I don’t know. I don’t feel like he would do something stupid, like against the law, drinking, or doing drugs if he didn’t want to. So, I don’t really worry about that. But, at the same time, I would say that he is very sensitive. This is also a sign of the times. He feels like he’s gotten a lot of awards that he’s not worthy of. So, he’s gotten a lot of things, but some he’s been really worthy of those. But he still doesn’t think he’s worthy of it. So those are the obvious rewards. Every school he’s been to until this one, and he’s not finished with, he’s gotten the Role Model Award, and I think he just thinks it’s ridiculous. He doesn’t see himself as a role model. No.”</p>

Table 4.9 Temperament – Reward Dependence Approval of Others

Parents' perceptions of Approval of Others as an emerging theme for Reward Dependence

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P1	<p>“He’s not motivated by getting approval from other people, and I think that’s sort of the piece that I kind of work with him on to come out of that. But, again, it’s home, and I hope that he is not doing this out in public. For example, our hands are full, and I ask whether you can help bring the groceries in with us. ‘I’m sorry I can’t, I’m busy.’ So, again, I don’t know if it’s that boy thing or if it’s his high functioning ASD, and there’s that piece. But I think that in school he will do it to some degree. He’s not one to he’s not a people pleaser. He’s pretty confident. I could have this delusion of who my kids are. I could be completely delusional.”</p>
P4	<p>“When he was younger and did not have grades at his school for gifted children, it was further instilled in him just to do your best. You just do your best because that’s what you do. You’re not doing it to get an A, you’re not doing it not to get an F, you are doing your best, whatever that is for you, and it worked brilliantly for him. So he goes to high school, which is, of course, way too easy for him, and it didn’t take long for him to figure out that he didn’t have to do very much to get an A. So, I think that has carried forth a bit, but I think, for the most part, he’s always just striving to achieve and accomplish because that’s what he wants to do.”</p> <p>“No, I don’t think that he’s seeking approval. It feels good to him to do his best. It’s not for outside approval. He doesn’t care what other people think. So, for the most part, if you’re not interested in whatever he’s doing, that’s okay. It’s not going to faze him. So, he’s not really seeking approval either. It’s really just for his own gratification.”</p>

P6	<p>“Thinking about her behavior in high school, and I don’t know the answers to that because we did not push to know...was this your idea or someone else’s because it didn’t matter. What mattered was that you were in it. It doesn’t matter who started it. So, we didn’t get into those conversations. I hope that she got into that with her counselor. But I don’t know how you respond to either. Are you the one pushing negative behaviors, or are you the one who’s caving into them? My gut response is that she was a party to, not the cause of those things that would go wrong. And so, I would say in her early adolescence, by a grand total of four years, that was a real learning experience for her because she wouldn’t necessarily be the one to put her foot down and say, no, this isn’t right. But I don’t know that she would have thought this isn’t right, so it’s hard to say was she actually seeking approval, or was she just there? My thought is that now in her later adolescence, she has her nebulous reward out there, and she is dependent upon that. I mean, I think that there are no longer immediate rewards for her. She understands that delayed piece.”</p>
P8	<p>“So, she’s not going to be the alpha in the room. She’s going to be a contributor and will be very involved with what the group collective decides to do, and she’ll have a voice in that. But, in the face of a true alpha, especially a true alpha female, I would think she will kind of go along for a while. Sure, she’ll kind of get sucked in by another person, and it really has to be a true alpha. She’ll allow herself to get sucked in, and then she’ll kind of pull back. She’ll become reflective and find her voice and say, ‘this is not something that I want to do, or this is not the way I want to go about it, or this isn’t fair, and I don’t want to participate.’ But I think regarding this subject, she’s more Reward Dependent upon grown-ups. Although she’s a little bit more independent with her peers than she is with grown-ups, she definitely seeks the approval of grown-ups.”</p>

Table 4.10 Temperament – Reward Dependence Dependent

Parents’ perceptions of Dependent as an emerging theme of Reward Dependence

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P3	<p>“She became, I would say, overly dependent on me to a degree because I kept her safe from the world, and I was her advocate. I would intervene when I needed to etc. So, anybody like me that would provide that safety net, she would gravitate to that person. It would matter what they saw and said, what their approval was, and she would be somewhat dependent upon them. There weren’t very many of those people in the world, and the frustration that came from the written expression disorder, dyslexia, and math impairment was huge. So, she is a very intense and emotional person. The intensity would be enough to drain a person, and you’d be exhausted at the end of the day. So, what she would do, would be to find her safe person and become very intense with them, dependent upon them, needing their – not necessarily their approval because she didn’t really seek that. As she’s gotten older and learned to have strategies to be successful, she’s less there if that makes sense.”</p> <p>“Even in college, there have been a couple of teachers that she admires and wants their approval not depending upon them, but she wants their approval so she will ask what is it that you need to see from me that you do not see, and then she’ll deliver that.”</p>

Persistence

“Persistence (PS) reflects a heritable bias in the maintenance of behavior despite frustration, fatigue, and intermittent reinforcement, as stated by Dr. C. Robert Cloninger. It is observed as industriousness, determination, and perfectionism. Highly Persistent people are hard-working, perseverant, and ambitious overachievers who tend to intensify their effort in response to anticipated reward and perceive frustration and fatigue as a personal challenge. Accordingly, low Persistence is an adaptive strategy when reward

contingencies change rapidly and may be maladaptive when rewards are infrequent but occur in the long run” (tcipersonality.com).

The last Temperament trait, Persistence, after examination yielded four emerging themes: (1) Overachiever, (2) Effort, (3) Time, and (4) Perfectionism. The descriptors for Persistence representing scores 1-3 ranging from Very Low - Low Average are: inactive and indolent, gives up easily, and modest and underachiever. Scores between 3-5 ranging from High Average - Very High are representative of one who has demonstrated being: industrious and diligent, hard-working, and ambitious and overachiever. Research study participants’ shared their perceptions in connection with the trait persistence, and excerpts taken from the data collected during Interview 1 mirrored the parents’ responses (see Tables 4.11-4.14).

Table 4.11 Temperament – Persistence Overachiever

Parents' perceptions of Overachiever as an emerging theme of Persistence

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P2	<p>“I’d say that he’s not an overachiever. If he doesn’t want to do something, it’s really difficult for him to do it. He’ll still do it anyway. He will really procrastinate, and he’ll rant about it, and so I don’t know what you would call that. I think he could always do better, and I’m not a perfectionist, but I think he gets stuck because he doesn’t see the purpose of it. He doesn’t want to do it. He saves it, procrastinates, he rants, and then he gets it done. So, I don’t think he’s ever missed an assignment, but they could have been better. He tends to do well, so in the end, he says, ‘If I spend all this time and do my best and spend hours on working on it, or I can do what I’ve been doing and spend an hour on it, and I get the same grade. So, what’s the point?’”</p> <p>“He’s been persistent in building things when he was younger and now also with taking care of the greenhouse that he built. It was a real source of pride, and I think he just was really enjoying figuring out why he enjoys growing things. He likes that it’s not stressful and you know there’s a reward of some kind. There can be a disappointment, but there’s always a new opportunity to grow something new. I think that the fact that it’s stress-free helps him keep it as a part of his life.”</p>
P7	<p>“Oh my God, I remember watching him in that green chair. I bought this chair when he was born to nurse him, and that’s where he did his work for high school. He’d have this notebook, and it was IB and AP. So, he would have all these things written down, and he would cross it off, cross it off, cross it off, and he didn’t complain. He just did it.”</p> <p>“Giving up easily would never be him. I would characterize him as a way overachiever, but it’s not a negative for him. He’s like a billionaire intellectually, and he uses it to move forward, and I don’t see anything negative. That’s just because he’s not freaked out about it. He got accepted to a PhD program at age 22, and he got through his undergrad university in three years with a really good GPA.”</p>

Table 4.12 Temperament – Persistence Effort

Parents’ perceptions of Effort as an emerging theme of Persistence

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P1	<p>“He’s not persistent unless it’s his sport or something that he finds interesting, something he loves, or his passion. Regarding his sport, he will say, ‘Mom I’m not a starter. That’s why I’m not playing as much.’ If you just keep showing up and you keep supporting the team and just have a good attitude, then ‘Mom, I’m finally – they’re putting me in.’ So, there’s that, but then there’s the other thing: grades and schoolwork. It’s basically, let’s just get this done as soon as possible and turn it in. I don’t think he sees any sort of benefit to that for himself at this point. Again, I think that’s part of the immaturity. Yeah, I’m getting a C. I’m good. But if you just put a little more effort into it because you’re not showing your best work.”</p>
P3	<p>“So, she is probably one of the most resilient people I know, and once she sets her mind to do something, she won’t give up. She has had to fight so hard for what she has, and most of the time, people will say, ‘Well, you don’t look disabled.’ Because all of her disabilities are invisible, and so now she’ll say to people, ‘I have these things going on, and for me to be successful, I need to do this.’ She knows that she’ll get nowhere if she doesn’t shoot the basket. If you don’t shoot the basket, you certainly aren’t going to make it, and you’re going to have a lot of misses before you get proficient at it. There may be unfair situations that get in your way, and you can curl up in a ball and say I give up, or you can say, okay, well, it’s not fair, but that’s the way it is. So no, I mean, she’s taking a 22-hour semester. She doesn’t give up.”</p> <p>“Although, there was a lot of pain during her younger years in school. The more pain she went through when she was younger, the more socially isolated and reserved, she became.”</p>

P4	<p>“When he was in seventh or eighth grade, he had a debate elective. He didn’t like debate. What I remember is that he didn’t tell me a whole lot about debate and what was going on, and then I found out that there was a debate coming up, and I asked him how it went, and he said, ‘I tied for first place.’ That, to me, was really indicative of his personality and his character. Because here’s a subject he really didn’t like, but he worked hard enough in something that was not – speaking in front of people, the written piece of it, and arguing that’s not him. But he put as much effort into that as he did into math and science. So that was a really proud moment to me that even though it’s something he didn’t care for, he still tried his best and achieved pretty well.”</p> <p>“In high school, he was very unhappy and didn’t want to be there. It was like, ‘No, I want to look at this college.’ He is the one that led the charge to drop out of high school. His high school was worried that he wouldn’t be able to handle leaving high school early and going to college. He graduated Magna Cum Laude, just missing Summa Cum Laude. So yes, he could, he could handle it, in fact as it turned out.”</p>
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Table 4.13 Temperament – Persistence Time

Parents' perceptions of Time an emerging theme of Persistence

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P1	“He did mention that he got a 98 on a test and how he was proud of something that he turned in and how he spent a lot of time on it. So, I think that maturity is starting to come.”
P5	<p>“Well, I think persistence is an area where she’s really grown a lot recently in her talent area, as a good example. She could have decided to throw in the towel. In fact, she even thought about it last year when she didn’t get put into an upper-level division. She thought, ‘well, maybe I’m just not good enough, so why am I trying to do this?’ She openly was thinking about all of that, but she stuck with it.”</p> <p>“I think looking back at her, the whole lifespan, I would not say that perseverance has been one of her characteristics. I would say that more often than not if she found something that she felt better about or more comfortable with, that’s what she would spend her time on. The things that were more challenging, she just would say, ‘I’m not going to worry about it.’ But I think she’s learned now to be able to at least devote enough time, energy, and effort to try and do as well as she can and have more perseverance even for things she doesn’t care for as much.”</p>

Table 4.14 Temperament – Persistence Perfectionism

Parents' perceptions of Perfectionism as an emerging theme of Persistence

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P6	<p>“Persistence, she totally had none. She learned that her perfectionism is really high, which has led her to instead become a pretty major procrastinator and avoider in things. She has since outgrown that. In being a 19-year-old adolescent, she can get through and face those difficulties and those obstacles now. That doesn't mean she likes them, or she doesn't still procrastinate on them. But she does meet them more and gets over them.”</p> <p>“She went on to complete a significant culminating thesis project in high school and it wiped her flat in the end, but it was something that she chose to do.”</p>
P8	<p>“Yes, she's very persistent. She's very into getting good grades and very into making things very perfect. So, she'll spend a lot of time on stuff, maybe sometimes too much time on stuff. I think in general she is very persistent and very motivated to do well and wants to finish things and do them very, very well, or you know, perfectly. She does take on a lot, and she likes to do that. We don't really push her. She just takes it on. I mean, we've introduced her to things, but she just latches on to this stuff, and she is challenged by trying to do too much. Her personality is such that she tries to do everything really, really well. So, then all of a sudden, her time is fully drained, and she's in a pickle. So, I think that's probably her biggest challenge.”</p>

When P6 was asked if there was anything else that they would like to add concerning temperament, she replied:

She has said so and this is maybe a part of where the struggle has been because we haven't seen her with the exception of holidays, so I really haven't spent solid time with her in almost two years now. So, to have her to say that her emotions

are really fluctuating enough that she's seeing a psychiatrist. That is surprising to me, that others have seen that. I don't know that it surprises me that it's in her, but I would like to know what it looks like, because she doesn't seem to do this to me. She seems to just kind of happily go along. I think there's times when I think she's on a downswing and she listens to a book that she loves and when she's on an upswing she'll go out and do something with friends. I'm not going to curl up in a ball, or I need to order my life perfectly in order to feel my sanity, or we need to go cliff diving so I can find my sanity. I don't see those extremes in her... Apparently, she's feeling them.

The excerpts presented from the Interview Sessions 1 & 2 revealed the perceptions of the parent participants in regard to their gifted adolescent's temperament and character. Themes emerged from the data collected from transcribed interviews. A global theme (Temperament) and the organizing themes: Novelty Seeking (NS), Harm Avoidance (HA), Reward Dependence (RD), and Persistence (PS) were previously established in accordance with the instrument used to gather data, the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI). The interviews were transcribed, analyzed, and coded. Similar codes were categorized for each organizing theme revealing the emerging themes from the data (see Figure 4.1).

Thematic Networks

In this research study the global and organizing themes were predetermined for both Interview Sessions 1 & 2. According to Attride-Stirling (2001) in the article Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research, there are three stages of a

thematic network analysis: (1) the reduction or breakdown of the text; (2) the exploration of the text; (3) the integration of the exploration. Within Stage (1) the breakdown of the text, Attride-Stirling (2001) outlines the steps to constructing thematic networks when themes are not predetermined:

Step 1. Code Material

Step 2. Identify Themes

Step 3. Construct Thematic Networks

(a) Arrange themes

(b) Select Basic Themes

(c) Rearrange into Organizing Themes

(d) Deduce Global Theme(s)

(e) Illustrate as thematic network(s)

(f) Verify and refine the networks (p.391)

The Analysis Stage (2) of a thematic network provides the next steps:

Step 4. Describe and Explore Thematic Networks

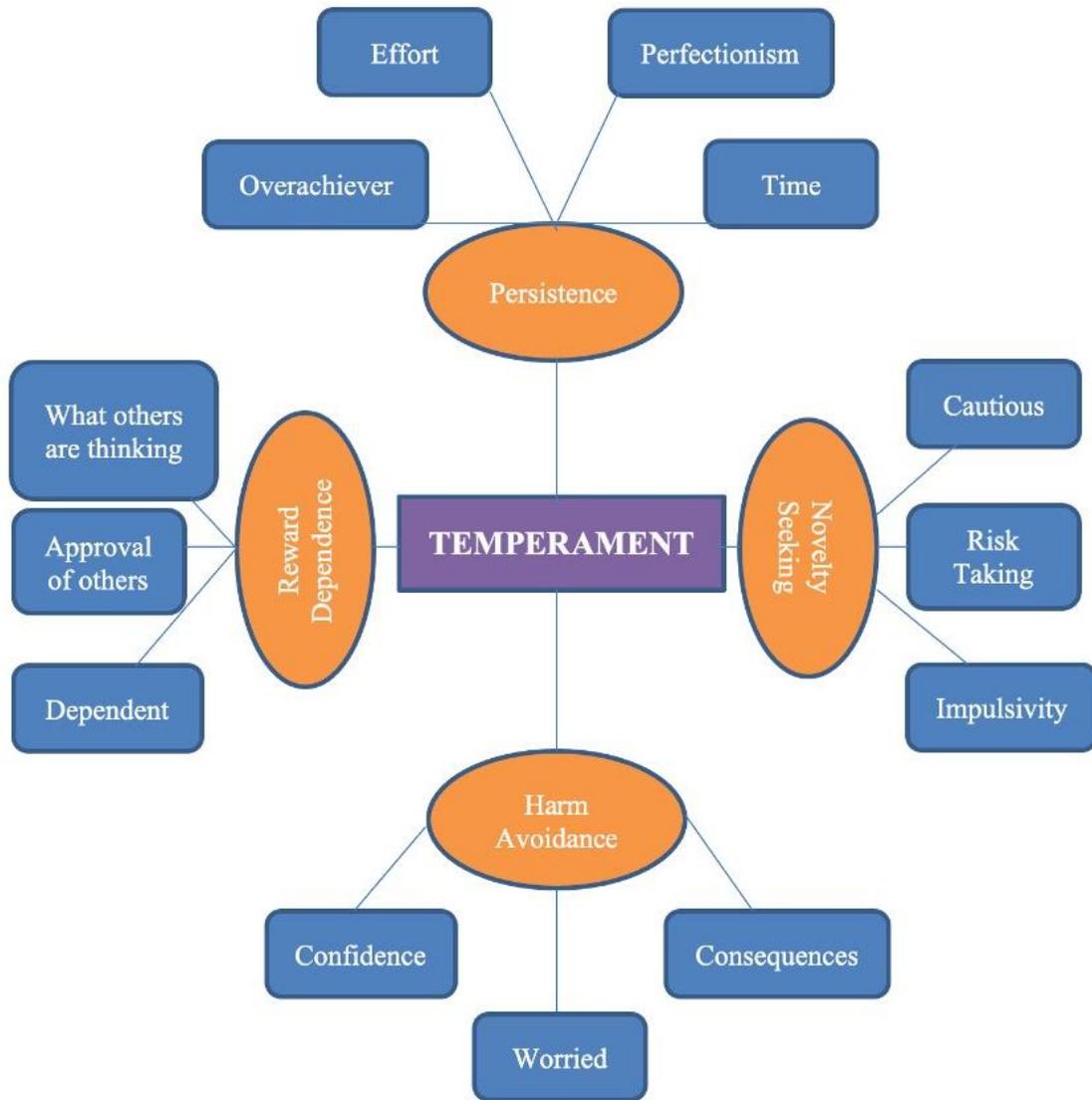
Step 5. Summarize Thematic Networks

Stage (3), the final stage of analysis:

Step 6. Interpret Patterns (p.391)

Attride-Stirling (2001) notes that the themes found are “then represented as web-like maps depicting salient themes at each of the three levels and illustrating the relationships between them” (p.388). The emerging themes for the four dimensions of temperament were illustrated in a web-like map for this study (see Figure 4.2) in regard to: RQ1: What are the parents’ perceptions of temperament in their gifted adolescent?

Figure 4.2 Thematic Network for Temperament Themes



Note. The Global Theme is centered in purple and is the core of the thematic network. The organizing Themes simultaneously group the main ideas and are indicated in orange. Emerging Themes are indicated in blue and are derived from the collected data.

Research Question 2: Parents' Perceptions of Character

Moreira et al. (2015) reports that “character refers to individual differences in higher order socio-cognitive processes such as: self-concepts, and intentional values and goals” (p. 2).

Research Question #2: What are parents' perceptions of character in their gifted adolescent? The TCIs three-character dimensions are: Self-Directedness (SD), Cooperativeness (CO), and Self-Transcendence (ST). Parent participants, P1 - P8's, responses to the statements within the 140-item inventory in regard to character with scores ranging from 1-5, results were recorded (see Table 4.15). Each of the three dimensions for character also has a set of descriptors (see Table 3.1). The descriptors depicted by the scores ranging from 1-3 can also represent (Very Low, Low, or Low Average), and scoring ranging from 3-5 can represent (High Average, High, or Very High).

Table 4.15 Parents’ Perceptions of their Gifted Adolescents Character

Parent	Adolescent Age	Adolescent Gender	Self-Directedness (SD) Avg Raw Score	Cooperativeness (CO) Avg Raw Score	Self-Transcendence (ST) Avg Raw Score
P1	14	M	2.7	3.4	2
P2	15/16	M	2.5	3.5	1.88
P3	18	F	4.7	4.25	2.75
P4	20	M	4.75	3.9	2.5
P5	17	F	3.7	3.7	2.94
P6	19	F	3.15	4.35	3.5
P7	23	M	3.15	3.35	2.88
P8	13	F	4.6	4.9	2.88

The purpose of this qualitative, narrative inquiry study was to examine and describe the parents’ perceptions of temperament and character in gifted adolescents. The TCI results from Figure 4.15 provided the parent participants’ perceptions and responses to the inventory as they perceived their gifted adolescent would have responded to statements in regard to the three-character dimensions.

Self-Directedness

Cloninger, acknowledges that “Self-Directedness (SD) measures the extent to which an individual is responsible, reliable, resourceful, goal-oriented, and self-confident.

The most advantageous summary feature of self-directed individuals is that they are

realistic and effective, i.e., they are able to adapt their behavior in accord with individually chosen, voluntary goals based on a realistic assessment of facts” (tcipersonality.com).

Excerpts from data collected in the first interview session reflected P1-P8’s perceptions in their words, and the emerging themes for Self-Directedness: (1) Goals, (2) Maturity, and (3) Learning how to be self-directed (see Tables 4.16-4.18). The descriptors for Self-Directedness representing scores 1-3 ranging from Very Low - Low Average are: low self-esteem, unlucky, victimized, and unclear goals. Scores between 3-5 ranging from High Average - Very High are representative of one who has demonstrated being: mature and strong, responsible, and reliable, purposeful, and self-accepting. For descriptive purposes for the character trait Self-Directedness: P2’s responses provided a TCI score of 2.5 which reflected a Low Average range, and an emerging theme of Goals (see Table 4.15 and Table 4.16).

Table 4.16 Character - Self-Directedness Goals

Parents' perceptions of Goals as an emerging theme of Self-Directedness

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P2	<p>“So, getting started is the hard part. I don’t know if there is perfectionism there. I think he disappoints himself, and that’s where the perfectionist is. I feel like he’s comparing himself to other people, and he’s surrounded by some really brilliant, confident friends. That’s a lot of it. They have a lot more confidence than he does and persistence. I think that he compares himself to others instead of looking at himself as a unique person. So, that’s where his doubt is probably part of the procrastination to get started, his self-doubt. His friends have even said that they thought he had really low self-esteem. So, self-directedness, I think he has it with hesitation. He will always reach his goals, but his self-doubt might make him lower the bar.”</p>

<p>P3</p>	<p>“The first example is when she realized that high school was not working for her, and she needed to graduate in three years instead of four and to get that she had to ask for an exception to the district’s policy to have four online classes instead of the two that they required or that they allowed. So, the principal said that the presentation had to come from her.”</p> <p>“Her gifted school for students that she attended did a beautiful job in this area. One of her teachers there was awesome with showing her PowerPoint and GarageBand. She is hands down one of the best people I’ve ever seen with things like that. She prepared her PowerPoint, and she bowled him over and convinced him that she knew what her mind was, she knew what her path was, and that she knew what her success model was. She delivered, and he approved it. She got the four online classes because of her 504 plan. I’m sure that was part of it, along with her disabilities. She needed that.”</p> <p>“So, yes, absolutely...and she continues to do that today with her degree plans and working with her advisors academically. She is hands down all of that. Although, she is not that in her own social, personal life. She doesn’t trust most people. I would say in her experience growing up, she trusted too much and got hurt too much, and so she doesn’t trust. She’s very cautious. So, in the social arena, if she needs to adapt her behavior, she probably won’t. She’s just told me, ‘I can be successful academically...’”</p>
<p>P4</p>	<p>“Well, I don’t think that his goals have shifted much since he was four years old. That is to be an aerospace engineer, although he has broadened a little. He may now want to be an astrophysicist. His goal since the age of four was to be an aerospace engineer and work for NASA...I think he’s open to maybe not necessarily having to work at NASA since there are no NASA centers in Denver. But I think he’s broadened to working with some private companies as well. The goal is pretty much the same.”</p>

Table 4.17 Character – Self-Directedness Maturity

Parents' perceptions of Maturity as an emerging theme of Self-Directedness

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P1	<p>“I think we’re working on not blaming everything...It’s mom, and it was not my fault. So, in a lot of situations, he tends to play the victim. For example, at the school for gifted students that he attended, you could leave your iPod, your iPhone, and a wad of cash or something in an unlocked locker, and when you came back, it would still be there. At his high school, he found out twice that you can’t do that. He said that it should have been safe, but it was not my fault. They shouldn’t have taken it because it’s my stuff. Or something happens, and it’s, ‘Hey, that wasn’t my fault because such and such happened. I had no control over it.’”</p> <p>“I’m trying to keep him from playing the victim. There’s always some sort of excuse that he has for not taking responsibility for himself. I think that’s part of maturity. So, I’m hoping, and I’m working on letting him know it’s okay to do something wrong. You didn’t mean it, but it’s okay to admit it, and it’s just more important how we fix it. So, just kind of that lesson, but again I think it’s a maturity thing. Right now, he’s not very responsible.”</p>
P4	<p>“I think overriding everything is just his goal to learn everything that he can. He loves to contribute. He loves his research. I don’t think that he’s ready to go out into the real world to get a job, which is why I think that getting a PhD is a good thing. I mean, he’s twenty, which people do get jobs at the age of twenty. But I think knowing some of the other things that we’ve talked about, he hasn’t matured in some of those more basic skills. For example, I was asking him to do something, and he didn’t know how to do it. It’s like he’s so hyper-focused on all the big level, high-level things, and he forgets everything that’s down here.”</p>

P5	<p>“I think it’s in the developing category for her maturity...it is. It’s improving a great deal, but there still is much more to go. I think some of it is just that she’s a typical teenager. So that’s just the normal progress of things. But I will say that she has matured a great deal more in just the last year or so. So, that’s improved. She’s taking a much more mature approach to things. I think that this, as I mentioned before with the band, I think that part of the reason why they held her back was that I don’t think that they saw the level of maturity that they would have liked. But, in the course of the experience, I think it’s that she’s grown, and I think it has had an effect on her as far as strength is concerned.”</p> <p>“Yes, she’s always had this inner strength, but the outer can come off as...she can sound like we talked about before, lacking in confidence and just not thinking that she’s good enough. That troubles her, and she dwells on that. I think that the strength issue, I would put that in the developing category.”</p> <p>“Responsible and reliable, that’s another thing that I would put into developing. There have been instances where she hasn’t been responsible or reliable. There’s a big difference between what she does or doesn’t do at home and then what she does at school. She tends to be much more responsible and reliable and receptive to doing things there than she is at home.”</p>
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Table 4.18 Character – Self-Directedness Learning How to be Self-Directed

Parents' perceptions of Learning how to be Self-directed as an emerging theme of Self-Directedness

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P6	<p>“Her self-esteem fluctuates. Overall, I think it tends to be high or at least positive. If you ask her how she’s doing, she will tell you she’s doing great. She’s rocking her grades, and she feels good about them. She feels good about the ones that aren’t great. She will say, ‘Yeah, my worst grade is in this class, but I’m really enjoying the class.’ So, she has a handle on where the value should be placed, not on the grade itself, but on how the process and the learning is going. I think that she has that down well.”</p> <p>“I mean even in the conversations that we’ve had about her emotional well-being, over this last year, even with that, her self-esteem has been fairly high. In that, she’s taking steps. She says, ‘I know this isn’t right. I’m going to do something about it.’ I think that’s an interesting kind of confidence and awareness of herself. Or a self-awareness of how maybe what’s happening now isn’t her. The recognition that there’s this little thing that is having some big impact on how I’m feeling so, I’m just going to deal with this little thing instead of letting it continue to have a big impact. I think that it means she can put it into the right perspective, and I don’t think you can do that if you don’t overall feel good about who you are.”</p>

P7	<p>“He’s never been self-directed. He would get interested in something, and he would go full speed ahead. He’s always been self-directed. He needed to get through IB and AP, and he did it, and he did it really well.”</p> <p>“Music, he figured out what kind of music that he wanted to do, so he got into that kind of band. Then that band dissolved, and then he went to another kind of band. So, everything he does is pretty much self-directed. He had his own guitar, and he learned how to play on his own. Now, he’s starting to take guitar lessons, but he’s been playing the guitar since he was in seventh grade. He didn’t get any music lessons, and he taught himself to play the guitar, drums, bass, and synth. He did start out with piano lessons when he was younger, so he had that. But he would just say, ‘Oh, I want to pick up the drums,’ and he would have just all of a sudden – now he plays the drums. So, he has just done that with everything.”</p>
P8	<p>“Now that I’m thinking about it, maybe she sticks up for other people more than herself. Yes, I think there’s something to that. I think that she is a little bit more accepting of bullying types of behaviors against herself than she is against other people. I think that that’s maybe a thing. Now, I will say that there are other times when she’s really found her voice and stood up for herself. She’ll say, ‘I don’t think it’s fair, and I didn’t like the way you treated me then.’”</p> <p>“So, I mean, in a sense, it’s really kind of been good for her because, at a very young age, she’s had to sort of develop that. Because I think you’re probably getting that she’s not necessarily prone to sort of sticking up for herself. But she has learned how to do it. I think that you kind of get the idea that she’ll stick up for herself, but not always right away.”</p>

Cooperativeness

Cooperativeness (CO) measures the extent to which individuals conceive themselves as integral parts of human society. Highly cooperative persons are described as empathetic, tolerant, compassionate, supportive, and principled. These features are

advantageous in teamwork and social groups, but not for individuals who prefer to live in a solitary manner, according to Cloninger (tcipersonality.com).

The researcher gathered data during the first interview session in reference to the next Character dimension, Cooperativeness. The themes that emerged were (1) Empathetic, (2) Supporting others, and (3) Accepting different viewpoints. The descriptors for Cooperativeness representing scores 1-3 ranging from Very Low - Low Average are: intolerant, critical, unhelpful, and revengeful. Scores between 3-5 ranging from High Average - Very High are representative of one who has demonstrated being: tolerant, empathic, helpful, and compassionate and principled. Excerpts were presented from parent participants, P1-P8, as they shared the experiences of their gifted adolescents' cooperativeness (see Tables 4.19-4.21).

Table 4.19 Character – Cooperativeness Empathetic

Parents' perceptions of Empathetic as an emerging theme of Cooperativeness

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P1	<p>“The whole thing about him with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder, they are not able to read cues, and there’s a lack of empathy. He senses things, and I’ve seen him sense things. I think for him, it’s very analytical. I think that he supports others, but it’s something that he looks at analytically.”</p> <p>“When he was little, he said to me, ‘Mom, I knew that my friend was sad because she had tears in her eyes. So, I just went and sat next to her.’ But you could tell that it was something that he was processing right because he saw tears, and that meant she’s sad, and so, I just went and sat next to her.’ Do you know what I mean? I think that I would feel the sadness coming from her, but for him, it’s very analytical. He looks at a situation and kind of breaks it down and then kind of responds. That’s the kind of thing that I’ve been working with him on since he was little because I knew he didn’t have that piece.”</p>

P2	<p>“He’s totally cooperative. He might look at everybody and sort of analyze them, but he is cooperative. He has always been empathetic towards people. Even people that have been bullying him. So, in kindergarten, there was a kid or two kids that were bullying him. Here he is, five years old, and one kid knocked him down pretty hard to the point of hurting him, and this kid had behavioral problems. Everybody’s looking at him, and all of the adults are wondering why he isn’t more upset. He said, ‘Well, his parents are getting divorced.’ I mean, at five years old, he understood the other person’s problem. There was another kid who had severe behavioral problems, and this kid grabbed his arm and gave him a huge bruise, and he said, ‘Well, he’s just not comfortable at school.’”</p> <p>“There’s a kid now at his high school that he’s friends with who is just so intense. He never stops, and he’s such a perfectionist. They are friends, and they worked together in robotics. They design things together, and they are good friends, but the kid’s energy level is off the charts. So, my son will tolerate it to a point, but then he has to step back because I think he absorbs it too much and has to take breaks from his friend no matter how much he likes him.”</p>
P3	<p>“Okay, well, she is empathetic. The problem that she faces is that her empathy is so strong that we had to teach her how to wall it off and put boundaries on it. Because she would walk into a room, and she would immediately get all of the emotions, and she would take it on and wouldn’t know what to do with it. So, she’s always cooperative, and she gets really upset with people that aren’t.”</p>

P4	<p>“So, cooperativeness...we’re going to separate that into two parts around the house when it’s to help me versus the real world. You get two very different outcomes. Outside of the house, he will do whatever he’s supposed to do whenever he’s supposed to do it. But it’s hit or miss when it’s something to help me out. Sometimes he will just do something that he sees needs doing, and he does it – that’s rare. I have to ask him to do things, and sometimes he’ll tell me “No,” fine. He’s either too busy or doesn’t think that what I’m asking for is worthy of his time and doesn’t really need doing. It’s fine, so for me, it’s hit or miss, but for the rest of the world, he’s pretty cooperative.”</p> <p>“He is empathetic, but I think he’s mostly quiet. He gets quiet in those types of situations. In those situations, I think he’s sad for them. He will stick up for people in whatever situation there is. He has a relative who has some social, emotional challenges, and he’s very empathetic toward him.”</p>
P7	<p>“I see him seeing the world as it really is. He is a revolutionary, and I agree with him. So, he’s not tolerant of some political views, and yet in conversation, he’ll be quietly respectful, listen and nod. Empathy an understanding of others, he totally grasps that. He totally gets that, and that’s wrong, and this is wrong, society has created these just disparate outcomes for people, and he does totally feel that.”</p>

Table 4.20 Character – Cooperativeness Supporting Others

Parents' perceptions of Supporting Others as an emerging theme of Cooperativeness

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P6	<p>“She will bend to breaking to help others. I think that she hasn’t had to in at least my perception of that bending to breaking. She is ready to do just about anything for her peers. They have had safety nets, so she hasn’t had to be one. So, I don’t know that component, but I think she has stepped forward. She has been there for them emotionally. I think that if you took it out of that emotional context and put it into just working with others, she’ll take on whatever role needs to be taken on in order to get whatever it is done that needs to get done.”</p>
P7	<p>“I think that he and his friend are doing more charitable work where they are doing stuff to help others. He told me some things recently, which I was kind of surprised by. I didn’t realize that he was volunteering for something. He has volunteered with me before, and we did trail building. He would do that kind of stuff.”</p> <p>“But I think it’s most obvious in his band stuff where it doesn’t have to be about him. What does the band want to do? How are we going to present this, even his own music? That’s the way the band is going to do it, and he’s fine with that. So, I think he’s fine with cooperativeness and working within a group. I think that he’s never been that guy who says this is mine.”</p>
P8	<p>“She enjoys things like the Student Council where there’s a bunch of people getting together talking and debating about things and then coming to a consensus decision. She really enjoys being a part of groups. She will occasionally say, ‘Okay, well I’m doing most of the work here if there’s someone who’s not contributing, but she’s very cooperative. I guess that is sort of the bottom line.’”</p> <p>“She likes people to get along with each other. She also likes helping people. She likes being of service, and she enjoys collaborating. She likes being part of a team, and to a certain extent, she will put the needs of the team over her own needs.”</p>

Table 4.21 Character – Cooperativeness Accepting Different Viewpoints

Parents' perceptions of Accepting Different Viewpoints as an emerging theme of Cooperativeness

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P3	“She is kind and generous, and she’s very accepting of a lot of different viewpoints. She is probably the strongest antithesis of the opposite in this case. That is just who she is. Now whether she would put herself below that, I don’t see that unless there was somebody that she felt was really, really needing, and then she would put herself below their needs.”
P5	<p>“I would say overall that she’s got a pretty high level of cooperativeness in terms of being concerned and understanding of other people’s situations. I think she’s got a pretty strong sense of social justice overall. She is intolerant and upset when she hears about things that are of viewpoints that she does not agree with.”</p> <p>“She’s really upset when there are things that are directed towards girls or women especially, and she gets really upset about that. But, for people who are the victims of this or who are in situations like gender identity, that’s another thing that she feels strongly about. She’s friends with some of the students who are transitioning. She has friends going through that. So, she feels strongly about that, and she’ll stand up for people and really make an effort to be a part of their groups.”</p> <p>“She has a strong sense of that, and I’m really quite impressed by her that she feels really strong about that. I’m saying, well, I’m open, and I’m tolerant. She’ll say, “No not enough, not enough.””</p>

P6	<p>“I think that her tolerance is probably better than most, and I do think that it is that understanding that she has come to of those that don’t have the same political beliefs that she does. Her tolerance has skyrocketed in that area. There has never been an issue about acceptance. I think she might even put tolerance in as a negative term with those who are not like her in gender, in orientation, and in ethnicity.”</p> <p>“I think that she is not tolerant of those things that are appropriate to not be tolerant of. I don’t think that she’s tolerant of nasty behavior. But of people with differences around her or internationally, I think she’s exploratory, not tolerant. She wants to know and understand.”</p>
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Self-Transcendence

As noted by Cloninger, “Self-Transcendence (ST) measures the extent to which individuals conceive themselves as integral parts of the universe as a whole. Self-transcendent individuals are spiritual, unpretentious, humble, and fulfilled. These traits are adaptively advantageous when people are confronted with suffering, illness, or death, which is inevitable with advancing age” (tcipersonality.com).

The third Character dimension, Self-Transcendence, was also explored. The descriptors for Self-Transcendence representing scores 1-3 ranging from Very Low - Low Average are: practical, skeptical, and objective. Scores between 3-5 ranging from High Average - Very High are representative of one who has demonstrated being: imaginative, idealistic, spiritual, and contemplative. After analyzing the data gathered from the parent participants' own words three themes emerged: (1) Creativeness, (2) Connections with people, and (3) Religion vs. spirituality (see Tables 4.22-4.24).

Table 4.22 Character – Self-Transcendence Creativeness

Parents’ perceptions of Creativeness as an emerging theme of Self-Transcendence

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P3	<p>“She is very imaginative, creative, and practical. I mean, she is all of that. She is very practical. This is what it costs to do things, and I’ve got my money in savings, and we don’t touch that unless there’s an emergency. So, if that’s part of the question, she’s already there on that part of it.”</p>
P4	<p>“He definitely has an appreciation for nature, animals, and our dog. He has a love affair with our dog. But his passion is and always has been space. I think that you would have to be imaginative and creative to research and find new solutions to something that’s hypothetical, so it applies in that regard.”</p> <p>“But he’s also very creative in other ways. He will make me things for Mother’s Day. I still have some of my favorite things that he has made for me. He handcrafts me little things out of wood, out of metal, and he made me a fan. He writes me poems.</p>
P5	<p>“I don’t see that as much, and for her, I think that maybe the connection to the larger world may come more through music. She has told me that there’s this thing about how some people can see colors in music. She feels that she does and sees that. So, for her, I think in terms of that kind of more transcendent aspect, I think that it comes through more in the music arena.”</p>
P7	<p>“I think he’s totally in on connecting with culture, with art, and with music. I think that he achieves transcendence in those things, particularly in his own creative process, his music. He is also doing a service with his Restoration Ecology research. Its whole purpose is to make things better than they were. It’s, however, the ecosystem was damaged in some ways, then how do we put it back? So that’s the focus of his research.”</p>

Table 4.23 Character – Self-Transcendence Connections with People

Parents’ perceptions of Connections with People as an emerging theme of Self-Transcendence

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P2	<p>“I don’t think that he’s connected to the world. I could say that he might feel connected to nature although we have a dog, and he has a gecko. I wasn’t his choice to have that gecko. He has not had much of a connection to either of those animals, but I think he feels it more with the earth. He likes ideas.”</p> <p>“I noticed that he’s always kind of pursued music by listening to it, not playing it. But I don’t feel like he feels connected to others besides us. I think that he’s aware of global issues. I don’t know. You know it’s really hard as a teen because he’s trying not to feel things because there are so many feelings. So, I just keep thinking I want to give him experiences so that he can determine if he feels connected.”</p> <p>“I am news addicted, but I don’t talk too much about it with him because he doesn’t want to. But he knows what’s going on all the time. He looks through Reddit, and he gets his news feed and reads it. He’s aware of all current events. They talk about it at school. So, I know he knows what’s going on. I don’t know if he even feels connected to those people.”</p> <p>“I know that he sees injustices in the world. I think that he sees his part is that he’s not going to have a big impact, but he’s going to want to do something that has an impact. I think he might go into Botany with Conservation in mind. But I don’t know. I would say that he has self-transcendence more with the world than people in the world. I really hope that he gets it with people because he has a lot going on inside there. He’s just afraid to connect.”</p>
P3	<p>“There’s no question about nature and the connectedness with animals. But she doesn’t include people in that right now. She just doesn’t. She can come up with a million ways to solve something or to look at something. And she doesn’t have trouble coming up with ways that something might work, like class projects and coming up with ideas, and looking at the world in a different framework.”</p>

P4	<p>“I think he feels very important, to me, in the world...by discovering, exploring, and providing answers to the universe from a scientific standpoint. When he was three or four years old, we exposed him to everything. I mean, we did the zoo, we did Botany, we did art, theater, everything, we traveled, and we did everything. We did it all, and he got really into birds and really into space.”</p> <p>“So, he’s got that whole end to him also. But I would say that he connects more with people. People that speak his language.”</p>
P5	<p>“I think she appreciates art and nature, but it’s not like an over-the-top, overwhelming transcendent experience for her. I think there is an ambivalence there. I think she likes it, being out in nature. We’ve done a lot of that, every year we would go camping during the summer. Every year she would look forward to it, and she liked it, and I think she still does. I don’t think that it’s as much of a driving force as it is for maybe the rest of us. So, she’s not the instigator of that, but she’ll go, and she’ll enjoy it.”</p>

<p>P6</p>	<p>“I would say if I was looking at this mathematically, 100 percent. There’s no question. I think from her that the behaviors and actions of herself and those around her have a rippling effect and vice versa. I think that she has a spiritual overlay that I don’t know that she even acknowledges.”</p> <p>“This one brings me to tears every time, but sometimes when she was in high school, she called me up, and she asked, ‘Can you sit with me in the calendar for a minute. I want to start with January, and I need to know the death dates of everybody that I knew that has died.’”</p> <p>“What happened was, and this is her processing thing, right. It takes a while. She said, ‘I need to live that day for them.’ She said, ‘I need to hold my high and live that day for them.’”</p> <p>“So, is she still connected and recognizes that power? Yes. But I also think that when I look at this and her desire to, I mean that international piece for her. She doesn’t say I want to be an International Diplomat. She doesn’t say I want to work in foreign countries. Her response was, I want to be a diplomat. I want the world to work together, and for her, it’s an entity, and her job is to make it a better entity.”</p>
<p>P7</p>	<p>“I think he would love to have and has always craved connections with people. I think that he has always been introverted, cautious, an observer, and worried. I think that he was socially anxious about just going up to people, and then when he was so tortured in middle school, that made him even more so. I think that he still wants to hang out with pals, but it’s still slow to happen in grad school. He is developing those connections with other grad students, but it’s not easy for him. It’s never been easy for him, and I think that he’s learning how. It’s not that he’s a sad, lonely person. That is not him. I think he would like to have more connections with people in the world.”</p> <p>“He is practical about the world. He sees the world as it is, which is one of the reasons he’s cautious. He’s skeptical about everything because he’s perceptive. But still, in spite of it all, he still takes these leaps into the void. I love that.”</p>

P8	<p>“She’s still a teenager, so she kind of wants what she wants. She’s not very altruistic. I mean, she is very involved in her own thing, which I think is pretty normal for a 13-year-old. But on the other hand, she definitely understands that there’s a world around her, and she is very globally connected and attuned to the world and cultural issues.”</p>
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Table 4.24 Character – Self-Transcendence Religion vs. Spirituality

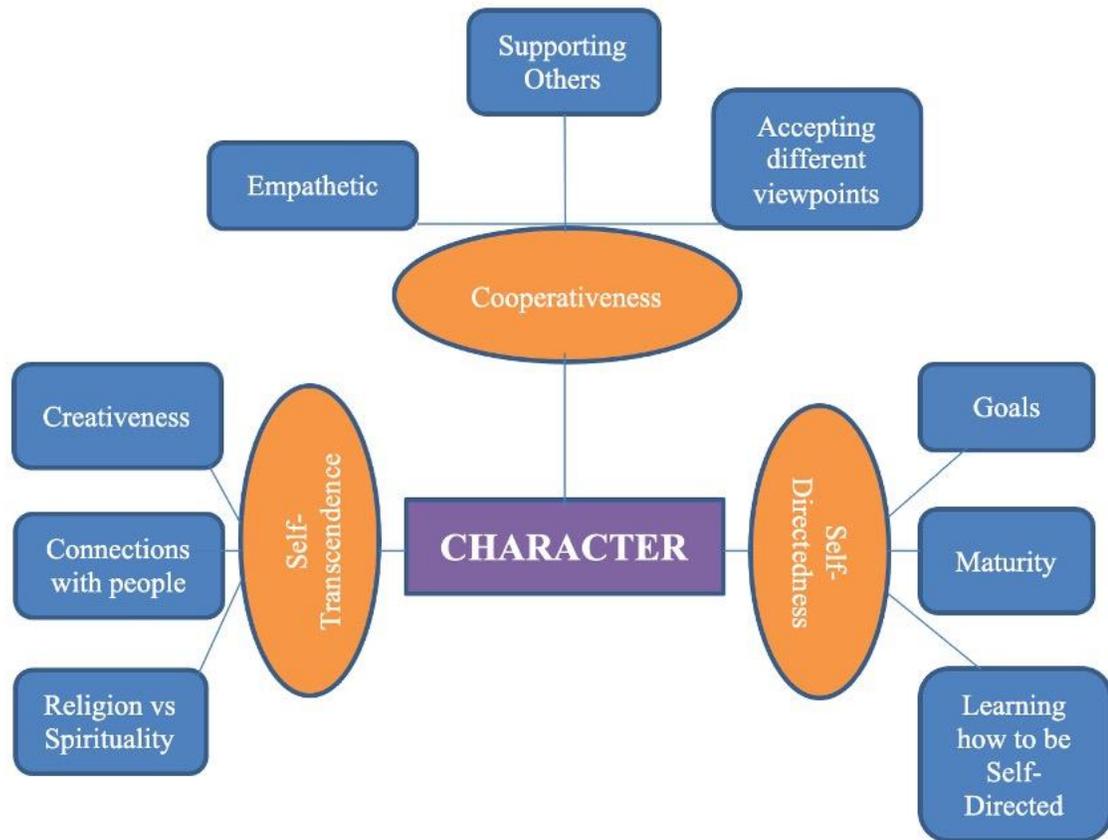
Parents’ perceptions of Religion vs. Spirituality as an emerging theme of Self-Transcendence

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P3	<p>“She has got a lot of room to grow in the area. She identifies herself as part of nature, and she does not have a spiritual basis at this point. Here’s my take on why she has struggled so hard just to get the success that she has. I don’t even think she’s gone into the realm of thinking spiritually at all.”</p>
P5	<p>“These were the hardest ones for me to answer. I just don’t know. She’s not religious, and to the degree that she connects with sort of this larger force. I just don’t know. I really don’t know. So, it’s hard to say.”</p>
P6	<p>“I would love to have her answer that question. I think, you know, she was not raised in any organized religious manner – Don’t think of it as religion – But I mean that she doesn’t have the kind of base connection that some might have who were raised in that culture that says, well, God says we’re all connected so therefore we are. She doesn’t have that Sunday school background.”</p>

P8	“She really enjoys sort of purposeful activities like she used to enjoy going to her church education group when she was younger. I think she definitely believes in God, and she believes in a higher power. She participates religiously and is looking forward to being part of the high school youth group next year. She likes being of service to others. So, she definitely sees herself as part of a larger picture.”
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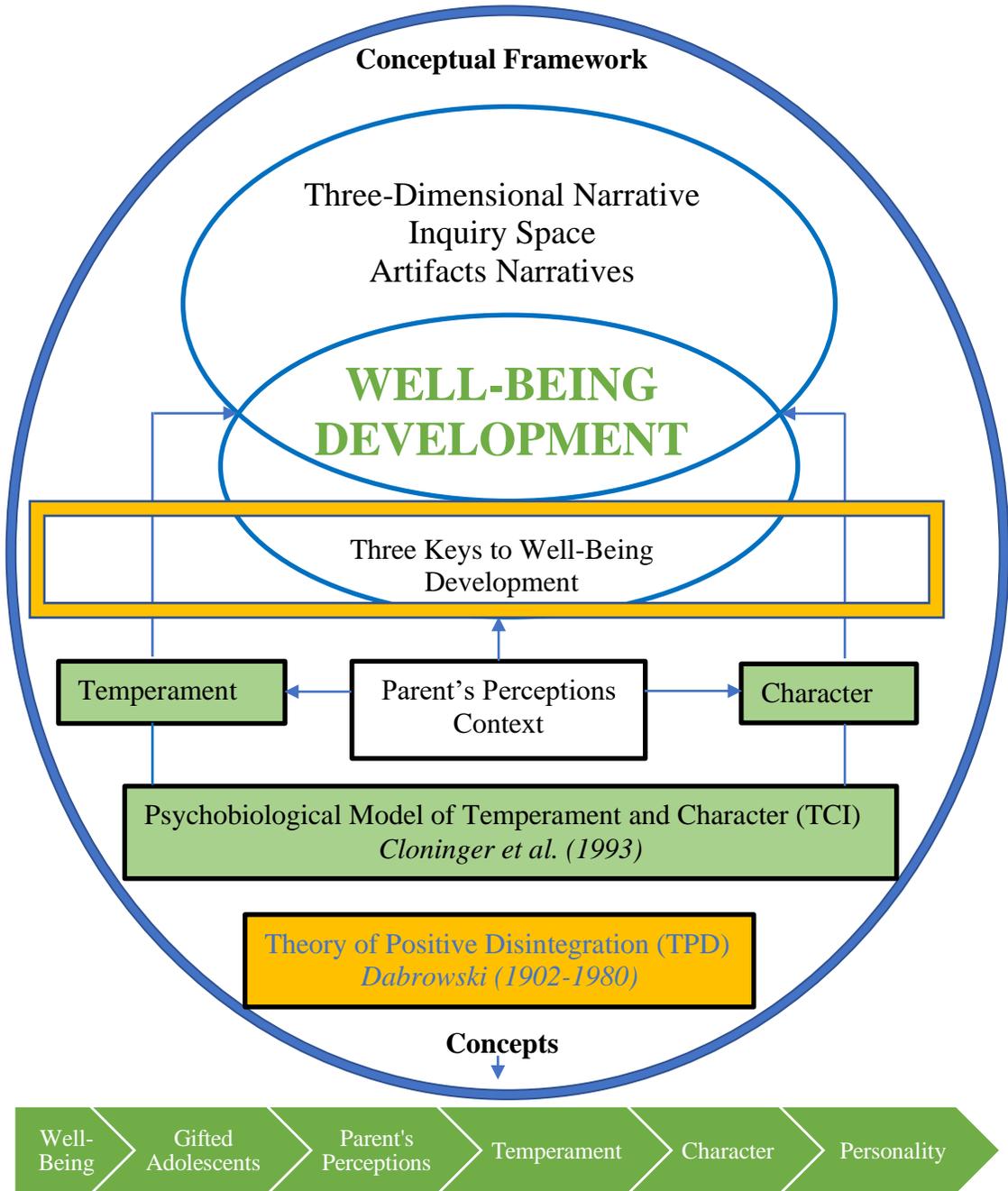
The structure of the thematic network for the Character themes that emerged from the data collected from transcribed interviews has the same stages and steps as the thematic network for Temperament. A global theme (Character) and the organizing themes: Self-Directedness (SD), Cooperativeness (CO), and Self-Transcendence were previously established in accordance with the instrument used to gather data, the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI). The interviews were transcribed, analyzed and coded. Similar codes were categorized for each organizing theme revealing the emerging themes from the data (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.3 Thematic Network for Character Themes



Note. The Global Theme is centered in purple and is the core of the thematic network. The organizing Themes simultaneously group the main ideas and are indicated in orange. Emerging Themes are indicated in blue and are derived from the collected data.

Figure 4.4 Conceptual Framework 7: Interview 2 Keys to Well-Being Development



Note. Interview 2 addressed (RQ3) What are parents' perceptions of well-being development in their gifted adolescent? The three keys are (1) Working in the Service of Others, (2) Letting Go, and (3) Growing in Awareness.

Interview 2: Three Key Practices for the Development of Well-Being:

Working in the Service of Others, Letting Go, and Growing in Awareness

Cloninger, C.R. & Cloninger, K.M. (2013) note that there are “three key practices that have consistently been shown to lead to the development of well-being” (p. 117).

Working in the service of others is expressed as genuine acts of kindness, which are satisfying even when it involves personal sacrifice. Serving others is an expression of *love*, rather than giving into fear and selfishness. *Letting go* involves acceptance of who you really are so that you can develop realistically and calmly without fighting or worry. Acceptance and letting go are expressions of *hope*, rather than giving in to excessive or insatiable desires. *Growing in awareness* is the result of using our intelligences to listen to all aspects of our being. Through reflection, meditation, and contemplation a person can discover more about oneself and the mysteries of one’s inseparable relations to others and the world as a whole. (p117)

These three practices formed the basis of the second interview with the study’s eight parent participants and directly connected to the character traits of Self-directedness (SD), Cooperativeness (CO), and Self- Transcendence (ST). Interview 2 protocol (see Appendix E) consisted of five questions: one opening question; followed by three questions allowing the parents to voice their perceptions of their gifted adolescents in regard to working in the service of others, letting go, and growing in awareness; and one question requesting the parents to share the artifacts that they brought with them to the interview to represent well-being of their gifted adolescent.

Themes emerged from the data collected from transcribed interviews. A global theme (Well-Being Development) and the organizing themes: Working in the Service of Others, Letting Go, and Growing in Awareness were previously established in accordance with the instrument used to gather data, the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI). The interviews were transcribed, analyzed and coded. Similar codes

were categorized for each organizing theme revealing the emerging themes from the data (see Figure 4.3). Equally, the same process as with Temperament and Character was followed to structure the thematic network for Well-Being Development.

Figure 4.5 Thematic Network Analysis for the Keys for Well-Being Development



Note. The Global Theme is centered in purple and is the core of the thematic network. The organizing Themes simultaneously group the main ideas and are indicated in orange. Emerging Themes are indicated in blue and are derived from the collected data.

Working in the Service of Others

Table 4.25 Working in the Service of Others - *Helping*

Parents' perceptions of Helping as an emerging theme of Working in the Service of Others

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P1	<p>“How would he respond, and he wouldn't notice. I think that's part of his Asperger's or ASD sort of. And so, I always try to point this out to him because he wouldn't notice. I think for him, it's just learning what that means. And so, he's always willing when I ask, ‘oh can you go and hold open that door for that person, or can you help them?’”</p> <p>“He will also go over to his grandmother's house next door and help her vacuum, rake leaves, and do other chores. So those are the types of things he'll do.”</p>
P2	<p>“I don't think he helps people because he wants them to like him. He just feels like it's the right thing to do. I mean, that's his sense of values that you don't do that. You do this, and you know this is the right way to behave.”</p>
P6	<p>“The reports that she got back from the teachers who were there...were you're a natural-born teacher. You are made to help others. These kids love you. We had thought you were young when you were coming in to do this, and we don't know if she's got the right stuff for this yet, and we need you to come back on this trip every year because you clearly know what you're doing.”</p>

Table 4.26 Working in the Service of Others - Kindness

Parents' perceptions of Kindness as an emerging theme of Working in the Service of Others

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P2	“You know he's always had a really good sense of kindness and empathy and helpfulness... if people don't say thank you. I don't think that would stop him.”
P3	“Love and Kindness is really kind of an everyday experience for her because being an empath, she notices people in distress, and what she'll really respond to is the negative emotions, not so much the positive. If somebody is happy, smiling and chattering, she doesn't really attend to that. But if someone is really hurting and she notices that through their body language, she will smile. She will offer assistance, and she will try to engage with that person. We call it random acts of kindness. And this is probably the best way that she exemplifies reaching out to others.”
P5	“Acts of kindness. She does do that. She does go out of her way at times to express gratitude or appreciation for things. It tends to happen more with her teachers at school than it does with us at home. But I know that she's written thank you notes to her teachers for things they've done for her. She'll bring little snacks for them.”

P7

“His career is going to be environmental restoration. So, that is the whole point of his professional life. I mean, he's going to enjoy it. But he's trying to make a difference in that.”

“As far as individuals where he has shown kindness. So, here's the thing like he's kind of closed off right. And so, he's not - but I do think that he does - I mean, I'm really struggling with this because he is closed, and that's just him. So, he's not outwardly like, hey, can I help you with that. It's more he's not going to harm anybody else. I mean, he has a very gentle demeanor. So, he's very accepting of everybody else.”

Table 4.27 Working in the Service of Others – Community Service

Parents' perceptions of Community Service as an emerging theme of Working in the Service of Others

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comments</i>
P4	<p>“When he was in kindergarten, he was very concerned about the rainforests, and when he was five years old, he said, mom, we need to do something. So, I went online, and I found Jane Goodall had these Roots and Shoots, and we formed a chapter. We had all these roots and shoots meetings, and we learned about the rainforests, the oceans, the savannahs, and everything. And at the end of each one, we did a fundraiser to benefit one group or another. And he continued that mostly most throughout the time he attended the school for gifted children. I'd say probably until seventh or eighth grade he did those projects.”</p> <p>“It was mostly environment and animals, but we also did projects with Project Angel Heart and Project Valentine, which Project Valentine is for Cancer patients undergoing treatment on Valentine's Day. So, we did projects with those organizations for several years. Those were mostly through middle school. Since then, I mean, he has the Denver Astronomical Society where he volunteers. I'd say that's working in the service of others. He's also done some volunteer things in college. There's one where he taught elementary and middle school students about physics with his Society of Physics Students club.”</p>

P5	<p>“Working in the service of others. This is something that I think she's been developing a bit more in recent years. One event that just occurred recently was, I think, in conjunction with the Columbine Day of Service, and so she organized a day of service for members of her club that she started in high school. And so, they did a service project cleaning up the park nearby the high school. They are a water club, sort of a water conservation club.”</p> <p>“So, that activity sort of fit with their theme. So, there was that, and then later that same day, they went to the Children's Museum, where they volunteered there, and they did a variety of projects with the kids there. So that's one example of her working to help others.”</p>
P6	<p>“She's very accommodating all the time to other people. But also, if we look at her high school trips, they would do kind of like the intercessions from her school for gifted children. They would have a week-long trip, no school. Everybody goes and does something, and they plan them. She went to the Dominican Republic to work in an orphanage.”</p> <p>“That was a trip that somebody else put on, but she could have gone biking in France or river rafting the snake or whatever, and she's like...No, I want to go to the Dominican Republic. I want to work in this orphanage, and she loved it.”</p>
P8	<p>“I think that is part of the reason she chose to attend Regis for high school because there's a service requirement, and she's really sort of on board with that and wants to be of service to others.”</p> <p>“Also, I think generally - she's as far as that - I think she looks at that as sort of doing charitable works...Well, some examples are Regis does this thing called day for others, and she's participated in that in the last two years with her brothers.”</p>

Letting Go

Table 4.28 Letting Go – Struggles

Parents' perceptions of Struggles as an emerging theme of Letting Go

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P2	<p>“His struggles with himself...he sees a lot of unhappiness. He sees people upset about the way things are in the world, locally with their jobs, and thinks about all these high school shootings. I asked him about that. I asked, what do you think is the cause of this, and how do you feel? How does it feel about going to school now? Because now it seems like for me I kind of got over the bump, or this is a rare occasion where it's definitely clear these kids are getting served that need mental health care. The kids that are at school, no matter what school they're at, the kids are targets, and they don't know who the predator is, who's going to break, snap, not everybody's happy, and any school could have somebody, anybody. And so, imagine living with that.”</p> <p>“He is the one who put it that way...He said, you don't know what it's like we're all targets, and I said, I know, I wish there was something I could do besides you know I vote. I'm kind to your friends. I look to see if anybody needs any extra help. He is kind to people that feel disenfranchised unless he thinks they're dangerous for some reason. So, how is that pushing kids to feel disconnected? I don't know what it's like being - It's hard for me to put words in his mouth because I don't know what it's like being a teen today. It was hard enough before all that social stuff and school. And now it's harder for them to get an education. It's more rigorous studies. There are fewer slots.”</p>
P4	<p>“I mean, I have seen other adolescents that have such struggles, and he doesn't have any of that, thank goodness. I mean, I don't know how - maybe it's because pretty much one of the worst things that can happen to you in your life already happened to him [the loss of his father]. So maybe that helped shape him and his outlook. I think that he is maybe able to let things go that others can't.”</p>

P5

“I would say frankly that she has struggled with that one because I feel like whenever things didn't quite go her way, she would be quick to blame it on some other person or some other thing or something that's beyond her own responsibility. So that one, I'd say, is still a work in progress. I think she's coming to more of a realization of understanding that she has more responsibility for things like that and that she can control a lot of that herself. But I think it's just now starting. So, I think it's still in a developmental stage.”

Table 4.29 Letting Go – Future

Parents' perceptions of Future as an emerging theme of Letting Go

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comments</i>
P1	“I think they're more external sort of things. I think with the inner struggles - he has to think. I feel like he needs to think about it for a while and then kind of try. He worries about everything. That's just part of his - you know that's why he suffers from anxiety. You know, overthinking things, or you know it's hard for him to just be - I think I said bendy, you know to just kind of go with the flow. It's impossible. So those things he has problems with, he has trouble with just letting go.”
P3	“And it also talks about challenges as she was growing up. So, she's reflecting on that, and in this paper, she's talking about it. I know I'm defensive about the extremely defensive obvious things. And here's what I saw with this was her saying that - I'm learning about this in class and I'm reflecting on it, and I'm saying oh my gosh, I interrupt response a lot when I am in the face of people that have bullied me before, in the past, etc., and then giving examples of these situations and then talking about what I'm going to do. When she revised this, she really gave her plan for the future in terms of okay now, I'm aware. And so, when I recognize it, or someone points out to me what am I going to do now to change my behavior because I don't want to be like this. And then we're talking about I think a really great mature process as an adult. I have a responsibility to myself and to others to communicate better, to manage conflict better, and to learn to let go better. And because she is a very emotionally intense person.”

Table 4.30 Letting Go – Internal & External

Parents' perceptions of Internal & External as an emerging theme of Letting Go

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comments</i>
P1	<p>“A lot of his thinking is pretty much current. He has a hard time right now, and I don't know if it's because he's a boy or if he's a teenager and looking into the future - having to remind him of things like what's happening now can affect you in the future that just sort of reminder of if you get bad grades in high school, this can affect you later. You've got to look past right now. He struggles with that, and I think it overwhelms him.”</p>
P6	<p>“Internally, I think she's learned to let things not stick around, but I'm not sure of that. I think that she's gotten really good about sharing, but I don't actually know what's in her brain. So, I'm not 100 percent certain. But I think of when we had her identified with ADHD. When that happened, her response was I am so glad to find out that it's not me - but that it's me. And her statement of that was - I thought that something in me was doing this on purpose and knowing - that it's happening that I'm not doing it on purpose makes me feel so much better to know what's going on. And so, I think that she has been able to kind of arrange things so that she doesn't have to own things forever. If something happens, she can let it go.”</p> <p>“I don't know if I have any specific examples, although I think of her reaction when she got into trouble at school that she didn't stay a troubled kid. She said, alright, so I got into trouble. Fix it. And she fixed it instead of saying I got into trouble, and I must be a bad kid, that kind of thing. She just went alright I did something stupid fix it. I think so. I think she's gotten to that stage.”</p>

P7	<p>“He went through that horrible thing in junior high school...in high school, it took him a while, and then he started to make friends...in college, he was pretty quiet, but then he became the social director. So, he started really putting himself out there. And so, I think he just let go of that.”</p> <p>“I think in the professional context, he was very quiet, and then he collected signatures for an initiative, and that actually helped him to open up professionally. So, he let go of I don't want to talk to people. He let go of that, and he's become just a lot more open in that way too.”</p>
P8	<p>“Letting go is not super easy for her. That's not to say that she doesn't get over it. I would say she processes the emotional side of things, and then she starts to intellectualize things and process them intellectually to sort of understand things. I think that's kind of her process if you will. She has some sort of emotional response and release, and then she works on it. She works on thinking it through, perhaps making a decision if need be or sort of figuring it out.”</p>

Growing in Awareness

Table 4.31 Growing in Awareness – *Parent Involvement*

Parents’ perceptions of Parent Involvement as an emerging theme of Growing in Awareness

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comment</i>
P1	<p>“I think it's just practice right. I am adapting and learning how to adapt, just practice. I think putting him in situations to practice that adaptation is sort of my analytical way of dealing with him. Again, we go back to the bendy kind of things. We have to adapt. Are there ways you can think about dealing with the situation? But I sort of have to help him.”</p>

P3	<p>“I have to remind myself all the time because I get snide remarks from people... well, you're too involved in her life, and I think as a mother that yeah, I'm not going to always get it right. But I think that she can support herself. I mean, I don't worry about her supporting herself financially. Academically I don't worry about her at all academically. I worry about her emotional function because I think it's behind where everything else is. So, you see the academic intelligence here and the analysis, but you don't see the emotional support.”</p>
P7	<p>“I think I have a really good handle on letting go and growing awareness. The stuff that he does day to day, his personal interactions with people now, I don't know. So, I feel like now I just want to ask him about it. But I also feel like his choice of a career is - I'm going to teach, and I'm going to do Environmental Restoration. So, he's always been like other people don't have the privileges that I do. So, he sees that, and then his focus is on this environmental way.”</p>
P8	<p>“I will say that we've sort of good or bad, we've intentionally sheltered her. There's plenty of time to sort of be exposed to what's wrong in the world, bad things, and the evil that's done in the world. There's plenty of time for that we've always felt. We don't obviously keep her as sheltered these days, but we still try to try to steer her in a happier direction, I guess, to sort of maybe consume positive messages.”</p> <p>“We don't sit down and watch the news together as a family just because it's sad. It really just brings you down. It's important for us to know about these sorts of things. But as adults it's probably important for us to know and they'll get their time.”</p>

Table 4.32 Growing in Awareness – Responsibilities

Parents' perceptions of Responsibilities as an emerging theme of Growing in Awareness

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comments</i>
P2	<p>“I have been incredibly proud of...things clicking in his mind about not always resigning yourself...seeing that there are options instead of just accepting a bad situation. So, with school, he just really felt trapped, and most of his friends are staying in that IB program. But he went beyond, and I mean his counselors were recommending against it. He’s had teachers that have wanted him to stay in the program, but he came up with very solid reasoning for not doing it. He signed up for the next two years, and he has figured out he can change his senior year. He's figured out the classes he's going to take. And he started doing even a little research into those courses, and he's looking forward to it a lot. So, I was so proud of him for solving it instead of me. And I don't want to solve all his things. To me, that was a great moment for him to dig himself out of a dark situation in a really positive way and get excited about it. I mean, it sort of transformed him in a short time.”</p>
P5	<p>“But certainly, in the music arena, I think that's where she feels more comfortable and where she acknowledges what's happening more and what role she can play in helping to change whatever is going on.”</p> <p>“I think on the home front, it's not really there yet. I feel like she's more prone to be deflecting reality there. I just don't see it there as well, and I think it really is a control issue because, at home, she doesn't feel like she is in control. The parents are in control there, so she just feels less inclined to take responsibility for her own actions.”</p>

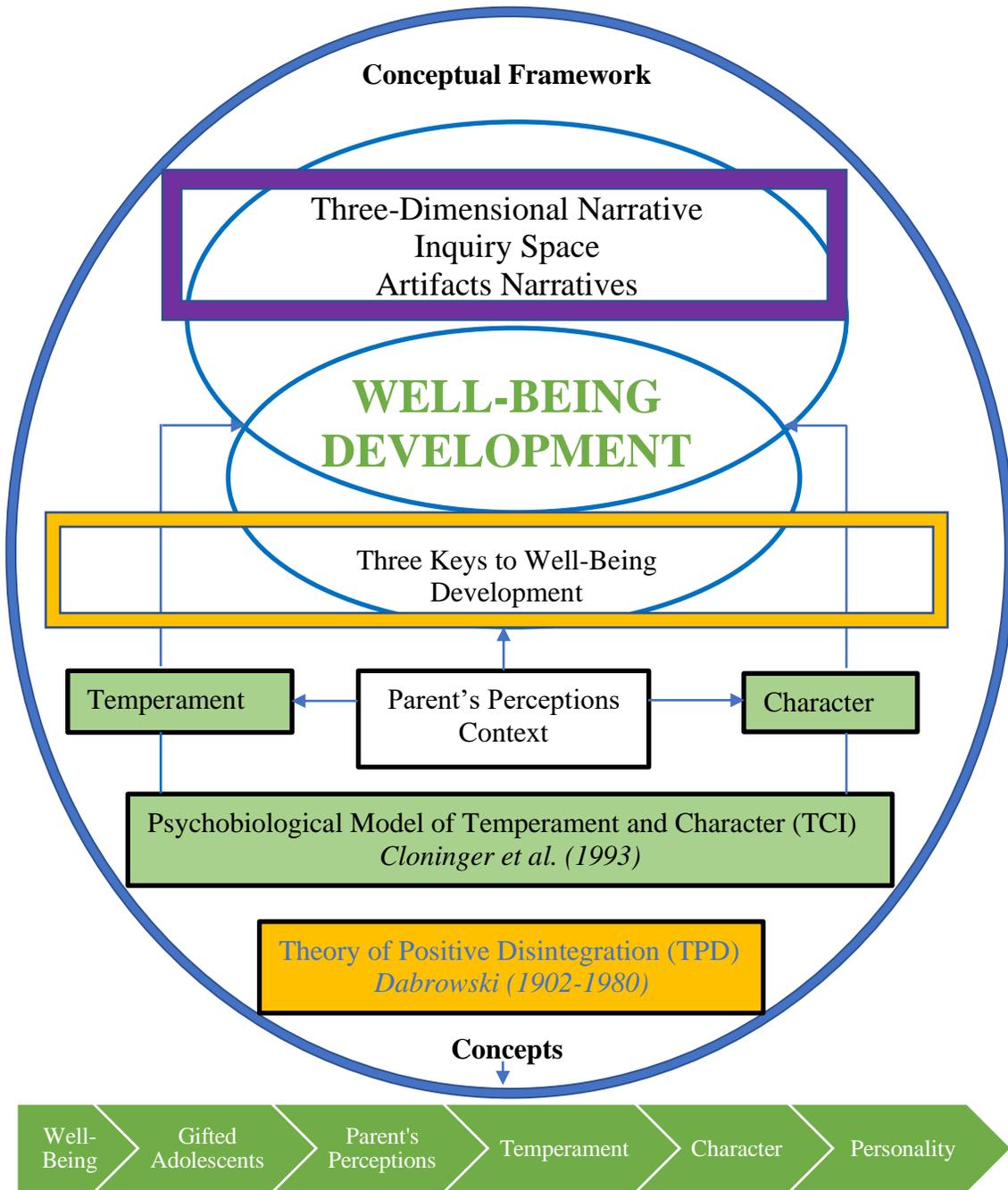
P6	<p>“So, it took her some time, but she's a processor. Sometimes things take her time. We've known that for years, and she took responsibility for her own actions as a 16-year-old, which is rather impressive to be able to do that component of it. So, I think that some of it, for her, is that she's kind of outgrown the knock the glass over and then says it's not me. I think that probably where she is often is that she knocks the glass over and goes, look, a glass fell down. Oh, that was me. It's that component when just because of that gap - sort of putting it all together that sometimes it takes her time to go - This is my issue, and I need to own it and fix it. But I've never seen her not own it, at least since she was a kid.”</p>
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Table 4.33 Growing in Awareness – *Contrary to other Themes*

Parent perception of Growing in Awareness

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Comments</i>
P4	<p>“It's not that he has not grown in awareness. I'm sure he has - He's oblivious to so many things - Just little things. Accepting reality, I mean, I guess, of course, he has. I'm sure he has. And I think he's aware he knows what's going on. He knows things, he keeps to himself, and he sees a lot.”</p>

Figure 4.6 Conceptual Framework 8: Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space



Note. The parent participants shared personal-social-family artifacts that they perceived to represent their gifted adolescent’s well-being development. The researcher collected the lived experiences as told by the parent participants and composed eight narratives as understandings of the parents’ perceptions of well-being development. Each narrative was grounded with Clandinin and Connelley’s (200) Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space: Temporality (past, present, and future); Interaction (personal and social); and Situation (space).

Shared Artifacts

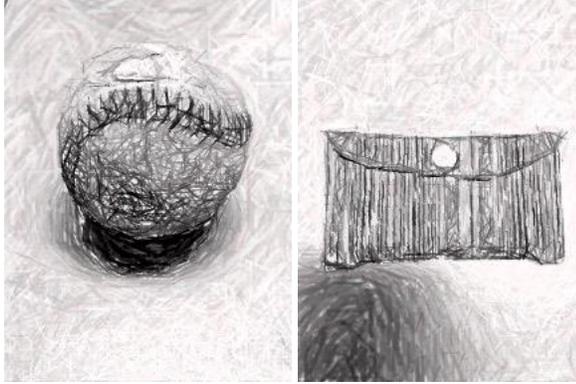
Parent participants were asked to share personal-social-family artifacts in which they perceived to demonstrate well-being in their gifted adolescent. The study participants, P1-P8, shared these artifacts during the second interview session. These artifacts ranged from personal objects belonging to their adolescent, photographs, poetry, and letters written by their adolescent, school documents and assignments, awards, medals, artwork, and a travel journal. As the study participants shared the artifacts with the researcher, they told stories of their adolescents' lived experiences with each item.

Each artifact carried special memories for the parents, and the researcher recognized the significance of the stories that were shared. The researcher compiled narratives for each participant, P1-P8, and analyzed the data by using a Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describes the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space in terms of directionality with temporality being one dimension, personal and social as another, and place being the third dimension.

The compiled narratives included analysis of the stories told by focusing on these dimensions: (1) backward and forward (temporality); (2) inward and outward (interaction); and (3) located them in place (situation). Backward and forward focused on the past, present and future; inward focused on internal conditions and outward concentrated on external or the environment; and place attended to the specific physical space of inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

The Baseball and the Wallet

Figure 4.7 Artifacts Shared by Parent P1



Note. P1 shared two artifacts, a baseball, and a hand sewn wallet, that they perceived for inquiry purposes represented their gifted adolescent’s well-being.

Parent Participant P1’s Narrative The Baseball and the Wallet

Withered, tattered, and torn are a few words to describe this artifact, a baseball. Origin unknown, last seen and taken from the bedroom of P1’s 14-year-old male adolescent. P1 is the mother of a gifted adolescent, she has also stated in earlier interviews that her son has been diagnosed with high functioning ASD (autism spectrum disorder). This narrative will begin with the researcher wondering how they are going to get enough information to write about this one artifact, a baseball. How does this inanimate object represent well-being in P1’s adolescent? As an afterthought, P1 offered another artifact, “I guess the other artifact that I have, I guess it’s my artifact, but it’s something that he had sewn for me,” she said. P1 made mention of the handmade object that she carried with her daily early on in our meeting when we were discussing the practice “working in the service of others.” Not much else was said about the wallet. However, it was left out on the table in plain sight beside the baseball as the inquiry

continued and the researcher listened to understand the parent's perception of her son's well-being and the symbolic representation of the baseball.

Backward and Forward (Temporality). At first glance, the baseball appeared to have some special meaning in the mind of the researcher. Was it something that P1's son has had since he was much younger? What was the past, present, and future of this object? Was there a live experience attached to this baseball? "I just found it in his room. I was trying to find something that represented him and baseball," she laughed as she tried to remember how the baseball came into existence. P1 started thinking back when her son might have gotten his first baseball and ascertained that it was when he was at the school that he attended for gifted students. He was introduced to baseball there by the athletic coach in either fourth or fifth grade, when he joined the baseball team. "He loved it, and just kept trying," she announced.

For the majority of the interview, P1's perceptions and memories stayed current, in the present, as she spoke more about her son's love of baseball. "He's very passionate about baseball. He's living and breathing baseball," she articulated. This prompted the researcher to reflect on one of the questions that parents are asked about their gifted children: Does your child concentrate on a single activity for a prolonged period of time without getting bored, and loses track of time? P1 stated that her son is interested in baseball gloves, baseball bats, his team's uniform, the Rockies baseball team, and in general anything having to do with baseball.

P1's perception suggests that the interest that her adolescent son has shown in all things baseball is indicative or symbolic of finding his passion and possibly a glimpse into his future. "He loves baseball so much that he knows the statistics of the players and

stuff. If you gave him a player's number, he would be able to name that player," she also hypothesized, "...take a passion and kind of direct it and do something with it where they can make money and make a living out of it because...you know, why not?" Sports and statistics could be in her son's future. However, she did mention that he is interested in becoming a sports broadcaster one day.

Inward and Outward (Interaction). P1 went on to connect her son's interest in everything baseball to her perceptions related to his well-being, the social and physical aspects of baseball, and his feelings. In speaking about her son's passion, P1 stated, "As for his well-being I think it really centers him and helps him function." The phrase, "it really centers him", started the researcher thinking about passions and sports related passions or talent in a different way. Being centered for the researcher was associated with mindfulness practices and the clearing of the mind, also finding a place of inner peace and a balance of feelings and thoughts. Can an academic gift, talent, or sport equate to a passion that leaves an adolescent in a state of emotional and spiritual equilibrium? P1 continues to enlighten the researcher about baseball and her adolescent's well-being:

I think it started at his school for gifted children where he started to play baseball there and I mean he's so obsessed with it. It helps him to meet people...there's a social aspect to it. I think he enjoys it, but I also think it could be the repetition of throwing or hitting. There's that physical part of being outside and doing something like physical exercise. I think it helps him.

The mind-body connection can help one gain focus and control their emotions.

Movement and being physical can also better one's temperament, and lead to self-awareness, the researcher thought.

When asked to expand upon how baseball helps her son, P1 replied, “It helps him to be calmer,” and with a pause she continued, “and maybe more focused for a very short period of time, but I think it also helps him motivate himself at school and getting his schoolwork done more or less, it comes and goes (motivation for schoolwork), so he can play baseball.” P1’s son’s motivation to get his schoolwork done can be seen as an existential or environmental force that propels him to practice his passion. On the other hand, P1 has stated that he practices all the time and that “it just makes them feel good when they’re practicing their passion.” She also agreed that he feels accomplished and that she has seen him “willing to work harder or to try.”

As the researcher continued to listen for understanding in regard to well-being, the dimensions of temperament came to mind. P1’s previous comments about working harder showed a relationship to the temperament trait of Persistence as outlined in the (TCI). Harm Avoidance is another temperament trait that was presented as the inquiry continued. P1 mentioned, “He was very afraid of...He has a seat on the JV team, and he was frustrated that they don’t do a lot of batting practice. He said, ‘it’s hard because the speed of the ball is so much faster than it has been,’ P1 remembered.” She continued to tell his experience of feeling afraid and hesitant:

But then all of a sudden you know he kept trying and you realize...oh, I can hit these. Also, things like he’s really wanting to play, be a starting player, and get some time to play but there are so many other kids that are better than he is because they’ve played more. And what was really interesting was that he wanted that, and I asked if that is something that you can ask your coach about. How do I be on the starting lineup? I said can you ask your coach and he said, ‘No, I can’t.

The coach said not to ask.' I don't know if that was a story he made up or not. I said, well you just need to keep showing up for games and being a part of the team even though you're not playing and have a good attitude and just keep trying. You know I kind of told him and he kind of did that.

The researcher was enlightened by the parent's perception of how this one object, a baseball, had such meaning and purpose in her son's life. "So, you know, I just feel like this is again hopefully a life lesson for other things, because they love it so much that they're very persistent and want to improve, P1 lovingly maintained."

Locating Them in Place (Situation). The researcher inquired if baseball was something that was mainly school based or was the obsession, as P1 had exclaimed earlier, also happening at home? "It's a 24/7...wherever he goes, wherever he is," she replied with so much laughter. "From the time that he gets up in the morning," another long pause. "It's rather strange," she said after the pause followed by more laughter, "he's very obsessed with it." P1 gave an example of her son wanting to watch a Rockies game that was starting, during his high school orientation.

The researcher also remembered an assignment that she gave P1's son's seventh grade class when they taught Communications. The assignment was an end of the year culminating assignment where the students were asked to build a website using techniques and strategies learned that school year. P1's son created a website featuring the Rockies baseball team, statistics of the players, their game schedules, and much more. He was able to communicate through this website information about the Rockies baseball team that anyone interested would want to know.

In earlier conversations P1 talked about how her son spends his days. “Baseball right now is obsessive. For example, watching the game, going outside, and practicing throwing, just anything baseball related right now.” When asked specifically about being at home or in his bedroom, P1 responded, “Baseball. This is baseball in his room: Ben, stop throwing the ball against the wall.” ‘Mom, that funny noise I’m making...I’m trying to break in my new glove.’ Ben, what are you doing? ‘I’m watching the baseball game.’

The researcher wanted to go back to the inquiry of school as being the place that P1’s passion was situated. How does this inanimate object fit into the situation of learning? Earlier P1 talked about her son’s motivation and his willingness to try harder. During this part of the inquiry P1 made a connection to her son’s passion and his schoolwork:

There is an eligibility, and so things like if they miss an assignment they can’t play until that assignment is turned in. I think if they’re failing also, all of those sorts of things. I think every kid, every person should have a passion. I think things seem to fall in place, and other parts of their life fall in place when they have a passion.

Eleven Years of Halloween Costumes and Building

Figure 4.8 Halloween Costumes Compilation Artifacts Shared by Parent P2



Note. Photos of Artifacts have been artistically filtered.

Figure 4.9 Building Artifact of Hoop House Shared by Parent P2

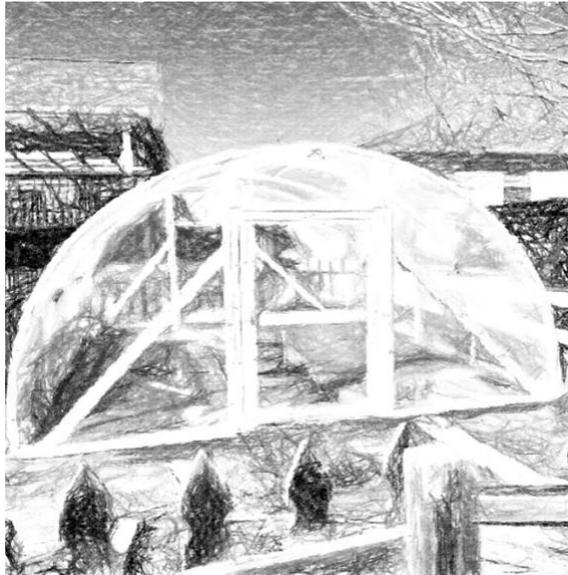
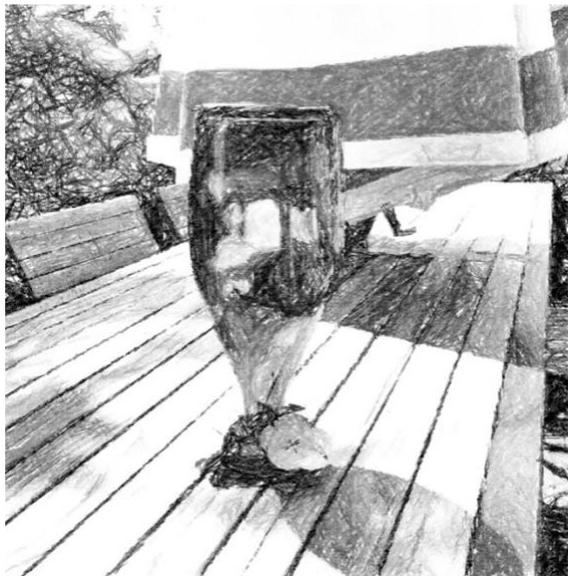


Figure 4.10 Building Artifact of Bird Feeder Shared by Parent P2



Note. Photos of Artifacts have been artistically filtered.

Parent Participant P2's Narrative Eleven Years of Halloween Costumes & Building

A picture is worth a thousand words as the saying goes. What if photographs could tell the story of a gifted adolescent's well-being? What if we could grasp the essence of someone through a Halloween costume tribute? That is exactly what P2 set out to do in her second interview. She put together a creative montage of photos taken of her gifted adolescent son who was 16 years of age. The photos included eleven years of her son's Halloween costumes from an infant to age 10 or 11, all of which were designed and constructed, with the exception of one, by P2 and her son when he was old enough to assist. When does creativity start in one so young, and how does this creativeness shape the temperament and character of an adolescent male?

P2 shared other photographs of her son's more recent innovations. The other artifacts were photos of a hoop house that he built, and a hummingbird feeder that he made from items he found at home. "There are three things I thought of for artifacts to bring. Everything is around building, which I thought was weird, but I also think some of his creativity that he does and his ideas...So some of the creativity that he comes up with shows his kindness and his priorities," P2 enthusiastically spoke.

The researcher was intrigued and eager to hear about each photograph. P2 was also eager and spoke with excitement in her voice while smiling and laughing as she uncoiled each lived experience of costumes and growth through photographs.

Backward and Forward (Temporality). The researcher sat down beside P2 with an open mind and open heart, preparing to listen and gain an understanding of the photographic artifacts that P2 was starting to share. There were twelve frames in the tribute, consisting of eleven pictures and one title frame. The title read, 2003 - 2013 11

Years of Halloween Costumes. It included a subtitle, Inspired & Produced by _____, P2's son's name would fill in the blank. Each of the photos in the tribute had a theme. The themes from left to right were:

1. Title
2. "The Moon" (*Inspired by a very cute, pale, BIG round face*)
3. "Gator" (*The only costume we didn't make—Still Cute!*)
4. "Safari Guide"
5. "Hairy – Not Scary – Monster" (*Sort of scary after all*)
6. "Penguin"
7. "Friendly, Colorful Alien" (*Missing from photo, Matching Colorful Dog Alien (aka dog's name)*)
8. "The Cheese"
9. "King Kong" (*Accompanied by Japanese fighter pilot with planes to bat down*)
10. "Chick Popping Out of Egg"
11. "Piggy Bank"
12. "Fortune Cookie" (*Passing out fortune cookies stumped people*)

With a loving smile on her face, P2 started describing the photos that were on her phone.

She put together a story of her son's kindness and priorities with photos. The first photo shared was the theme #5 *Hairy – Not Scary – Monster*, "He wanted to be a nice monster," P2 explained. She continued with her memories of this moment in time of her son, her words and the photos gave life to the experiences that she shared:

He wanted to be a monster, [insert laughter], but he didn't want to be...He's being scary here in the picture, but he didn't want to be. He doesn't like things on his face, and he didn't want to be a hairy scary monster. He wanted to be a nice monster. So, I could never put anything on his face, so he sort of looks like *Where the Wild Things Are*...hairy scary monster. He drew a picture you know, then he picked the fabric, and then I figured out how to make it. He helps me. He wasn't working the sewing machine back at that age.

The researcher and P2 continued the inquiry. The researcher listening and asking questions as they emerged, and P2 now happily transported back in time, continued her oration about each photo. Her stories flowed seamlessly from one frame to the next. As she spoke the researcher was also collecting their thoughts. P2 noted that her son didn't like things on his face, and how he didn't want to be scary. He was also able to articulate his vision for the costume through art at approximately 3 years old. These are some things that the researcher took note of from theme #5.

“Then this was a penguin...again, NO BEAK,” emphasizing that there was nothing on his face. “We couldn't buy anything,” she said while referencing theme #6.

Moving on to theme #7 *Friendly Colorful Alien*, “This was an alien that looked like a clown with an eye on top. Our dog had a matching outfit,” P2 said with pride and laughter. She transitions to the next two frames, theme #8 *The Cheese*, and theme #9

King Kong:

This year he wanted to be cheese. So, figuring out each year sort of goes with his engineering maker kind of mind. He always wanted to do something like take robot camps, but he would like the creative stuff. So, we had to figure out how to

use those old electric carving knives to do this. I had to borrow that. This was *King Kong*. I remember he wanted to be King Kong, but I don't know what inspired that. I said, 'Oh good, we can buy a costume this year.' He's like, I'm not going to wear any store-bought costume... Tom was the Japanese fighter pilot, and they were throwing paper airplanes.

So many memories chronologically organized through photos and told stories, the researcher thought. P2 was not only reliving stories about her son's Halloween costume adventures, but she was also shaping a picture of her son's developing personality and creativity year by year.

The next frame, theme #10 *Chicken Popping Out of Egg*, was a community effort P2 said as she talked about the creation of the costume. "This was a chicken popping out of an egg, and the whole neighborhood jumped in. It was his design. So, I would have done it differently, but it turned out really cute," P2 remembered.

When asked about the involvement of the neighborhood, P2 replied, "So, everybody came and helped. We had to paper mâché, the chicken wire, and so we had that happen a lot." P2 continued, "We had this great block in Denver and the kids would see what project we had going...you know we did all that stuff." The researcher has gained insight into P2's son's well-being and his willingness to share his experiences with others at this time of his life, at approximately age 8 and at age 9 when he wanted to be a pink *Piggy Bank*, theme #11.

As the photos and stories of Halloween costumes near an end, P2 reminisces about the last frame, theme #12 *Fortune Cookie*:

This one was the one to me that pulled it all together. He wanted to be a fortune cookie. He did not want the candy because he's never been a candy guy. He wanted to go around the neighborhood, and he had decided it was his last year and he wanted to give people something and not get the candy. So, we got all these fortune cookies, and we made a big to-go container. He went around giving them fortune cookies and nobody knew how to deal with that. So, they gave him more candy [insert big laugh]. It totally backfired from what his intentions were.

P2 told the researcher that she was so sad that theme #12 was the end of their costume journey together. She said that the costumes ended when her son was in 5th grade. What a rite of passage as he entered into early adolescence. Theme #12 *Fortune Cookie* and P2's words compelled the researcher to contemplate the parent's earlier statement of how this artifact of photos demonstrated her son's kindness and priorities, and also the person that he was becoming.

Inward and Outward (Interaction). Kindness can be thought of as an emotion that one feels, or showing kindness can equate to someone being affectionate, friendly, and caring. Doing good can also make you feel good. Acts of kindness towards others help promote well-being in ourselves and others. The researcher continued to reflect on kindness as the inquiry resumed with P2 searching on her phone for a photo of the next artifact that she planned to share.

“So, this is a whole story I could tell you about, but this is the finished hoop house. This was his own personal project,” P2 announced. She began describing in detail how he constructed the hoop house and the materials that he used. This was a major

project, and the researcher was eager to find out P2's perception of how this huge undertaking affected her son's well-being.

Reflecting back, P2 shared:

He's been helping with gardening since he was little. So, he would try one thing like cabbage one year or something like that. Gardening was always something he enjoyed and now he says it's because he thought he wanted to be a botanist, and he realized he likes it for a hobby because there's no pressure you know, and you get this amazing result.

When this inquiry started, P2 mentioned that the artifacts that she found to share somehow had to do with building. The construction of the Halloween costumes and now the building of the hoop house and the garden inside of the hoop house. What role does creative expression play in maintaining well-being? "We had these two 4 by 12- or 15-foot vegetable lots with drip lines...and the deer ate everything. So, he knew that was bothering me and we were going to turn it into a patio, but he liked the gardening part," P2 explained one of the reasons how the hoop house came into existence. The other reason, as told in another conversation, was that the hoop house was also a personal project that he chose to do for a high school class. As P2 found more pictures of the hoop house on her phone, she showed the researcher one photo of it covered in snow. "So, this was the snowstorm where I came home and I saw the hoop house had collapsed in the snow, and I didn't want to tell him because he was having a bad day, but I knocked it off and it popped right back up. So, I mean to me, it was really great construction," P2 told the researcher.

The inquiry revealed a little more about P2's son's feelings as she returned to her thoughts about the hoop house. Saying, "So, that's what I think...gardening makes him feel like he's accomplished something. It's very peaceful. I mean it is exactly why people choose to garden. It's rewarding."

Locating Them in Place (Situation). P2 returns to her phone searching for the last artifact that she wanted to share with the researcher. The artifact's physical boundaries of inquiry landscapes with the exception of the hoop house, which one could argue that it served a dual purpose when it comes to the dimensions of place, were constructed at home. The hoop house was a personal project for school located at his home. The ideas for the Halloween costumes were conceived and created at his home, and then shared with the classmates and his neighborhood, including the last artifact that is almost ready to surface from P2's phone.

She starts another memory, "So, I said I want you to make me something. He was bored." So, I said, "I want you to make me a hummingbird feeder with what we have around the house."

P2 thought of other experiences as she looked for the hummingbird feeder, "He's built everything. He's built foosball tables you know, with his own plans just to figure it out." She told the researcher that the bird feeder was made from a Perrier bottle and a beer can. "Here it is," P2 announced while showing the photos of the last artifact to the researcher with pride. It was impressive.

The researcher listens as P2 explains the construction of the hummingbird feeder. She also summed everything up by saying:

So, I just think he, I mean by nature I think he picks nice things. You know things that are not bloody or gory. He wasn't the one that got the stick and turned it into a gun. It was never a sword or a gun. I mean it was something to dig with or build something with.

The researcher took some time to reflect on the joyful accounts from P2 reminiscing about her son who has just had a birthday. He was 15 during the first interview and now he is 16 at the time of the second interview. Everything would seem to be going well with P2's son. He is curious, creative, motivated, and most of all extremely kind. However, the researcher referred back to their notes from the interviews and found several places where he appears to have had some challenges. These included family dynamics and his feelings about school. P2 stated at one point, "He's hating school right now, just because they're burnout because of the IB. So, I think he's getting through every day. He's just dragging, they are all like that right now."

Just getting through every day, the researcher thought. Was this just typical teenage moodiness, or could it be something to take a closer look at?

See Me

Figure 4.11 Photograph Artifact Shared by Parent P3



*I am the one who writes my own story
I decide the person I'll be
What goes in the plot, and what does not
Is pretty much up to me*

Parent Participant P3's Narrative See Me

This quote is one of the artifacts that P3 shared during her second interview. It is an affirmation that P3's 18-year-old gifted daughter looked at every day when she was younger. It was posted on the refrigerator along with a quote from a Chinese cookie that said, "A wise person cares not for what he cannot have but for what he can."

This photograph shows a younger image of P3's daughter. What do you see? Some attributes that arise are confidence, self-assured, adventurous, and in case you cannot see it there is a smile on her face demonstrating some form of happiness. Here is what you do not see in the photo of P3's daughter...Invisible disabilities. She has a

Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD), visual tracking issues, dyslexia, a written expression disorder, and a math impairment.

Are you ready to embark upon this journey of discovering the presence of well-being through the perceptions of P3 and the artifacts that she has brought to share? There are several documents in a briefcase-like folder. P3 also brought copies and her daughter's writings that span from her early years to college.

Backward and Forward (Temporality). Listen closely, do not assume that you know the story, the researcher reminded themselves. The inquiry of P3's perceptions of her daughter's well-being started with the first artifact that was given to the researcher during the "Letting Go" segment of the interview. It was a "Letter of Gratitude." The next artifact was a paper entitled, "Managing Conflict." Both of these documents were recently drafted at the time of the interview.

The inquiry initially began in the present and with P3 sharing her daughter's recent thoughts and lived experiences. "I think that this will give you really good information into how she sees herself," P3 said as she handed the researcher the letter of gratitude to read. She reflected back and spoke of her daughter's journey:

In high school, her freshman year was a perfect example moving from her school for gifted children to a college prep high school with no study hall. She had six classes while also testing for her second-degree black belt. I don't know how she got through it, but you know she gives me the credit for being the needle and thread and she says this in her letter of gratitude.

In P3's daughter's words the letter starts, "This letter is a little late in coming, I should have written it right after I graduated from high school, graduated from a bad

relationship, and graduated in the right direction. You have been my rock throughout my life, from my fits I threw as a young girl when you wouldn't let me watch TV all day to the screaming matches that ended up with textbooks being chucked across the living room floor." She also reflects in the letter, remembering how strong she started out her last year in high school when she was completing two years in one, "I started out so strong but as the things started piling on my last year of high school, I began to drown in the expectation of starting to become an adult." She goes on and writes that P3 helped her, encouraged her, and didn't let her forget why she decided to challenge herself that school year. In regard to the Managing Conflict artifact, P3 shared her thoughts with the researcher:

It talks about challenges as she was growing up. So, she's reflecting on that and in this paper, she's talking about, 'I know I'm defensive about the extremely defensive obvious things.' And here's what I saw with this was 'I'm learning about this in class and I'm reflecting on it and I'm saying oh my gosh I "interrupt response" a lot when I am in the face of people that have bullied me before in the past.' Then giving examples of these situations and then talking about what I'm going to do and when she revised this, she really gave her plan for the future in terms of okay, now I'm aware. So, when I recognize it, or someone points it out to me, what am I going to do now to change my behavior because I don't want to be like this? And then we're talking about I think a really great mature process of becoming an adult. 'I have a responsibility to myself and to others to communicate better, to manage conflict better, and to learn to let go better.'

Because my daughter is a very emotionally intense person which is why I think

that it is my perception that she has a hard time letting go. She's stubborn, she's intense, and when she forms emotional attachments to something they are there she's very loyal to a fault. So, these are the attributes that in her personality is her next growth phase.

During the time that was set aside for reviewing the artifacts, P3 shared documents which were early writings of her daughter's that demonstrated anxiety at an early age. The writings were from her early primary years at her school for gifted children. P3 also shared playbills and programs showing that her daughter enjoyed performing on stage. The performances ranged from her daughter's primary school years through college. She informed the researcher that these activities brought her daughter happiness.

Inward and Outward (Interaction). In a conversation about her daughter's growth and awareness P3 indicated to the researcher, "I think she's still struggling with being decisive when she gets the first signal that something needs to change. There's going to be many signals down the road in certain aspects of her life before she will, and she does have to work on that. Her dad has a saying that if she's in enough pain it will change, she will make the decision. But her level of pain can be pretty good." P3 continued, "It's like with most people they would have made this change a long time ago, but not my daughter. She has to feel it to the fullest and that's okay. I think that's who she is, and I see her down the road being able to, in her chosen profession, being very good at relating to people in different aspects of what we were just talking about because she will have experienced it all the way through."

The inquiry continued exploring P3's daughter's internal feelings and wants. "... she wants to be really independent. She wants to be free of me, she wants to be free of dad, and she wants to be free of her counselor. She wants to do her own thing, and then she realizes that she's not quite ready for that. Then we come back, and we have more life lessons, and she marches out again."

Listening to P3's perception of her gifted daughter who is feeling the challenges of becoming an adult. The researcher is reminded of studies that revealed that 18-year-olds are still considered adolescents. It is thought that adolescence can range from the time of puberty until the age of 25 years old. The researcher also reflecting on the depth of pain that P3's daughter could experience thought of Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration. P3's account of how her daughter would have to feel the pain pretty well and go through the process fully to get beyond the cause of it, reminded the researcher of the framework of this study.

The researcher inquired about the throwing of books since it was mentioned a couple of times and also showed up in her daughter's early writing about her anxiety level, as well as the gratitude letter. "So, we have had this challenge all along with the math and she was so frustrated, and it required so much energy for her to focus on the math and be successful that many times she wouldn't get it. She would get frustrated, and she would throw math books. It was not uncommon to have damaged math books and then we would talk about how that wasn't a productive way to settle the issue. Math was always a roadblock, and it continued through high school," P3 recounted for the researcher's understanding.

The dialogue switched back to P3 reminiscing about her daughter's time in plays and chorale as she resumed sharing artifacts with the researcher. "Let's see. Here's a poem that she wrote at her school for gifted children that I always thought was a good reflection of her," P3 noted. She continued:

Well, here's one, and here's one. Here's the one that was really good because this is about when the administrator and I almost gave up on her and then she pulled the lead in the play. This was Seussical, but there are others. The Phantom Tollbooth, she was the lead in that one. Let's see here. This is when she went to the Arvada Theater for a year. She loves this one. Yeah, it's when she got her little note in the mail that said she got the part, and she was so excited. So, one of the things you see with my daughter in her drama roles...is look at that face. I mean she is happy, she's happy. This is who she is. But not in the choirs because in the choirs you're in the mold of fitting in to everybody else, what the director wants, and you cannot be an individual at all in the choirs and I think that was one of her big problems with the university in terms of a collegiate choir...This is really sad for her because what she's recognized that her individuality is suppressed in the curriculum.

Locating Them in Place (Situation). Most of P3's daughter's life experiences shared through artifacts occurred either at her gifted school, at her high school, or at her university. Other artifacts that were shared included her participation in choirs, in high school through college and Taekwondo.

P3 commented that during Taekwondo she was in control of her body and this aspect of her life gave her self-acceptance and success that she could do something really

well. Headshots were also shared from her time at the Arvada Theater that showed a beautiful smiling young woman. P3 stated that drama performances were a personal channel for her daughter's emotive behaviors.

Other conversations between P3 and the researcher included the time that she spent supporting her daughter through her time at the gifted school and beyond. A family excursion that involved driving ATV's and her daughter's well-being charged and energized by accomplishing a feat. One of the last artifacts shared was her daughter's Model for Success adapted from www.Frostig.org. The model included practicing *self-awareness, effective support systems, proactivity, perseverance, goal setting, and emotional coping strategies*.

P3 also shared a Developmental Questionnaire document that was written a few years before the interview. The questionnaire requested for parents to describe their child as they saw them (personality, attitudes, development of friendships, etc.) P3 responded:

She is intense, emotional, empathetic, and perfectionistic...how she perceives she is viewed by the world and how she wants to be perceived, rather than perfect schoolwork. She sings/hums constantly if things are okay in her world and when they are not, she is snarky/snippy. When she is in an emotional place, her feelings take over and she rarely is able to focus and get quality schoolwork done until she deals with her emotions. She avoids confronting her emotions head on and also tends to avoid conflict/feedback or criticism from others. Journaling, physical movement (such as biking, swinging, dance), singing and playing the piano help her deal with emotions...she is recognizing her behavior and adjusting/ using her tools more frequently as she matures.

Picture Perfect Journey

Figure 4.12 Photograph Artifact from Family Photo Album Shared by Parent P4



Parent Participant P4's Narrative Picture Perfect Journey

Photographs are memories, a document of a moment in time, miniature stories captured in a 4x6 print. Two photo albums emerged from P4's messenger bag containing some of the life experiences of her 20-year-old gifted son. Which photographs would she deem worthy of sharing as artifacts to express her son's well-being? The photo albums contained pictures of P4's small family, children's activities, birthdays, graduations, friends, and family gatherings. There were also pictures of the family pet. The photos also documented holidays and accomplishments. Some pictures demonstrated her children's creativity and innovative passions, who often showed their love and affection for their mom by making her presents, some of which were full-blown projects. The researcher was pleased to share part of the life experiences of P4's family to gain an understanding of her perception of her son's well-being journey.

Backward and Forward (Temporality). Where do we start, the researcher wondered? It didn't take P4 long at all to focus on a photo of a birthday poem. This

artifact was a picture of a poem that was written by her son and framed with photos of the family:

Mom, this is a poem for you
For your wisdom and guidance
For how you see things through
For your strength and intelligence
Mom, this is a poem for you
You love us unconditionally
You always come to the rescue
You are the best, unequivocally
I hope that you will keep baking chocolate cakes
Keep running on the treadmill
Keep helping us fix our mistakes
You are awesome
I love you, Mom

P4's birthday poem was written a year before our interview and started our inquiry with a current artifact. This poem demonstrated her son's character and his compassion for others. The following photograph that P4 wanted to share continued the birthday theme and also illustrated her son's love and kindness for others. The photo showed P4's son holding up a Caprese salad that he made for his brother's birthday. "He made a Caprese salad. That's what his brother wanted. He cut up the cubes of mozzarella, and it says Happy 15," P4 explained as she described the photo.

Still focused on the present, P4 came across a photo of a Poster Presentation that her son did for school at his university. "Gosh, I don't even know what this is. I think this was his poster presentation of something or other. I can't even pretend to tell you what it is," she continued. "I think he won...he didn't even know it was a competition, but he won third place," P4 responded after the researcher asked if the poster was something that made her son proud? The poster presentation was for the Physics Department at his university, research-based and very scientific.

The researcher reflected when P4's son was their student at the school for gifted children and remembered that he had to build his motivation for creative writing. Now seeing the scholarly writing on display in his poster presentation, the researcher could not help but think back and wonder if they should have provided more opportunities for scientific writing for P4's son.

P4 continued flipping the pages of the photo album and mentioning small memories about some of the photographs. The photos that she spoke about appeared to bring her joy, "This was Mother's Day last year. I got all these air plants, and he made all these, and these back here," she pointed out the plants in the photo collage. "He took sticks of wood and formed all these metal things to hold them...He made a whole bunch for me and put them throughout the whole house...those are creative," she said as she turned the page of the photo album.

As the inquiry progressed and P4 commented on certain pages of the photo album that she was looking through, she came across photos that directly addressed her son's passion, space. There were pictures of him standing beside different astronauts and pictures of him when he was at the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation with other

astronaut scholars nationwide. The photographs that P4 shared were primarily recent experiences of her son's accomplishments since high school, along with a few glimpses of personal and social interactions.

Inward and Outward (Interaction). P4 shared her perception of her son's feelings about meeting prominent people in his field of study:

He's met a lot of Astronauts. I think that he really admires them a lot. And he doesn't really like... He'd already had two NASA internships at that time, and he had just been named the Astronaut Scholar Foundation scholar, which is a huge deal...and then he didn't even want to talk about that. I don't know...he gets kind of...really quiet.

The conversation continued as the researcher wanted to hear more about P4's perception of her son's emotions. "He was really nervous to go to that event. So, there were 40 astronaut scholars in the country there. But once he got there, he made fast friends with them. He was nervous, and he didn't know what to say, and he's a little awkward, and he's five years younger than them. It's a little intimidating," P4 recalled.

The researcher thought about how P4's gifted son left high school early and started college at a younger age than most students. Academically, this is what needed to happen for her son to continue to thrive and grow intellectually. However, the researcher could not help wondering about the emotional and social challenges of being years younger than your peers in an academic setting. What were the challenges, if any, that her son faced? What support was needed regarding his well-being?

Changing the course of the inquiry, P4 shared a photo of her son in a shirt that he wears every year for Halloween. The shirt says, "This is my costume," and the shirt

belonged to his father, who is no longer with them. The researcher felt humbled at this moment, a moment of empathy. Thinking of empathy, P4 revealed the next photo stating, "Here's a minute of being empathetic. Here we are at the beach." P4 shared a picture of her sister-in-law. "She was a little timid and shy. Here's my son holding her hand going into the water. The water was really kind of rough, although it doesn't really look like that in that picture," she said as she turned the page in the photo album.

As the researcher and P4 resumed viewing images of her son's lived experiences, they talked about holiday gifts that he gave to her, and time was spent exploring pictures of his college graduation. "I think he was pretty proud of himself. But he doesn't, you know, really boast about himself. He did humor me. I said I want to walk around campus and take pictures, and he didn't flinch. He wanted it too, and so he showed me around his campus," P4 said proudly. There were pictures of his graduation party at the Observatory where he volunteered. A photo of her son in a red suit jacket really stood out for the researcher, and they discussed how the red jacket came about. It was a jacket that he was really drawn to, so P4 got him that jacket for the holidays, and he wore it to his graduation party. She said that he was so happy to receive that jacket and very excited about it.

Socially, P4 shared with the researcher pictures of her son at his graduation parties. She explained the reason why he had more than one:

So, I think that I told you how he doesn't like to mix his friends. This was originally going to be a surprise party. I was going to invite his friends from the gifted school plus his science camp friends, and his friends from the Astronomical

Society...but he just got really anxious about that. He didn't want to mix his groups of friends, so we had a separate party for his other sets of friends.

P4 continued sharing photos of her son's friends, some he has known since kindergarten and met at the gifted school.

As P4 continued to thumb through pages of her son's friends, the researcher asked about other things that her son might have made. Serendipitously, P4 turned to a page in the photo album where her son had created a Mother's Day surprise for her. "He made this for me on Mother's Day... that's a heart. I walked into the house, and this was draped across the hall. This was made of Hershey's Kisses. He does creative things," P4 said with a proud mother's smile on her face. "He knows that I'm going to love it, and he's pretty proud of himself. He makes an effort to do these things," she said before turning to the next page of photographs.

Locating Them in Place (Situation). The researcher observed P4's expressions and the nuances in the tone of her voice as she reminisced about the memories captured in the photographs. Where did all these memories take place? In what environment did they occur? And who was present as P4's son experienced this journey from his early years through now at age twenty? Most of her son's lived experiences that were shared through photos happened at or near their home. The photographic journey embraced P4's son's love and kindness for her, his sibling, and his friends. Along the way, the researcher gained an understanding of her son's passion for science and all things space.

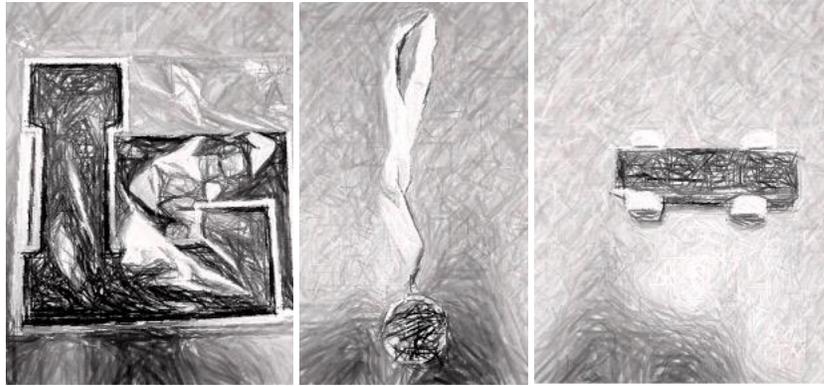
P4's son was twenty when the interview took place and had already started a master's degree. There were photos of him pursuing his passion at internships at NASA in

California and Florida. He was also photographed at his university, graduating early. Most of the pictures appeared to be taken by his mom or when she was by his side.

Other pictures were of his friends and told a story of friendships made when he was much younger. Although he gets anxious about mixing friends, they are all there for him in one way or another. The researcher could sense that family and friends were an essential part of this young researcher's life experiences. Although there seemed to be a piece missing from this young physicist's accomplishments, the father he loved so dearly but lost when he was much younger.

Music and Service

Figure 4.13 Artifacts Shared by Parent P5



Note. P5 shared a letter and pen awarded for participation in the high school band; a medal also for music; and a craft made for young children during a community service visit.

Parent Participant P5's Narrative Music and Service

What does it mean to have a talent? How does one find their purpose, that one thing that gets them through occurrences of fear and anxiety? P5's 17-year-old female gifted adolescent daughter has always been drawn to music, specifically creating music, the researcher recalls times of a younger student always performing some musical concept during lunch time, either alone or with a friend. When does a child know that they have a talent, and that the talent gives their life meaning?

P5 is the father of this gifted adolescent who expresses herself musically. He brought in three artifacts to represent his daughter's well-being. All of the artifacts were from her high school years. She was presently approaching her senior year at the time of her father's interview with the researcher. The first two artifacts symbolized her achievements in her high school music program. She was a member of the marching band. The third artifact is representative of a "day of service" at The Children's Museum.

P5 was ready to share with the researcher the artifacts that he brought to demonstrate his daughter's wellbeing and give his perceptions of what the artifacts characterized.

Backward and Forward (Temporality). The researcher was aware that this interview possibly might not cover much of P5's daughter's past since all of the artifacts were fairly recent. However, the researcher knew that they would need to be patient and lean into the inquiry with the father. P5 started the inquiry informing the researcher about artifact number 1:

So, she lettered in music. She's very proud of this high school. So, that would have been well I guess just this last year that she got the letter. It was her sophomore year for being in the music program, and then she got this band thing this year for being in the band. The letter I think was for just being in the music program and doing the things that you need to do to get a letter. Then she did more this year, and that's what got her this extra pin.

The researcher realized that there were actually four artifacts if you included the gold pin that was attached to the letter. "I would say that this is symbolic of her really enjoying the music program and joining the Marching Band," P5 stated. He continued his thought, "And just how that has really helped her to become a bit more integrated with the school and making her feel more a part of that community and that she's really become attached to it, and her attitude has really changed as a result of this."

The way that P5 spoke about the artifacts symbolized periods of emotional growth in P5's gifted adolescent daughter. Although the inquiry so far did not address his daughter's younger years, the researcher wanted to hear more about the father's perceptions of his daughter's transformation that the inquiry had begun to explore.

Toward the end of the inquiry P5 communicated some thoughts:

I've seen a great change in her just very recently and a lot of it is related to these artifacts right here. It's been a change for the better, positive change. So, you know I feel a lot better about her trajectory now than I did certainly two years ago, even last year. I wasn't sure what was going to happen. She was actively thinking about dropping music, and so for this to have kind of turned around it's just been a really positive development.

Looking to the future, "She wants to go into music composition in college. She's taking a guitar class this semester with one of her favorite music teachers and for her final she has to play something. So, she composed a song to play and then she got one of her friends to sing," P5 elaborated more about how his daughter played and sang the song for him, "It was a very nice song, and it was basically a thank you song to her teacher for doing all the things that she had done, which you know was very nice."

The researcher could not help thinking about the difference that just one teacher can make in a student's learning and life experiences. Both the researcher and P5 thought about a question that was asked in the first interview in regard to the temperament trait Reward Dependence. Was his daughter's intention with her song composition focused on her grade and completing her final, or was her intention to please her favorite teacher?

Inward and Outward (Interaction). The inquiry continued with P5 reflecting on his daughter's well-being before she joined the music program:

She was very fearful about a lot of stuff and wasn't really sure about what she should go into. Her confidence level was pretty low. But I think this experience of getting connected more with the music program and doing well in the music

program and the band...I think it's boosted her confidence and it's kind of given her a foundation or a grounding at the school. So, that's a significant thing.

After a brief conversation about whether the letter was going to be sewn on a jacket or hang on her wall, P5 acknowledged that they saw the letter as a symbol of his daughter's connection with the school. He also recalled, "When she first started there, I mean I don't know how many times we would drive up to the school and I'm ready to drop her off and she would just say, 'I hate this place. I hate this place. I don't want to go here. I wish I was doing something else.' She was just really negative about it." As the inquiry continued, the researcher listened as P5 concluded that the high school music program helped his daughter find a sense of pride and purpose in what she was doing. "And it came through the music program," he said.

The second artifact is also related to music. P5 told the researcher a story about how his daughter got the medal. She was asked to join the Rocky Mountain winter percussion group. He said, "...that whole experience throughout the winter being a part of that percussion group also was a very formative and strong confidence building experience for her." After a setback, the group experienced not being able to perform the music that they had been practicing, and after some disappointment the group rallied together with the director to learn another piece from scratch and prepare it for the competition.

"In the state championships they got a bronze medal for it. So. They were able to pull it together and come up with a whole other different program in a very short period of time and did pretty well with it. P5 continued his thinking, "She was quite happy about that, and so I think that was very meaningful as well."

The researcher was pleased to hear how P5's daughter and the other members of the group showed persistence and persevered and didn't give up. Resilience was a word that came to the researcher's mind. The researcher also reflected on the external conditions and whether or not being in a group influenced P5's daughter's ability to bounce back from disappointment and frustration. How do group dynamics affect an individual's wellbeing?

Locating Them in Place (Situation). The last artifact that was revealed to the researcher also had a lived experience that included a group dynamic. P5 shared, "The third thing is this (showing the small car) and this is one of the crafts that she and others made while helping little kids at the Children's Museum on their day of service. It's just a little car on wheels. She and her friends in the club all signed it. It's sort of a little memento of their Day of Service working at the Children's Museum."

P5's daughter's Day of Service aligns with one of the principles of wellbeing and happiness, "working in the service of others," which perpetuates love and kindness. "I think...my sense is that she felt good about doing it. I think that because it was with her friends in her club, altogether doing it together as a group. I think she really appreciated that kind of camaraderie and doing that together," P5 explained to the researcher.

With the exception of the Children's Museum, the lived experiences of P5's daughter's shared artifacts all occurred in a school setting such as her participation in the marching band, or in an environment that was related to her musical talent, such as the winter percussion group competition. The inquiry also indicated that there was some time spent talking things through with the parents at home. Her hopes, dreams, and fears were conveyed to her parents when there was a decision to be made.

Reflecting on the questions posited at the beginning of this narrative. The researcher first had this gifted seventeen-year-old adolescent as a student when she was in 5th grade and was able to observe her growth as an individual until she graduated from the gifted school in her eighth-grade year. Was she musically inclined before the researcher first became her teacher? The researcher was elated to know that she was maybe one of many educators who encouraged P5's daughter as she ventured down her musical path. Simply by allowing her to express herself and put on performances during lunchtime and recess may have helped P5's daughter grow her passion for music. The researcher had to stop and think about times when they themselves and other educators might have shut down a student's creativity because they were focused on teaching the curriculum and not the student and all their gifts.

Journal Quest

Figure 4.14 Artifacts Shared by Parent P6



Note. P6 shared entries from their adolescents travel journal which included sketches and goals.

Parent Participant P6's Narrative Journal Quest

Journaling can bring self-awareness and knowledge of our environment and perspective of lived experiences. Letters, drawings, reflections, and poetry can reveal one's thoughts and outlook on life at the time of documentation. P6 said that she had been going through old schoolwork of her 19-year-old daughter's and reminiscing about her younger years at the school for gifted children that she attended until she graduated in eighth grade. The artifacts that P6 brought included a journal that was offered to her by her daughter to share with the researcher on the morning of the interview. It was the mother's first time seeing what was inside and what her daughter had written. She also gave her mother her eighth-grade graduation speech as an artifact, because the speech had a connection between P6 and the researcher, poetry.

P6's gifted daughter gave her mother permission to share her travel journal from one of her trips that she took during her gap year before going to college. The journal was

an environmental journal, and the mother shared her perceptions on a few of the pages from the journal and the speech from middle school.

Backward and Forward (Temporality). The inquiry started with P6 handing her daughter's eighth grade graduation speech to the researcher to read. There was a brief conversation about how the speech was composed. The speech started with a poem inspired by one of her eighth-grade teachers, but P6 said that her daughter told her that it was because of the researcher that she was able to prepare this speech, so she could give it to the researcher to keep. The poem says a lot:

She was born strong, happy

But there was a pain inside and it was sorrow, abandon

She was left at a young age alone, sad

She was hopeless, helpless

But she walked away from the mushroom clouds of what her life could have become

And she looked away from the ruin of her broken education

And she found a world full of the rays of the sun

Full of colors of her future and empty of the pain inside

She found a life filled with the beauty of knowledge and creation

She discovered a world full of people bearing friendship, not war

She grew and learned and as she learned, she grew

Years went by and she discovered the truth

Nothing could stop her now

She ran full speed for whatever lies ahead

She vaulted the walls that stood in her path

And even when she tripped and skinned her knee, she ignored the pain and ran

She ran and ran, and she is still running now

And she knows she won't stop until she reaches the end of the world.

P6 said of the artifact, "There was a lot of growth to get to that step of standing up and speaking. She started hers with slam poetry, which was a major discomfort zone for her, when she first started doing those. So, to start with that for a speech in front of adults was huge."

As P6 continued to give her perception of the speech she also reflected on some of her daughter's personality traits when she was younger. "In it she talks about the growth that she made and why the gifted school was where she needed to be," P6 recalled. She continues and shares her memories of her daughter. "I think about the kiddo that we couldn't get to walk in a door without pausing. She never wanted to stand up in front of people and talk," P6 remembered.

The inquiry continued with P6 introducing the next artifact which was her daughter's journal. Before digging into the journal P6 reflected on the time spent with her daughter going through her artifacts from school and mentioned that she had not been aware of how long her daughter's memory was:

When we were just kind of going through some artifacts she said, 'Oh, we did ads for our new city and that was when I first learned the power of ads and promoting, and all of that.' She said, 'I got really fascinated with how people use images in order to sway people. And my senior thesis was on propaganda and that's what my college senior thesis is probably going to be on. Oh yeah, I remember this.'

The memory was from P6's daughter's primary school years at her gifted school. P6 was in awe of her daughter's ability to see something that she had done so long ago and take that project and apply it to her high school thesis and also thoughtfully plan to incorporate it into her college studies as well.

P6 also recalled her daughter's early interactions with her primary teachers. She told the researcher of a conversation that her daughter had with a friend about how she wanted to use her 1st and 2nd grade teacher as a reference on her resume saying that the teacher helped her become who she is today. The inquiry continued with P6 recalling memories of her daughter's younger years while looking through the journal for something that she wanted to share.

Inward and Outward (Interaction). Now for the journal. "So, this one I've only gotten to look through a little because it appeared this morning when I said anything else...and she said, 'back in a second,'" P6 told the researcher as she explained the journal's contents. The first entries were two thoughtfully written letters, one to her mom and one to her dad. P6 became emotional as she thumbed through the journal pages, "This is her journal from her gap year trip to India. It has some notes in it, just different things that they needed to keep track of and that kind of stuff. They also journaled and so there's a letter in here to me and there's a letter to her dad. There are comments from others on the days that she was leaving, all of that's in here," P6 said, showing sensitivity to the contents she was about to share.

The letter that was written to P6 brought her to tears as the researcher read aloud the first sentences of the letter:

Mom, this is the halfway point (hiking off the grid wise anyway). I feel like I'm changing more and more every day, and I know that will continue. I don't think I'll be the same [daughter] when I come home, but maybe I will be more me. This may come as a shock, but I really do miss you and I'm so excited to come home and tell you everything I can. Thank you for being mom. On our Designated Leader days and any other time, I need to take on a leadership role, you are my inspiration. I feel like graceful and confident leadership sits so well with you and I use you as my role model to try and bring that balance to myself.

P6's gifted daughter also marked the letter from to her dad for the researcher to read, although it was not discussed in the interview the first sentences were:

Dad, I've now spent three out of six weeks backpacking and camping and I keep thinking about how much you would love this experience. Practically everything I know about being outside I learned from you and there have been times when a teaching moment will happen and I'm thinking 'yea, my dad taught me that.' There have also been times when I think about experiences...I am so grateful to you for giving me the confidence to do things that make me nervous and to have an awesome time while I'm doing it.

At this point in the inquiry, the researcher can observe the importance of P6's daughter giving her permission to share the contents of her journal, as well as gain some insight into her daughter's temperament and character growth on this trip.

The researcher made note of some of the character traits that she gathered from the mother's perceptions during the inquiry. P6's daughter demonstrated Cooperativeness as she hiked and worked with her group while in India, even being a designated leader.

Reflecting on times at the gifted school the researcher recalled that P6's daughter was always a helper to her friends and teachers. Another character trait was Self-directedness. P6 spoke of her daughter's initiative in taking this trip to learn about a different culture and the goals that she set for herself and this experience.

One of the pages in the journal was titled Positive Learning Environment. On this page there was a drawing of a backpack with love as an overarching theme, and the other sections of the backpack symbolizing, "What we're taking with us vs what we're leaving behind." In her letters to her parents P6's daughter acknowledged how each parent influenced her and the researcher noticed that there were also environmental influences that helped her grow during this lived experience in India.

Locating Them in Place (Situation). Where did the lived experiences discussed during the inquiry of P6's daughter take place? What was the significance of each artifact? How and when does a gifted adolescent realize that they are becoming more of who they are meant to be? As the inquiry progressed P6 shared a poem that her daughter wrote, Smart Goals that she found, a page that listed values, and the last days of her daughter's trip.

The inquiry started with P6 giving the researcher a copy of her daughter's eighth grade graduation speech, which included a poem in which the researcher's slam poetry elective may have encouraged her to write and perform poetry. This speech was given on the University of Denver's campus at the graduation dinner, and possibly written at the gifted school that she attended. P6 also shared her perception of the growth and courage that her daughter showed in presenting her speech with confidence and grace, as opposed to the challenges she faced with public speaking when she was younger.

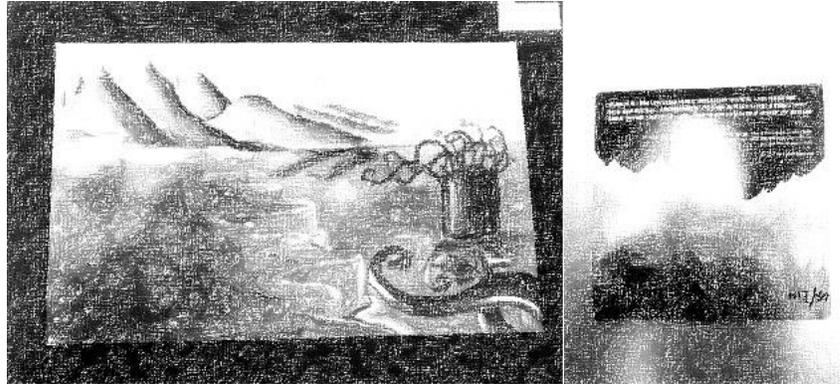
Next, the environmental journal documented growth in character and leadership. The contents of the journal were written while on a gap year before college while on a trip to India. Although P6's daughter spoke about things that she learned from her parents that she utilized when needed on the trip, she also participated in experiences facilitated by the organization to help her, and her peers gain the skills needed to cope in different situations and gain an understanding of different cultures. P6's gifted daughter's goals, the poem, the values that were shared, all led to the confidence that she found to spend a few days in another country alone:

She spent a week in India with three of those days by herself. No peers from the trip...no guided trip at all. Everybody had left and she had another day and a half or two days that she was by herself, and she remembers kind of going through the angst of being by herself. There was one day that she actually stayed in her hotel room. Then she went 'wait a minute I am totally capable of doing this,' and got out and just wandered the city for a day and just experienced and hung out at a coffee shop and walked along the riverbank. 'I'm actually okay...I'm an introvert...I like to be by myself.' She was actually okay doing that literally in a country full of strangers.

P6 also stated that they did not know that her daughter was there alone until she got back home. What are the perceptions of parents when their knowledge of their adolescent's temperament and character are unknown, especially when the adolescent is far away?

Creative Intelligence

Figure 4.15 Artifacts Shared by Parent P7



Note. Two artifacts shared by P7: artwork from high school, and the back of their adolescent’s music CD cover.

Parent Participant P7’s Narrative Creative Intelligence

Are highly intelligent individuals also highly creative? Or are highly creative individuals highly intelligent? Is creativity the highest form of intelligence? There are some gifted and talented students that excel in a talent area, and they also excel academically across the board. What temperaments are present in gifted students that are highly creative? Let’s take a look at some highly intelligent people who were also highly creative, there is Leonardo da Vinci, an artist, and an innovator; Beethoven, musical genius; and you cannot leave out Einstein who along with his deep understanding of quantum physics and mathematics, he also was able to visualize his theories because of his creative imagination. To quote Einstein, “Imagination is more important than knowledge.”

P7 brought four different artifacts that she perceived to represent her 23-year-old-gifted son’s well-being. The first thing that she shared was a matted drawing of a surrealist landscape. The composition and use of color were imaginative, blue mountains

and maybe sea creatures coming to the shoreline. Artifact number two was a four-page letter that her son wrote before he left for college. The researcher and P7 both enjoyed listening to a song from the third artifact which was one of her son's albums. The last artifact was a document with the lyrics of a song that he had written.

Backward and Forward (Temporality). The inquiry started with P7 telling the researcher about her son's artwork that she brought to share and why:

In high school this is for IB. He did art as a high concentration...which is kind of weird because he wasn't really like he never even took drawing. So, that was kind of a big leap on his part. I really like that because I think it's beautiful and interesting. And so, I don't have artifacts from when he was in junior high school. I mean, I should and I'm sure I do. I'm sure he's got notebooks or stuff. I didn't keep that because I was kind of thinking that that was a bad phase. But this kind of showed him growing. He never even took drawing, so for him to take that leap and he was comfortable doing that, he excelled and did really well.

This reminded the researcher of how important it is to allow students to represent their learning in different disciplines. Also, one never knows what they can excel in unless they try new things. Exposure to the arts gives students new perspectives and new ways of thinking about their environment. P7's perception of her son's artwork from his senior year of high school was that this creative leap was a leap of growth for him as an individual.

"So chronologically, and then this letter, this kills me. I mean to me this is so kind. Because he wrote it to me knowing how much I was going to miss him," P7 recalled as she introduced the next artifact that her son wrote before he left to go out of

state to college. “It makes me cry to think about it. It was very kind,” she said with a slight tremble in her voice. The researcher observed how special and how much this letter meant to P7.

She began to read the letter with so much feeling. The researcher listened intently to the inflections in P7’s voice as she recited the words that her son wrote five years prior:

It’s hard to believe that 18 years could go by so quickly. As much as you may have wished for phases like single handedly keeping the Lego company afloat era to go by more quickly, it is still indescribably odd that I’m moving away to go to college. I’m excited to go. I can’t help but feel I should be worrying about things like particularly difficult Spy Fox puzzles, rather than financial aid and career paths. However, the main thing I’ve always kept thinking about is so little of who I am today would ever have existed if not for your guidance and parenting. You’ve inspired me time and time again to work as hard as humanly possible in school to pursue what interests me and to complete creative works ranging from The Wrath of the Sorcerer, ‘that was a novel he wrote when he was 11,’ to my last album...There are so many things I’d like to thank you for, and so many things I’d like to reminisce about...

P7 continues reading but pauses to acknowledge, “This is everything that a parent could hope for, and it goes on for four pages. So, this to me is the ultimate gift that a child can give a parent, and it shows a lot of kindness...when he feels comfortable then he will just open himself up which is really nice.” Focusing on her thoughts about her 23-year-old son at that particular moment, P7 told the researcher, “So, as a mom it is so wonderful

because I don't know 90 percent of what he's doing right now. Because I'm not in it, and that's the way it's supposed to be. So, that's good."

What is more important as a parent, to know about your adolescent's activities, or to understand who they are and why they make certain decisions? Can knowing your adolescent's temperament and character help parents guide them to make better life choices, as well as provide some form of serenity in knowing that their adolescents are self-aware and are traveling down a path of growth and adaptability?

Inward and Outward (Interaction). The inquiry continued as P7 revealed her son's music CD and the lyrics to a song that he had written. "This is one of his albums which I really, really love. I just love it that he creates," P7 shared. She also gave some insight on how he managed to let go of the social challenges that he faced in middle school, "Did he hold on to what happened to him? No. He recorded all of it and he played all the instruments and now," with a pause she finished her thought, "he's very creative." P7 continued, "He loves music. He loves creating and he is expressing himself. So, he's giving...this is part of him giving himself. I mean that's so beautiful...We are so many things on this day and all of them bright," quoting a line from her son's lyrics.

The conversation shifted to hopes of being on the radio and what that would take to come to fruition, professional mixing of P7's son's band music. "They're actually going to record professionally with the band, and we'll just see because his day job is getting a doctorate. It would be super fun. He likes performing and he loves doing that stuff. But he would have to not do what he's doing in order to do that, and so he's doing both," P7 explained.

Soon the small interview room was filled with dreamy melodic sounds as the researcher and P7 listened to one of her son's songs. This artifact gave the researcher an understanding of the extent and potential of her son's talent and creativity. The lyrics that P7 shared as an artifact also provided a glimpse of her son's outlook at that time in his life. His writing was positive and seemed hopeful.

Larger than life

But smaller than stories we tell in the dead of the night

We are so many things on this day and all of them bright

"I love his lyrics. I think there's so much there. It's beautiful," P7 said authentically about her son's music.

Locating Them in Place (Situation). The artifacts that were shared during the inquiry beginning with the surrealist painting took place while P7's 23-year-old son was a senior in high school. P7 felt that the artwork showed growth in her gifted son's temperament as he chose to do something that he had never done before for his International Baccalaureate (IB) High Level courses in The Arts. As P7 shared the artwork she also spoke of community. The researcher saw this artifact as an environmental influence that happened at his high school.

The letter that was written to P7 was done at their home and given to her before he left for college at the age of eighteen. It was not said exactly when or where this took place in the inquiry, but can you imagine P7's son remembering all of the special moments spent with his mother by his side that he wrote about in the letter so many years ago? What were his feelings at the time that he wrote the letter? Was he excited and

ready to begin this new chapter of his life away from his family? How do individuals in late adolescence cope with leaving home to go to a different environment and space?

P7 stated during the inquiry that her son wrote the lyrics to the song that she shared along with the recording of the music album when he was in college. This was two years prior to the inquiry. It was clear that being able to communicate and share some of her son's lived experiences and give her perception of his well-being during the period of time that she chose to disclose to the researcher brought her great joy, and at times deep emotions also arose. Reflecting on her son's growth from early adolescence to the young adult phase of adolescence and all of the nuances of his journey that has led down the path of becoming a PhD student, his talent, music has always been there as a tried-and-true friend, P7 gave her perceptions of his state of well-being. How important is creative intelligence to one's well-being?

Kindness and Excellence

Figure 4.16 Artifacts Shared by Parent P8



Note. P8 shared drawings and poems from his adolescent's primary school years, and certificates and awards from her middle school years.

Parent Participant P8's Narrative Kindness and Excellence

As parents we may all want our children to be kind when they are young, when they become teenagers, and grow into adults that naturally show kindness to others. Showing love and kindness to others can help us feel better by knowing that we could possibly brighten someone's day. Random acts of kindness can occur in our homes, in our schools, in our workplaces, and in our communities. As individuals we can experience the benefits in our lives of showing love and kindness to others by spreading beauty in our communities, lending a helping hand to someone in need, or writing loving notes to our loved ones such as P8's gifted adolescent daughter did. P8 is the father to a graduating eighth grader from a school for gifted children.

P8 brought in artifacts that he chose to demonstrate his 13-year-old gifted daughter's well-being. The researcher is hoping to capture P8's perception of his young adolescent's temperament and character as they sit and listen to a father's thoughts. The artifacts were sketches, notes to mom and dad, a letter, school projects, and many awards

and medals of achievement. This will be the last inquiry of the research study, and P8 will be giving his perceptions of the youngest adolescent of all of the parent participants. The researcher is eager to hear about the lived experiences of this young adolescent from her father's perspective.

Backward and Forward (Temporality). The inquiry into the artifacts that P8 brought to share began with what looked like little, short but thoughtful notes that his daughter might have written at a fairly young age, possibly a few years before she became the teenager that she was now at age thirteen. "So, some of it's fairly simple. I mean and I don't remember exactly when all this happened," P8 stated as he started to go through the artifacts that he brought to share. He began to read each one out loud:

Mommy

I love you!

Thank you for

Everything!

Happy Valentine's Day

And she wrote this for me. It's an Acrostic titled My Dad is...

Magnificent at dadding.

Your favorite baseball player.

Does everything with his kids.

Awesome cooking.

Daddy is the bestest [*sic*] dad you could ever have.

P8 noted that the first artifact to mom was probably written after the acrostic since it was written in cursive and decorated with well-drawn hearts. The acrostic poem was

challenging to read and had a few misspellings, but the researcher could tell that it meant a great deal to P8 and that it was something that touched his heart.

The inquiry continued as P8 shared more loving notes from his daughter. The next note simply read:

DADS

RULE!

I love you papa!

It was written on paper that had been painted purple with what looked like watercolors, accompanied by hearts and a smiley face. This artifact may have been written during his daughter's elementary years as well. The next artifact was noticeably created when she was very young and P8 introduced this note by saying, "...and then this goes way back. Your love and something...love you," he read trying to decipher the writing that had faded overtime. This note had a heart that appeared to be made out of a collage of colors and maybe outlined in string. It was a bit crumpled. However, worn the note might have been, the researcher observed the joy that it brought to the father's face and the laughter that came out as he spoke about this simple artifact. The next artifact shared was a drawing, "...and then she did this drawing as well, I almost forgot this. So, that's her and her mom. Run, run, run...and that's my daughter with the peace sign on her shirt. This probably was around 5th grade or somewhere in there." This drawing was given to her mother on Mother's Day and the sketch of her mom's shirt said Run, run, run written out. Is there any symbolism to what is on the daughter's shirt (a peace sign) and the words (Run, run, run) on the mother's shirt, the researcher contemplated?

A more recent letter was pointed out among the artifacts that P8's daughter had written to her mother. It was an apology to her mother for saying something that she should not have said, and her mother overheard this slip of the tongue. "This is adorable," P8 said before starting to read the letter. Let's just say that the letter was very endearing and full of love beaming off the page. She also included lovely drawings of different flowers because she knew that her mom loved them. "So, you remember I was talking yesterday about how she does like to please people, and so she knew that her mom was a little bit upset. I mean I'm sure it wasn't a big deal or anything, but she was a little upset that our daughter said whatever she said. And so, she wrote a little letter to try to make up for it," P8 reflected.

The other artifacts that P8 brought with him to the inquiry were academic in nature. He remembered talking to the researcher about the temperament Persistence and brought things that he perceived showed his daughter's perseverance. These artifacts mostly were created in her middle school years and will give some insight into his daughter's current state of temperament and character.

Now I'm not going to sit here and tell you that this is her best work because it certainly wasn't. But this is one of those projects that she had this spike of activity that she had to do before she left for a trip out of the country, and it was so many assignments that just kept coming at her and coming at her. So, I think she started this around eleven thirty at night and she just kept going and going and she wouldn't let it go... This was sort of an example of her perseverance.

Without missing a beat, P8 continued going through and introducing each school project to the researcher that he brought to share. “The other stuff is sort of like hard work if you will,” he explained to the researcher before going to the next project.

Inward and Outward (Interaction). As P8 imparted his perceptions of his daughter’s work ethic of her school projects the researcher was also reflecting on times when P8’s daughter was their student in her early middle school years. The researcher remembers the passion and emotion that P8’s daughter put into every assignment. There are times when students who may be considered perfectionists will work just as hard on an assignment that only required minimal effort as the assignments that required more rigor or attention to detail. P8 continued to talk about the artifacts while giving the researcher a tiny glimpse of how connected he was to his daughter’s schoolwork and how she approached learning:

I really thought that this was like a tremendous effort. This was a book talk, and here she put together a fake book review where she had all these reviews. She probably could have done like only two and it would have been fine, but she did like eight of them. And she had all of these little vignettes and some of them were handwritten. She did this really intricate drawing. So, I just really felt like she kind of went above and beyond on this thing, and she obviously loves literature.

This project was a Language Arts assignment and P8 was aware that this was an area that his daughter excelled in however he said, “I thought that was really good work of hers, where she really put in the effort.”

The next project that P8 wanted to share was a history project. He said that he wanted to show this project because this was an area that had not been easy for her as

literature. Reflecting on what his daughter said earlier that day when she presented her eighth-grade portfolio:

I think what she said was really true today about how her history teacher really made it fun for her. So, she's really gotten into it, and you can tell that she really persevered in getting this done and I think she kind of pushed through this sort of somewhat apathy that she might have had towards history. She really did her best work on this, I thought.

The researcher listened and wondered if there was a way to know if P8's daughter's temperament had anything to do with her prior apathy towards history. What made the difference for her and motivated her to do her best work on that history project, which was a poster on George Washington? It only takes one teacher to make a difference in a student's learning journey.

Locating Them in Place (Situation). In the case of P8's gifted thirteen-year-old daughter, kindness and excellence stood out as traits that have always been part of who she is. There are several things that point at these traits being influenced by parent involvement, as well as educators, and community. The researcher recollected that P8's daughter was very active outside of the gifted school. She participated in different activities such as the Children's Chorale, gymnastics, dance, was an avid reader, and loved to write stories.

P8 shared notes, drawings, and a letter demonstrating love and kindness. These artifacts were produced at home and in her school environment when she was younger. Observing how these simple artifacts were important documents that held meaning for this father, the researcher saw the power that acts of kindness can have on individuals.

The other academic artifacts were school projects from her literature and history classes. However, these projects originated at school but came to life at her home in the presence of her father and mother. Where does the motivation come from to put in the effort to start and complete a school project? Does it start with the teacher and then move to the environment provided by the parents? Does peer affiliation have any part in the motivation for excellence? Or is it intrinsic? Intrinsic motivation being the act of doing something without any obvious rewards. Earlier in the inquiry, P8 did state that his daughter liked to please others, that could be parents, teachers, and friends. The researcher was also reminded of the temperament trait, Reward Dependence while gazing upon the certificates and medals that P8 was now sharing.

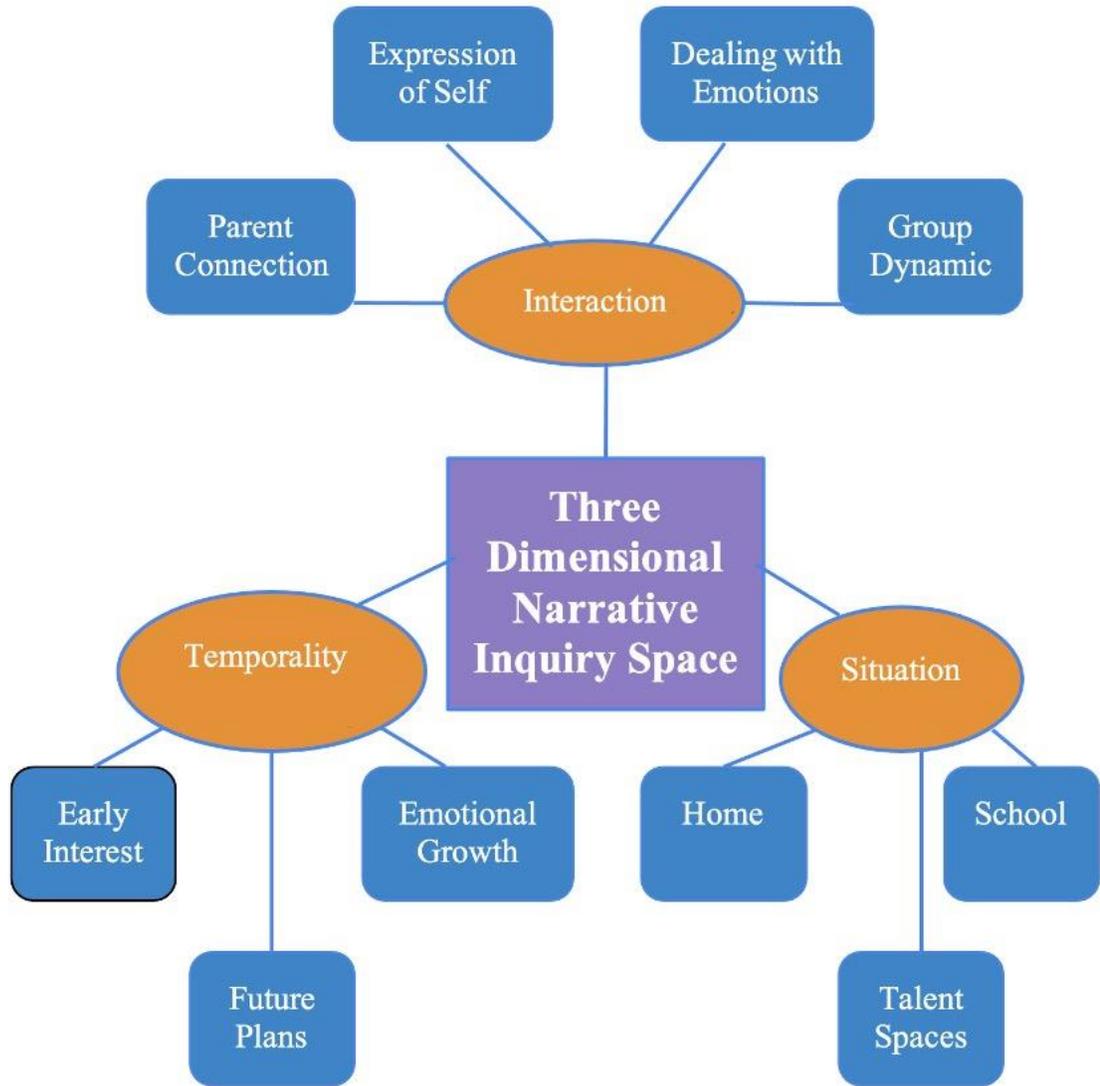
P8's daughter's certificates, awards, and several mythology medals from her Latin exams over the years were impressive. These awards were presented to his daughter at her school for gifted children. It is clear that she excelled in her classes and socially, however this driven thirteen-year-old young adolescent may need the continued support from her parents to emotionally manage the stressors of doing it all and doing it all perfectly as her experiences in life become more demanding.

Three-Dimensional Narrative Space Inquiry

The narratives composed for each parent participant P1-P8 analyzed the data from the parents' words during the interviews where they shared artifacts brought to the interview. Data was reviewed through the lens of (1) temporality, focused on dialogue pertaining to the past, present, and future; (2) interaction, feelings personal and social; and (3) situation, where the told story took place attending to the "specific, concrete physical and topological boundaries of inquiry landscapes" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000,

p. 51). Themes emerged from the excerpts taken from the transcriptions of Interview 2 and were depicted in a thematic network analysis web (see Figure 4.17).

Figure 4.17 Thematic Network of 3-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space Themes



Note. The Global Theme is centered in purple and is the core of the thematic network. The organizing Themes simultaneously group the main ideas and are indicated in orange. Emerging Themes are indicated in blue and are derived from the collected data.

Triangulation of Data

Data that was collected was analyzed and themes emerged for each data set: (1) Interview 1, (2) Interview 2, and (3) Shared Artifacts. The theoretical framework that guided this research study was Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration.

Dabrowski's five Levels of Emotional Development was used to align the themes for the data collected following the categories listed in the Miller Assessment Coding System (MACS) for Values, Self, and Others (see Appendix F).

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the parents' perceptions of well-being development in their gifted adolescents. Three research questions guided the examination of the overarching perception of well-being development:

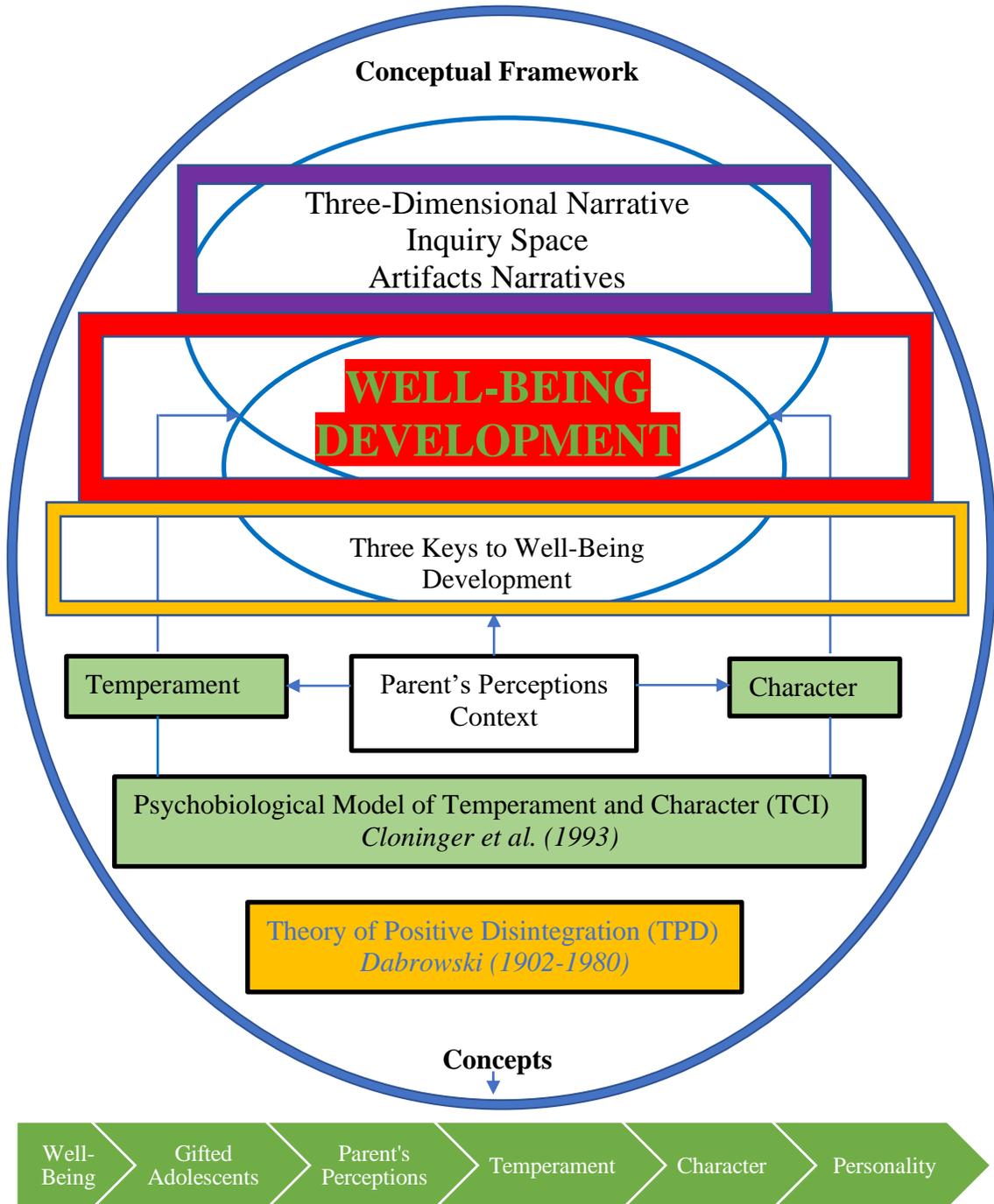
RQ1: What are the parents' perceptions of temperament in their gifted adolescent?

RQ2: What are the parents' perceptions of character in their gifted adolescent?

RQ3: What are the parents' perceptions of well-being development in their gifted adolescent?

The conceptual framework (see Figure 1.1) displayed the map of tools used to examine well-being development through the integration of: Concepts covered in the literature (see Figures 2.1-2.2); Theoretical Framework TPD (see Figure 2.5); Psychobiological Model of Temperament and Character (TCI) (see Figure 3.1); Interview 1 Temperament and Character (see Figure 4.1); Interview 2 Three Keys of Well-Being Development (see Figure 4.4); Artifacts Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space Narratives (see Figure 4.17). This framework mapped out the relationship between the concepts, theory, and model used to examine well-being development (see Figure 4.18).

Figure 4.18 Conceptual Framework 9: Well-Being Development Integration



Note. The Conceptual Framework was first displayed as (1) Framework as a whole. The next steps examined were (2) Literature concepts, (3) Dabrowski's TPD, (4) Cloninger's Psychobiological Model of Temperament and Character TCI, (5) RQ1 Temperament and RQ2 Character, (6) RQ3 Three Keys to Well-Being Development, (7) Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space Artifacts Narratives, and ending with (8) Well-Being Development highlighted in red.

Summary

Chapter 4 reported on the findings of the research based on the analysis of data collected in this narrative inquiry study. The thematic network analysis approach “does not aim or pretend to discover the beginning of arguments or the end of rationalizations; it simply provides a technique for breaking up text and finding within it explicit rationalization and their implicit signification” (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p.388). The web-like network presented three classes of themes from the text: Basic themes, Organizing Themes, and the Global Themes. These themes emerged from the Descriptive and In Vivo passages from the parent participants' own words. The parents' perceptions and their responses to the (TCI) assessment, the two interview protocol questions, and their sharing of personal-family-social artifacts were triangulated and reviewed.

Narratives were composed from the parent's sharing of the artifacts during the second interview session. P1 through P8 shared their perceptions of their gifted adolescents' lived experiences related to each item that they brought to the interview. Using the Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space Clandinin and Connelly (2000) this form of analysis, exploratory data were collected, and the research aim was to organize the data to create a narrative with a plot that unified the data. The created stories were narrative explanations of the phenomenon being studied, Clandinin (2007), and the parents' perceptions of well-being through shared artifacts.

Chapter 5: Discussions

There are two inconsistent viewpoints that have prevailed in the literature of well-being in gifted education. The first perspective is that gifted children are better adjusted than their non-gifted peers, and the second view takes the position that gifted children are more at risk for maladjustment than their non-gifted peers (Neihart, 1999). The literature over the last quarter century about parenting the gifted has centered on a handful of related themes, such as gifted identification, the concept of giftedness, and the use of gifted labels. Interests in parents of the gifted can be traced back to the earliest studies on gifted children, Galton (1869) and Lewis Terman's (1925) research that collected some of the first data on the parents of gifted children. Now, nearly a century and half after the first efforts to study parents of the gifted, it appears that little progress has been made in this area despite well over a century of formal study. There is limited information found on parent's perceptions concerning the temperament and character of their gifted adolescents.

Few would argue that adolescents differ in their personalities. Some adolescents are outgoing and exuberant, whereas others are quieter and more reserved. Some are irritable and emotionally unstable, while some show self-control at an early age. Some

can be aggressive, and others can be gentle. These subtle differences that are observed daily by teachers, peers, psychologists, and most of all by parents, are not easily described in research and clinical practice (Shiner, 2006). This qualitative, narrative inquiry study was necessary to examine the perceptions of parents of gifted adolescents in reference to their knowledge of their adolescent's personality dimensions, temperament and character traits, and well-being development. Although there have been numerous studies of personality in adult samples, there has been limited research in the direct development of child personality and the associated problems that can stem from personality (Bernstein et al., 1993). Conducting this research study was imperative and contributed to the existing body of knowledge regarding the biopsychosocial needs of gifted adolescents by illuminating the parent's perceptions of temperament and character, personality development, and data on gifted adolescent's well-being development.

This narrative inquiry addressed the problem statement that the literature seems to be most lacking in the guidance for the gifted adolescent's well-being development (Bireley & Genshaft, 1991) lack of understanding the perceptions of their personality dimensions – temperament and character, combined with their gifts and talents. To address the problem of the study, it was necessary to investigate the pertinent issues that gifted adolescents face from the perspective of the parents. As stated in the literature, parents and teachers may or may not possess the knowledge required to provide guidance for their adolescent's affective needs during this unique period of human development as they face ups and downs in life (NAGC Whole Child Report, 2018; Solow, 1995; Subotnik et al., 2011).

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

This section reports on the significant contribution to scientific knowledge made as a result of addressing the research questions in the study. Eight parents' perceptions of their gifted adolescent's temperament, character, and well-being development was examined in regard to well-being. The parents participated in this study by contributing data through completing a personality inventory along with two individual face-to-face interviews and discussions. Additional data were gathered through artifacts that included objects, documents, letters, and photos that were personal, social, and family oriented. After careful review and analysis of data collected, themes emerged that addressed the three research questions. Parents may also not know how they should respond to their child's behavior, as they lack a framework for understanding the developmental issues affecting a gifted child (Solow, 1995).

Theoretical Framework Revisited

Kazimierz Dabrowski's (1902-1980) Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD) provided a theoretical framework for this research study. TPD is known as a personality development theory, and it also provides levels of emotional and moral development. Bailey (2010) reports that Piechowski and others in the field of gifted education have the opinion that:

“Gifted individuals experience the world from a different perspective, with qualitative differences including intensities, sensitivities, idealism, perceptiveness, overexcitabilities, asynchrony, complexity, introversion, perfectionism, and moral concerns. Dabrowski's theory offers a lens through which to conceptualize these differences” (p.1).

Parents of gifted children and gifted individuals may find that Dabrowski's ideas provide a useful framework for growing in awareness of the developmental patterns and

challenges of their high ability children (Neihart et al., 2002). The parent participants in this study provided responses to research questions that examined their perceptions of the personality dimensions temperament and character, and well-being development.

Dabrowski's theory of positive disintegration outlines a framework of an individual's personality structure of their lower self that disintegrates in order to reintegrate to their higher level of self, their personality ideal. During the inquiry the participants shared their perceptions of their gifted adolescent's lived experiences and feelings in regard to values, self, and others in the context of emotional drives and beliefs.

Mika (2005) noted that "Dabrowski believed that the most important aspect of human development is the emotional one, since only in the area of emotional growth a transformation of behavior and character is possible" (p. 5). Descriptions of the participants' gifted adolescents' emotional growth ranging from their younger years to their present selves were shared with the researcher. Some adolescents' emotional levels were described as still developing. Parents also shared stories of their adolescents' internal and external struggles.

Aspects of Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration

According to the literature there are two tenets that create the foundation of TPD: (1) developmental potential, which determines the character and the extent of mental growth possible for an individual; and (2) multilevelness, the arrangement of human development in a hierarchical approach. The dialogue that took place between the parent participants and the researcher revealed themes that emerged aligned with Dabrowski's levels of emotional development.

Mika (2005) posits that:

Developmental potential expresses the relationship between individual development and three main groups of factors influencing this development: (1) First factor – genetic and permanent physical traits (intelligence, overexcitabilities, special talents); (2) Second factor – social influences; (3) Third factor – autonomous forces and processes such as self-awareness, conscious inner conflict, free will and conscious self-transformation, etc. Third factor makes self-determination possible and is necessary for creativity and advanced development.” (p. 11)

Each participant shared stories about their adolescent’s journey navigating their intelligence, temperament, character, talents, and creativeness.

Wells and Falk (2021) acknowledged that Dabrowski described OEs as establishing “the main form of developmental potential, and their absence, or appearance only in weak or narrow forms, was indicative of a limited, or even negative, DP. The five types are known as: psychomotor, sensual, intellectual, imaginational, and emotional.

Additionally, the dynamisms (see Figure 2.6) are another aspect of developmental potential:

Dynamisms are the mental processes that shape and direct development, and like the overexcitabilities (OEs), their presence or absence in development potential means the difference between a strong, limited, or negative potential. Everything in TPD is hierarchical, and there are higher and lower levels of dynamisms, as well as different types. (p.29)

The narrative stories shared by the parents revealed that their adolescents exhibited intensities and sensitivities regarding their behavior and personality growth such as: ambivalences (doubts and uncertainties), inner conflicts, dissatisfaction with oneself, as well as empathy. During the inquiry of temperament and character, self-awareness, self-directedness, self-acceptance, and creativeness was also discussed.

The inquiry of well-being development described instincts, drives, and intellectual processes combined with emotions that are also dynamisms (Dabrowski, 1972). These dynamisms appear at different mental development levels.

“Multilevelness is viewed as the division of human behavior and reality into different, multiple levels of development achievement, and as the result of the hierarchization of one’s internal and external experiences. This hierarchization is based upon a growing awareness of universal values and their roles in shaping personal growth” (Bailey, 2010, p. 3).

Dabrowski outlined multilevelness in three classifications:

1. Initial integration (Level I)
2. Disintegration (Level II, III, and IV)
3. Second integration (Level V)

These five developmental levels are:

1. Level I (Primary Integration)
2. Level II (Unilevel Disintegration)
3. Level III (Spontaneous Multilevel Disintegration)
4. Level IV (Organized Multilevel Disintegration)
5. Level V (Secondary Integration)

The parent participants reflected on their gifted adolescents’ emotional growth focusing on internal and external struggles, if there were any. Tillier (2018) lists personality features of each level: Level I - Individuality (external conflicts), Level II - Ambiguity (internal horizontal conflicts - not fitting in), Level III - Self-identity emerges (internal vertical conflicts), Level IV - Personality ideal forms (internal weakening conflicts), and Level V - Full unique self-created personality ideal (external social justice conflicts).

Themes that emerged from the data collected were aligned with the Miller Assessment Coding System (MACS) representing Dabrowski's levels of emotional development (see Appendix F).

Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration served as a framework for this study and acknowledged a positive view of mental health. As one goes through the process of disintegration of lower-level structures this allows one to develop higher level integrations and develop autonomy. Additionally, Tillier (2018) notes that:

In order to find autonomy, a person has to uncover and discover his or her deep personality characteristics: Who am I? Who do I dream to be? What is my unique idealization of my personality? Why am I here? How do I find meaning in life? Furthermore, this review of one's character leads to growth and a reformulation and reprioritization of one's values and beliefs. This reexamination brings into focus one's true, authentic personality. With this personality ideal as a guide, one can transform, shape, and reform the lower aspects of the self, those based on instinct and socialization, to reflect one's unique and autonomous self-defining characteristics. (p. xxv)

Conceptual Framework Revisited

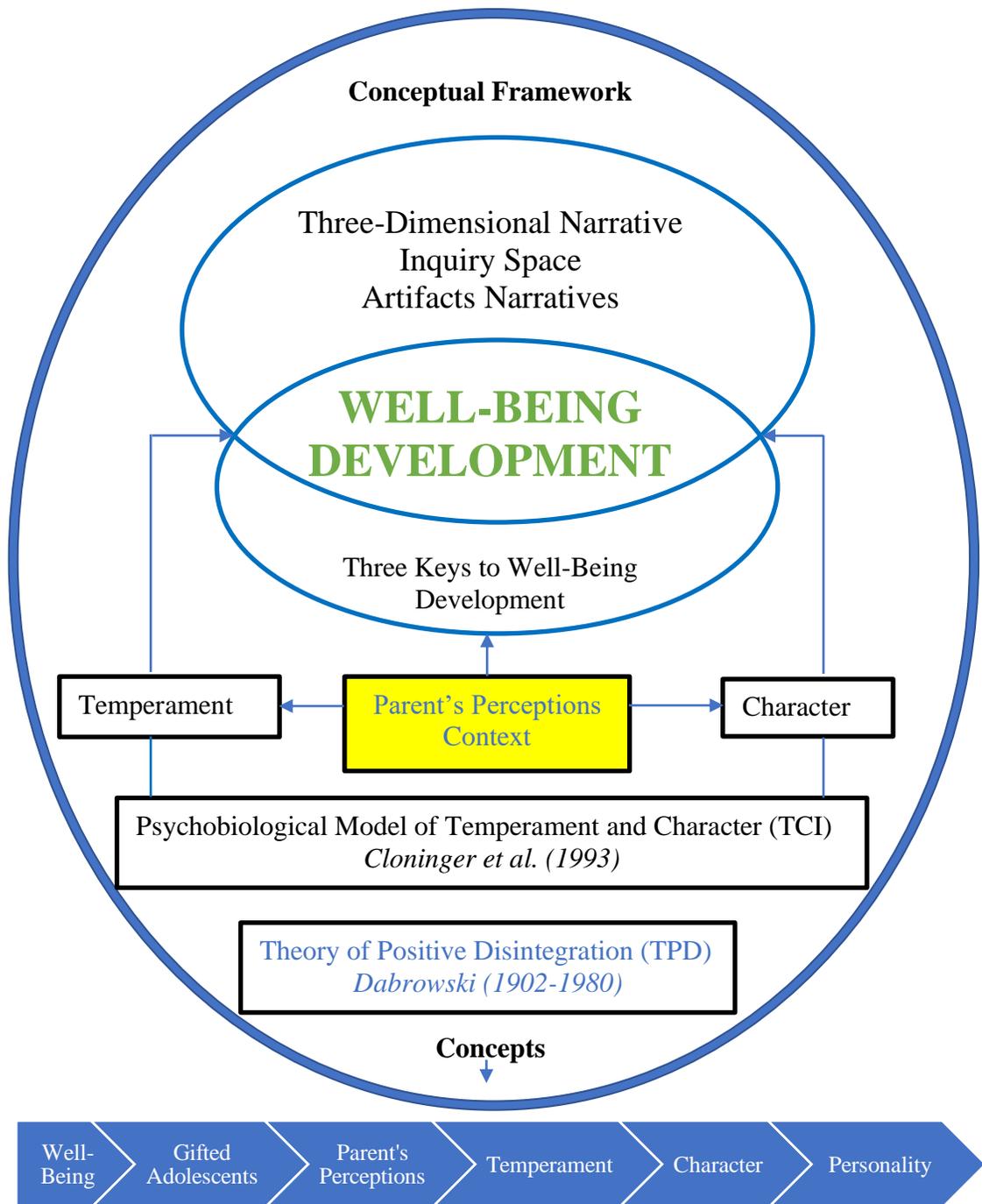
The concept framework guided the research through the integration of Dabrowski's Theoretical Framework the Theory of Positive Disintegration, Cloninger's Psychobiological Model of Temperament and Character (TCI), Three Keys of Well-Being Development, and Narratives from shared artifacts grounded by three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. Concepts from the literature for gifted adolescent's well-being were also examined: Well-Being, Gifted Adolescents, Parent's Perceptions, Temperament, Character, and Personality. Upon examination of theory, model, and concepts there is one common factor in the development of well-being in this study: Parent's Perceptions.

The perceptions of the parent participant's touched every aspect of this study and gave meaning and context to each research question. Emotional and personal growth in the areas of values, self, and others were highlighted by the parent's stories of their gifted adolescent's lived experiences. Well-being development is incomplete without the input of the parents of these extraordinary individuals.

“The parent-child connection is the most powerful mental health intervention to mankind”

Bessel van der Kolk

Figure 5.1 Conceptual Framework Revisited: Parent’s Perception in Context



Note. Parent’s Perceptions are central to the well-being development of gifted adolescents.

Connections to Research Questions

Research Question 1

The first research question of inquiry was: What are parents' perceptions of temperament in their gifted adolescent? This research question was necessary and provided a framework to explore the study's participants' perceptions of their adolescents through the four temperament dimensions of Cloninger's Temperament and Character Inventory: *Novelty Seeking*, *Harm Avoidance*, *Reward Dependence*, and *Persistence*. The data analysis process revealed themes that addressed this research question. Under *Novelty Seeking* 3 themes emerged: (a) Risk Taking, (b) Cautiousness, and (c) Impulsivity; *Harm Avoidance* revealed the themes: (a) Worrying, (b) Consequences, and (c) Confidence; *Reward Dependence* themes (a) Concerns About What Others are Thinking, (b) Dependent, and (c) Approval of Others; and 4 themes emerged for *Persistence* (a) Overachievement, (b) Effort, (c) Perfectionism, and (d) Time. Figure 5.1 presents a commonality of the parent participant's perceived rankings of their gifted adolescents' temperament.

Figure 5.2 Global Themes, Organizing Themes, and Emerging Themes for RQ1



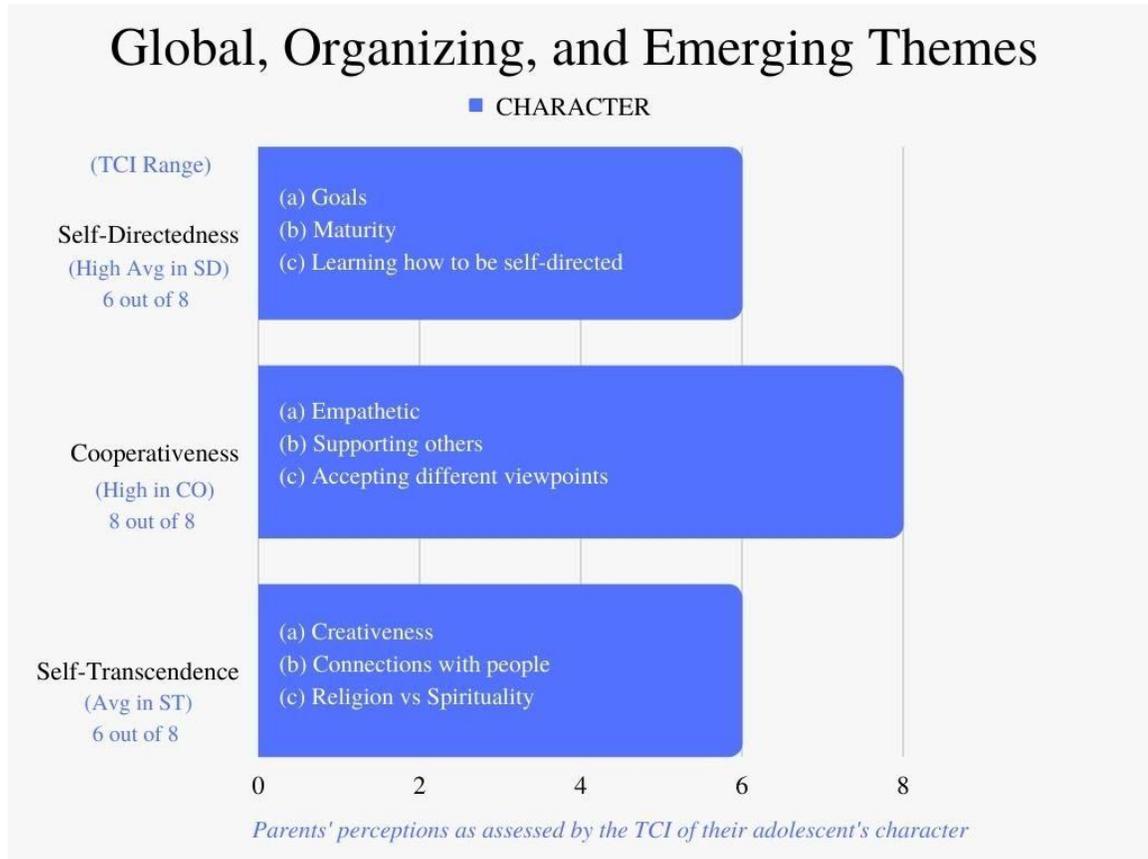
Summary of findings. In voicing their perceptions of *Novelty Seeking (NS)*, *Harm Avoidance (HA)*, *Reward Dependence (RD)*, and *Persistence (PS)* in their adolescent, the parent participants spoke of their adolescent's behaviors as memories regarding these temperament dimensions. The results of the (TCI) revealed that 6 out of 8 parent participants perceived their adolescent to be in the lower range of Novelty Seeking. While 7 out of 8 saw their adolescent to be moderate to high in Harm Avoidance, with one outlier who was extremely low in (HA). The Reward Dependence temperament dimension results revealed that all 8 participants perceived their adolescent to be moderately high in Reward Dependence, and 5 out of the 8 parents perceived the

adolescents to be high in the Persistence Dimension (see Figure 5.1). The themes of *Risk-taking*, *Worry*, *What are Others Thinking*, and *Perfectionism* appeared the most frequently when the temperament dimensions were discussed during the interviews. In some cases, temperament can be similar in individuals. What sets us apart is our character.

Research Question 2

The next research question for this study was: What are parents' perceptions of character in their gifted adolescent? This research question was intended to also examine parents' perceptions of Cloninger's three-character dimensions of the (TCI): *Self-Directedness (SD)*, *Cooperativeness (CO)*, and *Self-Transcendence (ST)*. The data disclosed emerging themes in regard to RQ2. The first character dimension *Self-Directedness* uncovered 3 themes: (a) Goals, (b) Maturity, and (c) Learning how to be self-directed; *Cooperativeness* showed 3 emerging themes: (a) Empathetic, Supporting Others, and Accepting different viewpoints; and the last character dimension *Self-Transcendence* revealed 3 themes: (a) Creativeness, (b) Connections with People, and (c) Religion vs Spirituality. Figure 5.2 presents a commonality of the parent participant's perceived rankings of their gifted adolescents' character.

Figure 5.3 Global Themes, Organizing Themes, and Emerging Themes for RQ2



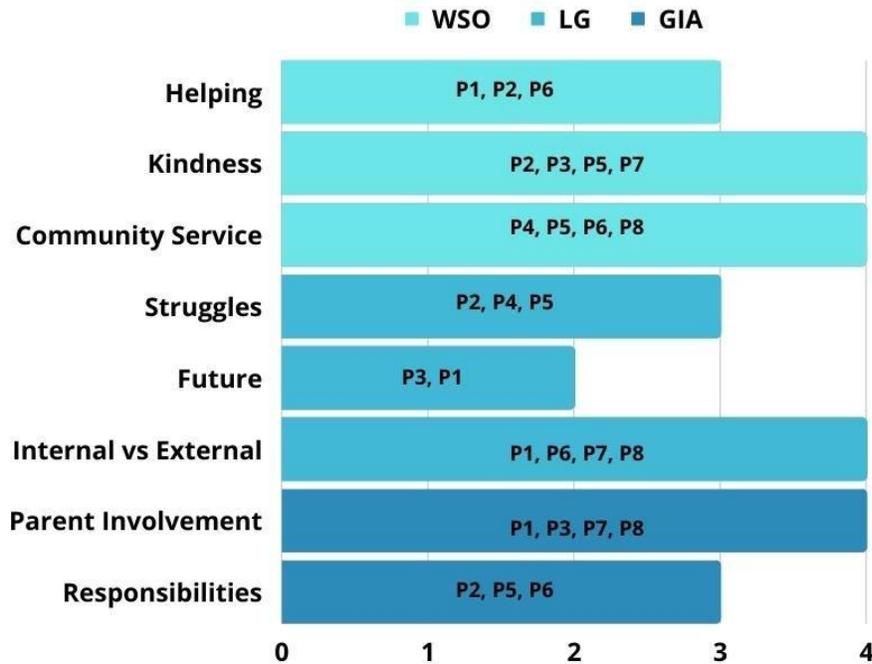
Summary of findings. The parent’s reflected on their perceptions of their gifted adolescent’s values and goals and their growth in the dimensions of Self-Directedness and Cooperativeness, as well as the need for more life experience in the last character dimension Self-Transcendence. The results of (TCI) revealed that 6 out of 8 of the parent participants perceived their adolescent as being moderately high in (SD) and 2 participants were slightly below average. All of the parents’ perceptions of the character dimension (CO) was on the higher end of the scale. The final character dimension (ST) results disclosed that all of the parents reported their gifted adolescents slightly below average with 2 of the parents reporting their adolescents low in (ST).

Research Question 3

The final research question for this study was: What are parents' perceptions of well-being development in their gifted adolescent? This research question provided a space to also examine parents' perceptions of three key practices that lead to well-being development according to Cloninger and Cloninger (2015): *Working in the Service of Others*, *Letting Go*, and *Growing in Awareness*. The data disclosed emerging themes in regard to RQ3. The first key practice of well-being development *Working in the Service of Others* uncovered 3 themes: (a) Helping, (b) Kindness, and (c) Community Service. The second key practice showed 3 emerging themes: (a) Struggles, (b) Future, and (c) Internal vs External; and the last key practice leading to well-being development *Growing in Awareness* revealed only 2 themes: (a) Parent Involvement, and (b) Responsibilities. Figure 5.3 presents a commonality of the parent participant's perceived rankings of their gifted adolescents' well-being development.

Figure 5.4 RQ3, Three Keys of Well-Being Development Participant Commonalities

Three Keys of Well-Being Development



Summary of findings. The parent’s reflected on their perceptions of their gifted adolescent’s well-being development through stories told to the researcher as they remembered experiences of *Working in the Service of Others (WSO)*, *Letting Go (LG)*, and *Growing in Awareness (GIA)*. The results of WSO revealed 3 out of 8 parent participants reflected on the theme of *helping* during the inquiry. *Kindness* was a topic that arose in the dialogue with 4 out of 8 of the parent participants. *Community Service* emerged during the WSO inquiry with 4 out of the 8 parent participants. The dialogue in reference to LG presented that 3 out of 8 parent participants reflected on the *Struggles* of their gifted adolescents. Two out of 8 parents also spoke of their adolescent’s *Future*, while 4 out of 8 parents informed the researcher of their adolescent’s *Internal and*

External conflicts that they were facing. The last key practice of well-being development *Growing in Awareness* GIA provided two emerging themes. *Parent Involvement* was a topic of conversation for 4 out of 8 parents, and the theme *Responsibilities* occurred 3 out of 8 times during the well-being development inquiry.

Narratives Discussion

The last question in Interview 2 the parent participants were asked to elaborate on the context of the artifact(s) shared; personal and social, time (past, present, and future), and place. This one question resulted in the eight narratives in Chapter 4 dedicated to the parents' perceptions of their gifted adolescent's well-being as perceived through different artifacts that included personal objects belonging to their adolescent, photographs, poetry, and letters written by their adolescent, school documents and assignments, awards, medals, artwork, and a travel journal.

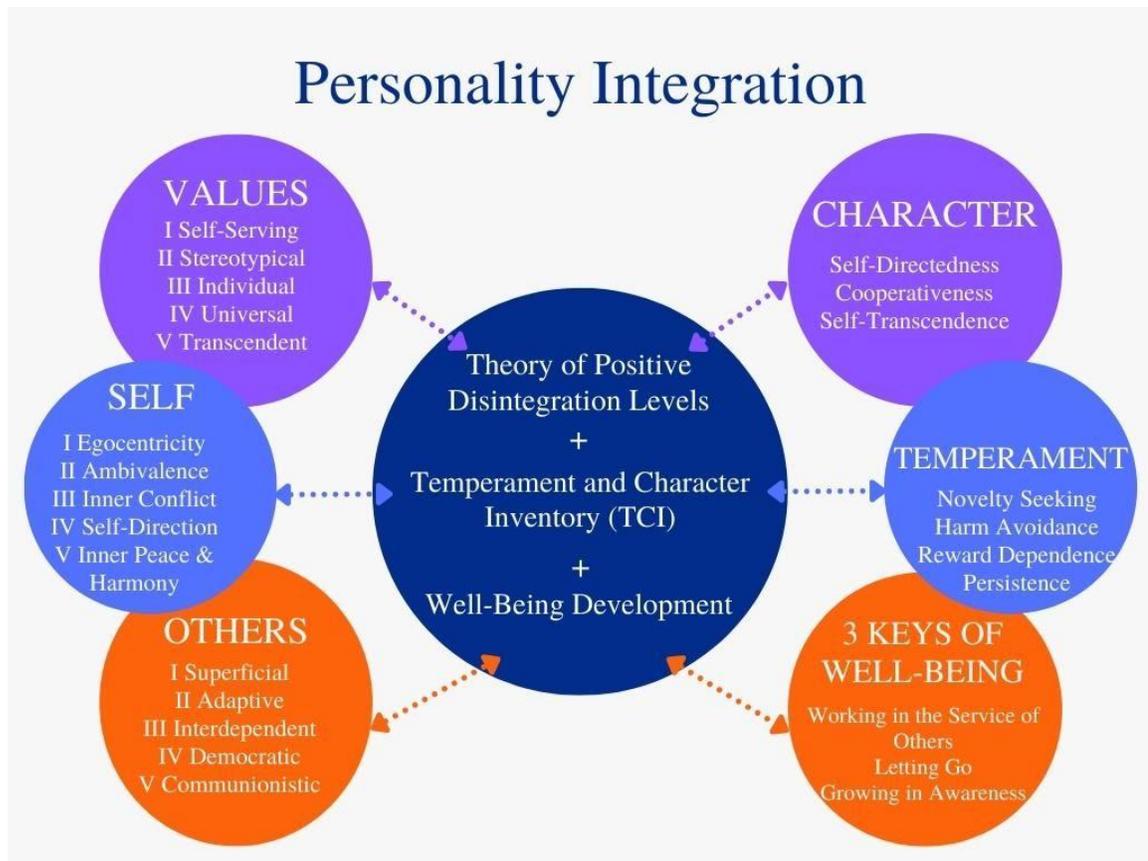
The narratives were analyzed with Clandinin and Connelley's (2000) Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space using the terms *Interaction (personal and social)*, *Temporality (past, present, and future)*, and *Situation (place)* to ground the retelling of the parents' perceptions. These narratives also places the researchers thought process that occurred during each face-to-face session with each parent participant. Individual experiences, memories, and emotions were captured and composed from the parent's words during the inquiry regarding the shared artifacts.

Figure 4.17 illustrated the themes that emerged from the shared artifacts. The themes are represented by a thematic network analysis web for the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space: *Temporality themes* (a) Early Interest, (b) Emotional Growth, and (c) Future Plans; *Interaction themes* (a) Parent Connection, (b) Expression of Self, (c)

Dealing with Emotions; and (d) Group Dynamic; and *Situation themes* included (a) Home, (b) School, and (c) Talent Spaces. In Chapter 4 (see Shared Artifacts) for each Parent Participant’s Narrative P1-P8.

Figure 5.5 presents a synthesis of the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI), Three Keys of Well-Being, and Dabrowski’s TPD levels of development through the lens of the Miller Assessment Coding System (MACS). This diagram of personality integration can be used to foster awareness of well-being providing understanding of personality development for parents, educators, counselors, and gifted students.

Figure 5.5 Dabrowski’s TPD, Cloninger’s TCI, and Well-Being Development



Note. The Miller Assessment Coding System (MACS) Values, Self, and Others aligned with the Temperament and Character personality dimensions for Character, Temperament, and the 3 Keys for the development of well-being.

Limitations

Parent Participants

According to Simon and Goes (2013), limitations are factors in a study that are beyond the control of the researcher but could also affect the outcome of the study. The first limitation addressed is that the parent participants were asked to respond to the TCI inventory items as if they were their adolescents. The adolescents' perceptions were not examined as part of the research. The parents that volunteered to participate came from only one school for gifted children which their adolescents attended or had previously attended. Thus, this population of parents and their adolescents are not fully representative of other schools with a gifted population. The sample size for this study was small and therefore generalizability is not possible (Simon & Goes, 2013).

Recruitment emails were sent out to sixty-three families, seventeen parents responded, and eight participants were accepted to the study. Out of the eight parent participants there were six mothers and two fathers. Another limitation would be related to an absence of diversity in the population of the school, which resulted in a lack of diversity in the study.

Instrument

The limitations of the instrument that the researcher used in the study were that the questionnaire was a self-reported measure that required time for the participants to perceive the answers of their adolescents on the 140-item inventory. A question could be

asked if the parents were able to remain unbiased in their responses. The instrument also used a 5-point Likert scale limiting the range of the participants' responses from “definitely false to definitely true.” The researcher followed the inventory with a qualitative interview protocol based on the items in the inventory. This allowed the participants and the researcher to ask clarifying questions about temperament and character that the inventory did not address. A parent participant informed the researcher that the interviews provided the space needed to expand upon their perceptions of their adolescent’s actions and feelings.

Another limitation was that more than one instrument could have been used to address personality development. Since the theoretical framework used was Dabrowski’s Theory of Positive Disintegration the Overexcitability Questionnaire Two (OEQ-II) is an objective instrument that can be used to measure emotional OEs from a multilevel perspective (Wells & Falk, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

After reviewing the literature to become acquainted with research relevant to the persistent problem of practice for this study the researcher chose Dabrowski’s Theory of Positive Disintegration. Limitations included the researcher not positioning the chosen theoretical framework within a wider range of comparable personality development frameworks, concepts, models, or theories. Dabrowski’s TPD was chosen because it is a known theory of personality and emotional development in gifted education. TPD also shared similar concepts to the instrument used in this study, the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI). TPD and the TCI both have hierarchical approaches opposed to stage developmental approaches.

However, there are other theories that could have been used to help develop a framework for understanding the research problem. Positive disintegration worked as a theoretical framework that was inclusive of age, gender, culture, etc. Other theories that may have worked included Erikson's Identity Theory, although it is a stage theory it is also known theory in education; Maslow's Needs-Hierarchy Theory; Carl Rogers' Self-Actualization Theory; and Bandura's Modeling Theory.

Methodology

Limitations related to the qualitative methodology in this study was evident in the lack of literature examining parents' perceptions of their gifted adolescents' temperament and character. In seeking to understand the experiences of gifted adolescents through their parents' perceptions, qualitative researchers may have preconceived ideas about the information participants provided Lietz and Zayas (2010). The researcher's presence was unavoidable during data gathering, which could have affected the participants' responses, since the researcher was a former teacher at the school that their adolescents once attended. Personal assumptions that the researcher may have brought to the study may raise concerns if the conclusions of the study are free of bias.

Likewise, the use of purposeful sampling to select the parent participants may raise questions as to whether greater understanding of the phenomenon in the inquiry was achieved. However, purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to find participants that identified with the community and the phenomenon being examined in this qualitative narrative inquiry research study.

The volume of the data collected made the analysis and interpretation time consuming. Other related limitations related to time included the lapse in time to

complete the research requirements of this study. The researcher experienced personal and family health concerns as well as loss, the pandemic also created challenges as it had an impact on the researcher's ability to move forward, all of which extended the time of the study's completion that was started in 2019 with an approval from the university's IRB.

Implications

The parents gave their perceptions of their gifted adolescent's temperament and character by completing the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) and participated in two face-to-face interviews. The participants also shared personal, family, and social artifacts with the researcher (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) related to their perception of their adolescent.

The researcher was a former teacher at the self-contained gifted school for children in Denver, CO. The study's participants were parents of students that the researcher taught over several years with the exception of the oldest adolescent the researcher did not have as a student. When the eight parents were selected after volunteering, the researcher arranged to meet for the first interview session on the campus of the University of Denver. Study rooms were reserved at the Academic Commons Library. The rooms were private and provided a safe environment for the participant and the researcher. One by one on different days the researcher and one of the parents would meet. The first interviews started with each parent signing the consent form and then proceeding to complete the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) while the researcher waited outside of the room, but in close proximity in case the participant had any questions that needed to be answered for them to complete the

inventory. The participants were instructed to answer each item on the inventory how they perceived their adolescent would answer. After the participants completed the (TCI) the researcher resumed the meeting by beginning the interview protocol of questions related to the inventory they had just completed. There were four main questions focused on the four dimensions of temperament: *Novelty Seeking, Harm Avoidance, Reward Dependence, and Persistence*. There were also 3 main questions pertaining to the 3 dimensions of character: *Cooperativeness, Self-directedness, and Self-Transcendence*. Conversations also took place between the researcher and the parent as the parent elaborated on each question giving their perceptions of their adolescents' temperament and character that they either knew about or were not familiar with or sure how to answer. Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD) was used as the theoretical framework of this study and guided the study's focus on specific concepts and viewpoints that the researcher took in analyzing and interpreting the data gathered.

Theoretical Implications

Dabrowski's *Theory of Positive Disintegration* is a theory of personal development with five levels in which one makes a journey from egocentrism to altruism however this journey may not be an easy road to travel. Disintegration and reintegration as a way of promoting growth, self-awareness and also an understanding of the world around us better makes sense, but painful? However, through this complex theory and the comprehension of human development TPD provides a framework for educators of gifted students.

In looking at TPD and the levels of development some of our gifted students may exhibit attributes found in *Level I: Primary Integration*. Egocentrism may present itself

especially in younger students, but gifted students do tend to show empathy even in the midst of being competitive. Learning to take personal responsibilities is also an area that some students may need help with, to progress to the next level of development.

Level II: Unilevel Disintegration. At this level these students are no longer self-centered but are now concerned with what others think of them (Mika, 2005). They also seem to have a need for approval. They may experience inner conflicts stemming from external societal norms. Dabrowski stated that people at this level have not yet internalized a core set of values. In observations of the gifted population this statement does not take in consideration the strong sense of social justice that manifest in most gifted students.

Having a strong sense of justice and honor is a characteristic that appears in *Level III: Spontaneous Multilevel Disintegration.* At this level, an individual begins to develop an inner core of values ranking some higher than others (Mika, 2005). This level is where intense conflicts occur as a person is dissatisfied with themselves and their work, often comparing themselves to what they consider to be ideal or perfect. This is synonymous with the perfectionism characteristic of some of our gifted students. Here at this level is where a person appears to feel out of sync with their peers who don't share their same ideas of values. Certain emotions such as anxiety, guilt, shame, and depression could arise as one struggles to become perfect or ideal. In gifted students some experience more than a couple of overexcitabilities and at times have been mistaken for behavioral problems in the classroom. These intense emotions can lead to a person progressing to a higher level of development.

Level IV: Organized Multilevel Disintegration is a level of development that is not reached by everyone because to progress to this level one must disintegrate their previous self through the struggles mentioned in level three. Those that do reach this level of development have figured out who they are and accept themselves as well as others for who they are (Mika, 2005). They accept personal responsibilities, and they have compassion and concern for others. Self-awareness is an important attribute to continue on to the final level.

The final level is referred to as *Secondary Integration* which is characterized by reaching the highest level of moral development. Only a few people attain this level completing the journey from egocentrism to altruism. They have overcome all inner conflicts and become true humanitarians. This is reminiscence of Maslow's hierarchy of needs in which an individual can reach self-actualization encompassing a high level of morality, creativity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, and acceptance, although TPD is more complex with far-reaching implications for understanding human development in general (Mendaglio, 2002).

One who is successful in TPD has struggled and endured the pain of development and frames their lives for the betterment of humankind (Mendaglio, 2002). Going from one extreme of being self-centered to the total opposite extreme of selflessness is an emotionally painful process resulting in reintegration at a higher level of human functioning (Mendaglio, 2002). The implications of TPD in an educational context with gifted students that experience "positive maladjustment" may help foster positive interventions that will yield positive effects. However, TPD can and does provide

parents, educators, and counselors, etc. with the knowledge to recognize where an individual gifted adolescent is in their personal development.

Practical Implications for Parents

Having knowledge of their gifted adolescent's temperament and character fosters an understanding of how to best approach the biopsychosocial responses to their lived experiences. According to the literature, *Temperament* refers to the automatic emotional responses to experiences and is moderately heritable (i.e., genetic, biological) and relatively stable throughout life. The participants in this study gave their perceptions of their gifted adolescent's four temperaments traits: Novelty Seeking (NS), Harm Avoidance (HA), Reward Dependence (RD), and Persistence (PS). The parent participants also gave their perceptions of their gifted adolescent's three-character traits. *Character* refers to self-concepts and individual differences in goals and values, which influence voluntary choices, intentions, and the meaning and salience of what is experienced in life. Differences in character are moderately heritable and moderately influenced by socio-cultural learning. Character traits mature in progressive steps throughout life. The three-character traits discussed in this study were: Self-Directedness (SD), Cooperativeness (CO), and Self-Transcendence (ST).

Not having knowledge of your gifted adolescent's emotional drives (temperament), their goals and values (character), or the risks factors that influence stress, isolation, internal and external conflicts that could lead to suicide ideation, in the worst case scenario, can hinder parental support.

Cross et al. (2006) stated in the article *Suicide Ideation and Personality Characteristics Among Gifted Adolescents* that assessing the personality aspect of well-being is of great importance because the intensities and sensitivities of gifted individuals does impact how they view and react to the world.

Becoming familiar with these seven dimensions of a gifted adolescent's personality provides an avenue for parents to open up communications with their adolescent and gain insight into how temperament and character may be related to behaviors and emotions. Understanding the nuances of one's behavioral style and the way they experience and react to their environment (Kristal, 2005) is key to being confident in guiding gifted adolescents through the developmental period of "who am I" into "knowing themselves." "A lack of understanding of the emotional differences of gifted adolescents by their parents can lead to an "end result of a low self-concept, anxiety, depression, and underachievement" (Sisk, 2005, p. 214).

"Families are very influential in the intellectual and social and emotional development of gifted children," and have been described as "the most critical component in the translation of talent, ability and promise into achievement for gifted individuals," (Olszewski et al., 1987, p. 6). The support that a parent can offer their gifted adolescent through times of uncertainty can be crucial in their child's lived experiences. Not knowing whether your adolescent is struggling with inner conflict or external environmental pressures and not knowing which personality traits through their temperament and character are affecting their behavior can be challenging for parents in providing a safe space for their adolescent to grow physically, mentally, and emotionally in well-being.

Practical Implications for Educators

Cross et al. (2006) acknowledged an empirically based study Baker (1995) that examined the prevalence of suicide ideation, depression, and stress in gifted adolescents:

...educators of the gifted should be alerted that approximately 10% of their students may be suffering from clinically significant levels of depression. This finding supports the need for faculty to receive training in recognizing and intervening with depressed students... (p. 297)

If educators are without the knowledge of their gifted adolescent student's temperament and character, an opening to the why and how a student thinks and learns may be diminished. What is the purpose behind a gifted adolescent's emotional reactions in the classroom? What are their values and goals as exemplified by their character traits? Teachers that are aware of their temperament and character understand the why behind their emotional drives in the classroom, and better understand how to navigate their student/teacher relationships. It is important to be aware of a student's learning styles, neurodiversity, accommodations, and health issues (etc.), as part of educating an individual.

“Social and emotional development occurs over a lifetime (Cross, 2009) and we simply must take into account the psychological, social, and emotional needs of gifted individuals to encourage and support talent development...the academic needs of gifted individuals cannot be met without simultaneously addressing their psychosocial needs,” (Rinn, 2018, p. 453).

If we want to educate and meet the needs of each gifted adolescent, the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) provides a means of awareness to help in supporting the “whole-child.”

Practical Implications for Counselors

“What is missing in the research on counseling the gifted is information related to best practices,” (Rinn, 2018, p. 458). It has been implied that evidence-based counseling of the gifted entails “the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of the gifted student’s unique characteristics, culture and preferences,” (Pfeiffer, 2013, p. 170). Anxiety, not feeling that they belong, uncertainties of emotions, and self-doubt about their giftedness may be challenges that gifted adolescents face, along with having a strong sense of social justice and empathy for others. However, each gifted adolescent is an individual and experiences the world in a personal way and should be guided in regard to their particular personality characteristics. Silverman (2000) notes that “A child who feels different from other children is likely to interpret this difference to mean, “Something must be wrong with me” (p. 86). “Counselors should be aware of these problems and, through their own direct interviews with and observations of gifted students, see the need for more intensive diagnostic procedures afforded by tests and self-report inventories” (Feldhusen et al., 2000, p. 240).

This study contributes to the information and research related to the well-being of gifted adolescents and attempts to provide counselors of gifted students access to an explanation of the underlying causes of individual gifted adolescent’s personality traits through the use of the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI). Mental health or the well-being of gifted adolescents cannot be fully understood without parents' perceptions of their gifted adolescent’s developing personality.

Practical Implications for Policy

In an article, *Blazing New Trails: Strengthening Policy Research in Gifted Education* Plucker et al., (2017), a section on including policy in theories and models in gifted education policy, reports that:

Theories and models of giftedness are plentiful and robust, with significant conceptual development in recent years. But these approaches to describing how to foster school age talent and develop adult success rarely include policy developments or considerations in their conceptualizations. (p. 213)

What would happen if policy for gifted education does not embrace the use of tools that assess the biopsychosocial needs of gifted students? Some of the unintended consequences that may occur when giftedness meets well-being needs, we may see increases in:

- Student isolation
- Drop-out rates (especially during the first year of college due to anxiety and depression)
- Underachievement (educator concerns)
- Mental health care needs (counselor concerns)

Without policy implementation of the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) and interventions for gifted students, the multiple benefits to all involved in guiding gifted adolescents may delay their path to well-being into adulthood. Parents are concerned about how hearing about school shootings and the bullying by peers affects their gifted adolescents. Parents want support structures for well-being in gifted education to decrease the challenges of mental health wellness in our community of learners.

Recommendations

The gifted education community can utilize the knowledge of temperament and character by noting the differences in how they are affected by ways of learning:

The key difference between temperament and character is the difference in the pattern of their development and underlying type of learning involved. The procedural learning of habits and skills influences the conditioning of temperament, so temperament remains stable throughout life, except in response to behavioral conditioning that is unique for each individual. Propositional or semantic learning of goals and values influences the development of character, so character profiles are pulled toward the norm favored in a person's culture. Likewise, parental role models and attachments have a greater influence on character than on temperament, in excess of the effects attributable to genetic inheritance. Both temperament and character interact with one another in self-aware consciousness, so that a person can maintain a personal sense of continuity throughout many episodes of experience as his or her life history unfolds. (Garcia et al., 2020, p. 5409)

The awareness of the TCI temperament and character traits of individual gifted adolescents may help close the gap in communication between parents, educators, and other support networks such as counseling, preventing misdiagnosis.

Recommendations for Future Practice

In this study well-being is defined as a state that allows gifted students to learn how to face their academic and life challenges by focusing on their whole being. Incorporating instructional practices that enhance all aspects of the gifted adolescent from a biopsychosocial approach to learning will foster a healthy growth mindset. It is important to recognize all of the stakeholders in the educating of the whole gifted child. Not excluding the gifted adolescent, the stakeholders include the parents (guardians, grandparents, other caregiving adults), teachers, support staff at schools, counselors, coaches, and mentors. Letting each individual student know that they are supported in and outside of the classroom by all of the stakeholders listed above creates a powerful

network for them to access whenever they need help in navigating stressful times in their lives. Schools can institute more family engagement opportunities and initiate involvement by having a community outreach team to help connect teachers with their student's family in meaningful and purposeful ways.

Another recommendation would be for educators to take the initiative to get to know their temperament and character before entering the classroom with biases and their own stressors. How can we help others if we need help ourselves? Teachers take on the weight of the world at times, sometimes all in one day. At one point a teacher may be giving instructions, at another point they are performing CPR, and at some point, a teacher may be that student's only friend and counsel. As an educator, advocate for self-care so that you can be your best in your chosen profession.

Recommendations for Future Research

The parent participants in this study all were requested to complete a 140-item Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) and to give their responses as to how they perceived their adolescent would respond. The researcher and each parent volunteer continued their session with a face-to-face interview of seven questions related to the (TCI) that they had just completed. This part of the study proved to be very rewarding for both the researcher and the parent participant, being able to voice their perceptions about their adolescent's personality guided by the four temperament dimensions: Novelty Seeking (NS), Harm Avoidance (HA), Reward Dependence (RD), and Persistence (PS); and also, the 3-character dimensions: Self-directedness (SD), Cooperativeness (CO), and Self-Transcendence (ST). For future research it would be advantageous to also have the adolescent of the parent volunteers to complete the (TCI) and assess the responses of

parent and adolescent. The outcome would open the lines of communication, provide understanding, and hopefully give both parties sustainable information to move forward with a new support system in place.

Other research for the future includes going deeper with narrative inquiry. In this study each parent participant shared different artifacts with the researcher that represented well-being for their adolescent. The artifacts included photos, letters, documents, schoolwork, and artwork. Another way to approach this type of inquiry would be to request that the participants create some form of art to answer a research question. Narrative inquiry in the creative context can take on many forms of expression and reach a far deeper level of the human consciousness than, pure questioning with words or outcomes with numbers.

The purposeful sampling of parent participants came from a self-contained private school. This study could be replicated with parents from a public school, and also parents whose gifted adolescents are students in general education classes. Gaining understanding of temperament and character in different settings and contexts will contribute to the research of well-being. Since the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) is a self-reporting tool that assesses different dimensions of an individual's personality further research should also include reports from the gifted adolescents.

Additionally, research can continue with the self-reported assessments of gifted adolescents along with the interview protocols and artifacts that they select to share that demonstrates their well-being. The TCI is a tool that provides self-awareness of one's emotional drives with their goals and values. Although it is important for parents of

gifted adolescents to be a part of the conversation, it is just as important for the adolescent to explore their personality as assessed by the responses to the TCI.

In order to explore gifted adolescents' well-being more deeply through their personality, further research studies that involve different personality theories, models, concepts, and assessments along with the TCI should be conducted. The TCI gives a lens into the biopsychosocial makeup of an individual personality, looking at the whole individual combining the aspects of biology, psychology, and social aspects of a person's being. Adding this approach to social emotional learning and well-being research in the field of gifted education helps advocates get closer to the goal of educating the whole gifted child.

To build on this body of research a longitudinal study focused on the well-being of gifted adolescents and their parents. Researching a larger sample and a broader demographic will give rise to a stronger body of evidence utilizing the TCI, interviews, and personal-family-social artifacts. Studies of this scale can also compare different cultures or gender using the TCI in the gifted community and provide information to create interventions and activities to guide gifted adolescents on a path to well-being into adulthood.

Conclusion

The persistent problem of practice is a lack of guidance for the gifted adolescent's well-being development (Bireley & Genshaft, 1991) partnered with the lack of understanding of perceptions of their personality dimensions such as temperament and character, combined with their gifts and talents. Parents, educators, and other caring adults may or may not be aware of the temperament and character personality dimensions

needed to guide these exceptional adolescents through this unique period of emotional and moral development. The purpose of this qualitative, narrative inquiry study was to examine and describe the parents' perceptions of well-being development in gifted adolescents. Eight parent participants volunteered to take part in this study *Well-Being Development: Parents' Perceptions of Gifted Adolescents*. The sample number of participants represented the gifted adolescent population required for the study. Parents were selected to give their perceptions of their early, middle, and late – young adults gifted adolescents. The data collected examined the parent participants' perceptions of their adolescents' temperament, character and well-being development. At the request of the researcher the parents responded to a 140-item Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI), participated in two face-to-face interviews, and provided personal-family-social artifacts pertaining to their gifted adolescents' well-being.

The first research question explored during the first interview was: *RQ1: What are parents' perceptions of temperament in their gifted adolescent?* During the interview sessions parents shared stories and reflected upon their adolescents in regard to *Novelty Seeking, Harm Avoidance, Reward Dependence, and Persistence*. Discussions around these four temperament dimensions revealed internal and external social emotional strengths and challenges that the parents perceived of their gifted adolescent. The inquiry provided a space for the parents to contemplate the basic emotional temperaments that their adolescent was born with. Temperament is known to be moderately heritable and relatively stable throughout life.

The second research question was also explored during the first interview: *RQ2*: What are parents' perceptions of character in their gifted adolescent? The character or self-concepts and individual differences in the goals and values of the gifted adolescents were shared as perceived by their eight parents. There were three-character dimensions discussed: *Self-Directedness, Cooperativeness, and Self-Transcendence*. The research revealed influences of voluntary choices, intentions, and the meaning of what the gifted adolescents experienced in life as their parents reflected on their evolving character. Character traits mature in progressive steps throughout life.

RQ3: What are parents' perceptions of well-being development? Interview protocol #2 was the impetus behind the parent participants' perceptions in regard to the three key practices for the development of well-being. Meaningful experiences were communicated as the practices of Working in the Service of Others, Letting Go, and Growing in Awareness were discussed during the inquiry. This research question also culminated in the narratives from shared artifacts and perceived well-being.

The parents' shared their perceptions of their adolescents whose ages were 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, and one who was 15 at the time of the first interview, but 16 during the second interview. Narratives told of these adolescents from their parents' viewpoints fostered emerging themes that revealed patterns of emotional development influenced by internal and environmental pressures. Parents' perceptions of their adolescents' feelings in regard to values, self, and others aligned with aspects of Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration. The research also revealed implications for parents, educators, counselors, and policy in the field of gifted education.

The TCI is particularly effective in the development of well-being because it is predictive of physical, emotional, social, and spiritual components of well-being. Other tests ignore the differences between temperament and character. No other test measures all seven basic dimensions of personality, which are needed to understand the development of our capacity to work, love, and understand the meaning of life, as well as to understand the basic emotions we feel that may complicate [or enhance] mature development. (tcipersonality.com)

Professional Lessons Learned

This dissertation in practice began with a vignette of a student that asked the question, “Is there something wrong with me?” Engaging in this research and exploring personality development through parents’ perceptions of temperament and character, has provided me with insight into the personal, emotional, and moral conflicts that our gifted youth face daily. As an educator I would have been prepared to respond more efficiently to the needs of that student if I had access to a tool that informed me of their temperament and character. There would have been a more productive dialogue with the student’s parents during our conference time. We would have been able to discuss aspects of the student’s developing personality with the aid of the seven personality dimensions: *Novelty Seeking, Harm Avoidance, Reward Dependence, Persistence, Self-Directedness, Cooperativeness, and Self-Transcendence.*

Additionally, as an educator and a participant in a well-being coaching training program that utilized the TCI, I gained an understanding of my temperament and character. I believe that this allowed me to also have a better understanding of my students in regard to their actions and emotions displayed in the classroom.

In the context of being a researcher, there was a learning curve associated with the process of beginning a research study, collecting the data, the data analysis, reporting the findings, and completing the study. There is an abundance of discipline needed for such a

project. There is a knowing of the need for the research that you have resolved to pursue and to find answers to a persistent problem of practice. And finally, there is respect and admiration for the researchers that have dedicated their time, resources, and knowledge to the literature of gifted education and well-being.

Personal Lessons Learned

In a graduate class early on when I started this degree path, a professor asked my cohort about giftedness and then posed the question if we had been told that we were gifted, or if we thought that we might be gifted. As a mother of three identified highly gifted individuals who are now young adults, I had never thought about possibly being gifted. I have never taken an IQ test. There was not any mention of any gifted programs that I can recall during my early education. What I did recall was that I have always loved learning. I did remember being escorted from my second-grade class to an older student's classroom and asked to solve math problems on the chalkboard. That was a challenging time with my peers or the older students. I did not understand what I had done wrong, or why my mother refused to let the administrators accelerate me to a higher grade level. Fitting in has never been without effort for me, even in adulthood.

While researching the literature pertaining to well-being in gifted education, I found parallel aspects of personality development that were comparable to my reactions to the emotional life events that presented themselves as I progressed through my research. My path has not been a conventional one, many obstacles surfaced, along with many emotions, and I needed to work my way through it. I now have empathy for my former students that could not complete their assignments in a timely manner. Was I aware of their temperament? Did they need a different instructional approach? Was my

lack of understanding in reference to their personality development hindering their potential for emotional growth? Growing in awareness of these questions allowed me to create a community of trust and support in my classroom. My students and I learned from each other. My classroom was a space for students to grow and advocate for their emotional needs as well as academic needs, becoming autonomous learners.

As a parent, it was a rewarding experience to sit with and interview parents of former students. At first, I was concerned that there would be an awkwardness and that they would pause in responding authentically to the interview questions. My concerns were unwarranted, they were eager to discuss their gifted adolescents and wholeheartedly embraced the inquiry of temperament and character. Trust was an unspoken mutual agreement between the researcher and the parent participants in the study. At times there was laughter as memories abound, and at other times there were sensitive emotions that surfaced as the parents reflected on the past, present, and future of their gifted adolescents. I learned that it is significantly important that parents have a space to voice their perceptions and also learn through inquiry how to gain an understanding of how to guide their gifted adolescent as they experience living with intensities and sensitivities.

*“To this Good we must be led by those who love us,
and to it we must lead those whom we love”*

Augustine

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Appendices

Appendix A – Community Partner Agreement

Dissertation in Practice
Well-Being Development: Parents' Perceptions of Gifted Adolescents

Community Partner Agreement

Dr. Kevin Cloninger and Barbara Washington

Researcher – Barbara Washington

This research study will involve participation from a purposive non-random sample population of parents of gifted adolescent students who have attended a self-contained gifted program. Through this research project, the researcher will examine how parents of 13-25-year-old gifted adolescents perceive their children's well-being and school experiences, as well as their social-emotional needs through temperament and character. The parents' collaboration will aid in gathering data on their perceptions of the temperament and character of their gifted adolescents and contribute to research related to the well-being of gifted students.

The community partner for this research project is Kevin Cloninger, co-founder of the Anthropedia Center, 3693 Forest Park Ave., Ste B., St. Louis, MO 63108. Dr. Cloninger is also a graduate of the University of Denver and the provider of the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI), which is the instrument that will be used in this research project.

The research questions for this qualitative narrative inquiry are as follows:

1. What are parents' perceptions of temperament in their gifted adolescent?
2. What are parents' perceptions of character in their gifted adolescent?
3. What are parents' perceptions of well-being development in their gifted adolescent?

Community Partner – Kevin Cloninger

Executive Director

Anthropedia Foundation

kcloninger@anthropedia.org

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K. Cloninger', written over a horizontal line.

Appendix B – Recruitment Letter

Well-Being Development: Parent’s Perceptions of Gifted Adolescents

Dear Former Ricks Family Member,

My name is Barbara Moncure Washington, and I am a doctoral student from the Curriculum and Instruction department with a specialization in Gifted Education at the University of Denver. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study: Well-Being Development: Parents’ Perceptions of Gifted Adolescents.

This research project will involve participation from a purposive non-random sample population of parents of gifted adolescent students who have attended a self-contained gifted program. Through this research project, the researcher will examine how parents of 13-25-year-old gifted adolescents perceive their children’s well-being and school experiences, as well as their social emotional needs. The parent’s collaboration will aid in gathering data on their perceptions of the temperament and character of their gifted adolescents and contribute to research related to the well-being of gifted students.

You are eligible to be in this study because you are the parent of a former student of RCGC. I obtained your contact information from my records when I taught at the Ricks Center.



If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI), give two interviews, share personal-family-social artifacts such as photos, projects, and etc. that demonstrate your adolescent’s well-being. I would like to audio/record your interviews and photograph your shared artifacts. The last meeting will be to confirm with you the accuracy of the transcription of your perceptions.

Please remember, this is completely voluntary. If you’d like to participate or have any questions about the study, please email or contact me at barbara.washington@du.edu or phone 720-253-4692, please leave a message. You may also contact Dr. Norma Hafenstein who will be overseeing this research as faculty advisor, at Norma.Hafenstein@du.edu, or at 303-871-2532.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Barbara Washington, Principal Researcher

Appendix C – Informed Consent

Consent to Participate in Research

Study Title: Well-Being Development: Parent’s Perceptions of Gifted Adolescents

IRBNet #: 1372551

Principal Investigator: Barbara Washington, EdD Student, Curriculum, and Instruction
Gifted Education

Faculty Sponsor: Norma Hafenstein, PhD, Daniel L. Ritchie Endowed Chair in Gifted
Education, Clinical Professor, Teaching and Learning Sciences

Study Site: Anderson Academic Commons at DU or a public library

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you do not have to participate. This document contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate. Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate.

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not you may want to participate in this research study. The person performing the research will describe the study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to give your permission to take part. If you decide to be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your permission.

Purpose

The purpose of this research project is to examine and describe parents’ perceptions of temperament and character in gifted adolescents. In using the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI), a potent instrument for helping individuals grow in self-awareness, this research project will lend a predictive lens of the physical, emotional, social, and universal components of well-being in gifted adolescents. It is important to provide information that will give parents, educators, and community members tools to help gifted adolescents become self-aware and in a state of well-being.

This research is being conducted to fulfill the doctoral research project requirement for a Doctor of Education at the University of Denver.

Voluntary Participation

Please know that your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and is in no way an obligation of our relationship. You may decline to answer any questions without having to qualify your reasons for doing so. At any time, you may request a

break, terminate the session, or remove yourself from this project. You may withdraw from this research project with full confidence that any information you have shared will not be included in the study. A copy of your interview transcripts will be given to you for your records. If you decide to remain in this research project, you will also receive a copy of the research results.

The Research

For this research, you will be requested to complete a 140-item Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) and to participate in two interviews, 60-90 minutes each. You will also be requested to attend a 60-minute meeting to verify that the interviews have been transcribed accurately. You will also have an opportunity to respond with any feedback to my findings.

The first meeting will include the researcher's collection of this form giving your consent to participate in this study. Any questions that you have will also be answered at that time. After consent has been given, you will then be handed the (TCI) to complete, this should take approximately 30 minutes. We will end our first meeting with an interview consisting of nine questions.

The second session will occur approximately one week after the first meeting. During this time, we will start with answering any questions that you may have before starting the second interview. You will also be requested to share personal-family-social artifacts that may include journals, letters, family stories, documents, or photographs. The third and last meeting will occur approximately 1 to 2 weeks after the completion of the interview sessions, and all meetings will take place at Anderson Academic Commons at the University of Denver or a public library.

Risks or Discomforts

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with well-being in this research project. The participants will not be harmed in any way by the information presented in this research project. Also, there are no psychological or physical risks anticipated. If at any time you start feeling uncomfortable or overwhelmed during the interview, you are encouraged to request a break for as long as needed. You may also terminate the session or remove yourself from the research project without having to qualify a reason for doing so.

Benefits

The benefits, which may reasonably be expected to result from this study are receiving the results of the research project and gaining a greater awareness of how well-being is perceived in gifted adolescents through the perceptions of parents. In sharing your perceptions, you will have the opportunity of contributing to further research on temperament and character in gifted adolescents.

Confidentiality of Information

Your name will not be used in any report. Identifiable research data will be on one computer and password protected.

Your responses will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this code will be kept in a password protected file. Only the researcher will have access to the file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed.

With your permission, I would like to audiotape the interviews and photograph the artifacts so that I can make accurate transcripts. Once I have made the transcripts and checked for accuracy, I will delete the recordings and photographs. Your name will not be in the transcripts or my notes.

The information that you give in the study will be anonymous. Your name will not be collected or linked to your answers. Because of the nature of the data, it may be possible to deduce your identity; however, there will be no attempt to do so and your data will be reported in a way that will not identify you.

The information that you provide in the study will be handled confidentially. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released or shared as required by law. Representatives from the University of Denver may also review the research records for monitoring purposes.

Consent to audio recording / photography of artifacts solely for purposes of this research

This study involves audio recording, and/or photography. If you do not agree to be recorded, you can still take part in the study.

_____ YES, I agree to be audio recorded/artifacts photographed.

_____ NO, I do not agree to be audio recorded/artifacts photographed.

Questions

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact the principal investigator, Barbara Washington at 720-253-4692, or email her at Barbara.Washington@du.edu. You may also contact the faculty advisor for this project, Dr. Norma Hafenstein, with any questions. She can be reached at 303-271-2532 or email at Norma.Hafenstein@du.edu.

If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the University of Denver (DU) Institutional Review Board to speak to someone independent of the research team at (303-871-2121 or email at IRBAdmin@du.edu).

Signing the consent form

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form, and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

Printed name of subject

Signature of subject

Date

Appendix D – Interview Protocol #1

Interview Protocol #1 – *Well-Being Development: Parents’ Perceptions of Gifted Adolescents*

Researcher – Barbara Washington

Opening

1. Before we get started, I would like to make sure that you have read over the consent form and are comfortable with the content. Do you have any concerns before we get started, if not we can begin when you are ready and thank you for participating in the research project?

Temperament

Novelty Seeking

1. Please reflect on any times that your adolescent might seek out new or novel experiences, despite any possible consequences.

Harm Avoidance

2. Please describe when your adolescent might restrain their urges, drives, and impulses.

Reward Dependence

3. Reward Dependence measures the degree to which a person is sensitive to or dependent on the responses of others and/or seeking their approval. Please respond to this statement with your adolescent in mind.

Persistence

4. Please describe the degree to which your adolescent might persevere in the face of difficulties or obstacles.

Character

Self-Directedness

5. Self-Directedness measures the ability of an individual to control, regulate and adapt their behavior to fit a situation in accordance with their goals and values. How does your adolescent demonstrate self-directedness?

Cooperativeness

6. Cooperativeness measures the degree to which an individual identifies with, supports, and accepts others as well as their needs. Please respond to this statement with your adolescent in mind.

Self-Transcendence

7. Self-Transcendence measures the degree to which people identify themselves as an integral part of the universe as a whole. How does your adolescent see themselves in the world, or their connections with people, nature, etc.?

Closing

8. Is there anything else that you would like to share related to temperament, character, or well-being that we have not covered in this interview?

Appendix E – Interview Protocol #2

Interview Protocol #2 – *Well-Being Development: Parents’ Perceptions of Gifted Adolescents*

Researcher – Barbara Washington

Opening

1. This second interview will help put in context the experiences of your gifted adolescent with place (school and outside of school) as we discuss the questions and the artifacts that you are sharing today to gain a deeper understanding of well-being. Do you have any concerns or questions before we start?
2. How would you reflect on the phrase “Working in the Service of Others?” Please respond to this question about demonstrating love and kindness with your adolescent in mind.
3. “Letting go” is a practice of well-being. How would you describe your adolescent’s ability to let go of personal struggles, if there are any, with others and themselves?
4. Please reflect on any times that you observed your adolescent “Growing in Awareness.” When were they more attentive to whatever was happening, accepting reality without complaint, and adapting to it?
5. What artifacts did you want to share and how do they exhibit your adolescent’s well-being? Please elaborate on the context of the artifact(s): personal and social, time (past, present, and future), and places. Thank you for sharing.

Appendix F – Data Triangulation

Triangulation of Emerging Themes and Dabrowski’s Levels of Development

Dabrowski’s Levels of Development	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<i>Values</i> <i>Self</i> <i>Others</i>	Self-serving Egocentricity Superficial	Stereotypical Ambivalence Adaptive	Individual Inner Conflict Interdependent	Universal Self-direction Democratic	Transcendent Inner Peace Communion
Emerging Themes					
<i>Temperament</i>					
<i>Novelty Seeking</i>					
Cautious	<i>x</i>				
Risk Taking			<i>x</i>		
Impulsivity	<i>x</i>				
<i>Harm Avoidance</i>					
Confidence		<i>x</i>			
Worried			<i>x</i>		
Consequences			<i>x</i>		
<i>Reward Dependence</i>					
What others are thinking		<i>x</i>			
Approval of others		<i>x</i>			
Dependent		<i>x</i>			
<i>Persistence</i>					
Overachiever	<i>x</i>				
Effort	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>			
Perfectionism				<i>x</i>	

Time	<i>x</i>				
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Dabrowski's Levels of Development	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Values <i>Self</i> <i>Others</i>	Self-serving Egocentricity Superficial	Stereotypical Ambivalence Adaptive	Individual Inner Conflict Interdependent	Universal Self-direction Democratic	Transcendent Inner Peace Communion
Emerging Themes					
Character					
<i>Self-Directedness</i>					
Goals			<i>x</i>		
Maturity			<i>x</i>		
Learning how to be self-directed			<i>x</i>		
<i>Cooperativeness</i>					
Empathetic			<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	
Supporting others			<i>x</i>		
Accepting different viewpoints			<i>x</i>		
<i>Self-Transcendence</i>					
Creativeness				<i>x</i>	
Connections with people			<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	
Religion vs Spirituality					<i>x</i>

Dabrowski's Levels of Emotional Development	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Values Self Others	Self-serving Egocentricity Superficial	Stereotypical Ambivalence Adaptive	Individual Inner Conflict Interdependent	Universal Self-direction Democratic	Transcendent Inner Peace Communion
Emerging Themes					
Well-Being Development					
<i>Working in the Service of Others</i>					
Helping			x		
Kindness				x	
Community Service				x	
<i>Letting Go</i>					
Struggles			x		
Future		x			
Internal vs External		x			
<i>Growing in Awareness</i>					
Parent Involvement		x			
Responsibilities				x	

Dabrowski's Levels of Development	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<i>Values Self Others</i>	Self-serving Egocentricity Superficial	Stereotypical Ambivalence Adaptive	Individual Inner Conflict Interdependent	Universal Self-direction Democratic	Transcendent Inner Peace Communion
Emerging Themes					
Artifacts: Three Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space					
<i>Temporality</i>					
Early interests	<i>x</i>				
Emotional growth				<i>x</i>	
Future plans		<i>x</i>			
<i>Interaction</i>					
Parent connection		<i>x</i>			
Expression of Self		<i>x</i>		<i>x</i>	
Dealing with emotions			<i>x</i>		
Group dynamics			<i>x</i>		
<i>Situation</i>					
Home		<i>x</i>			
School		<i>x</i>			
Talent Spaces			<i>x</i>		

Note. Triangulation of emerging themes from Interview 1: Temperament and Character; Interview 2: Three Keys of Well-Being; and the Narratives compiled from shared Artifacts. Themes are aligned with Dabrowski's Levels of Emotional Development identifying values, feelings toward self, and relations with others using Miller Assessment Coding System.