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SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF GIFTED STUDENTS IN VIETNAM

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Abstract: Promoting social and emotional well-being (SEWB) of students has become an important goal for education. Gifted students (GT) who demonstrate distinctive characteristics from their chronological age peers may encounter unique social-emotional challenges which could hinder their personal development, and thus may require unique support from teachers and parents. Vietnamese education, nevertheless, appears to shy away from devoting attention to these special needs. Studies that focus on SEWB of Vietnamese GT, especially those at high-school age are scarce in the existing literature. This study thus aimed at investigating SEWB of GT, through perspectives of the GT, their parents and teachers. Quantitative approach was employed to achieve the research aim. The three groups of participants mentioned above were required to complete the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to screen out the social emotional advantages and disadvantages of the GT. Findings from the study suggested that GT in the current study had medium to high level of social-emotional strength; yet there remained a number of unique issues relating to their social-emotional difficulties, particularly hyperactivity problems. Comparison between students' responses and those from the other two groups also revealed that parents might have more information about their children's emotional problems, whereas teachers may be more informed about gifted students' peer problems. These findings contributed to the limited literature on social-emotional well-being of GT, and had important implications for further research and practices to enhance the social-emotional well-being of GT in general and in the context of Vietnam.

Keywords: gifted students, social and emotional well-being, social and emotional strength, social and emotional difficulties

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SỨC KHỎE XÃ HỘI VÀ CẢM XÚC CỦA HỌC SINH TRUNG HỌC PHỔ THÔNG CHUYÊN TẠI VIỆT NAM

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Tóm tắt: Việc thúc đẩy sức khỏe xã hội và cảm xúc của học sinh ngày càng được coi là mục tiêu quan trọng trong giáo dục. Học sinh chuyên thường có những đặc điểm khác biệt so với bạn bè cùng trang lứa và có thể gặp những khó khăn riêng về mặt xã hội - cảm xúc, đòi hỏi sự hỗ trợ đặc biệt từ giáo viên và phụ huynh. Tuy nhiên, giáo dục Việt Nam hiện vẫn chưa chú trọng đầy đủ đến nhu cầu này. Nghiên cứu này nhằm khảo sát SEWB của học sinh tại các trường trung học phổ thông (THPT) chuyên tại Việt Nam thông qua quan điểm của chính các em, phụ huynh và giáo viên. Bằng phương pháp định lượng, ba nhóm đối tượng tham gia được yêu cầu hoàn thành bảng câu hỏi Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) để đánh giá điểm mạnh và khó khăn về mặt xã hội - cảm xúc của học sinh chuyên. Kết quả cho thấy các em có mức sức khỏe xã hội và cảm xúc trung bình đến cao, song vẫn tồn tại một số vấn đề đặc thù, đặc biệt là biểu hiện tăng động. Phụ huynh có xu hướng hiểu rõ hơn về cảm xúc của con, trong khi giáo viên nắm bắt tốt hơn các vấn đề liên quan đến mối quan hệ bạn bè. Nghiên cứu này đóng góp vào kho dữ liệu còn tương đối hạn chế về sức khỏe xã hội và cảm xúc của học sinh chuyên tại Việt Nam và gợi mở hướng hỗ trợ phù hợp hơn cho đối tượng này.

Từ khóa: học sinh chuyên, sức khỏe xã hội - cảm xúc, thể mạnh về sức khỏe xã hội - cảm xúc, khó khăn về sức khỏe xã hội - cảm xúc

1. Introduction

In recent decades, there has been a marked increase in both scholarly and public interest in enhancing student well-being (Ben-Arieh & Frønes, 2011; Benson & Scales, 2009). This growing attention is reflected in an expanding body of theoretical and empirical research that explores various dimensions of students' well-being (Diener & Seligman, 2004; Dolan, Peasgood, & White, 2008; Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010). However, despite these efforts in both academic discourse and policy development, the concept of well-being within educational contexts continues to lack a comprehensive and universally accepted definition (Ereaut & Whiting, 2008; Fraillon, 2004).

In response to the limitations of traditional definitions, contemporary frameworks have emerged that conceptualize student well-being as a multifaceted and developmentally situated construct influenced by contextual factors. Roeser and Galloway's (2002) principles of 'lifespace' and 'lifespan' offer a contemporary and holistic lens for understanding student well-being. These principles emphasize that student well-being is not a static trait but a dynamic, evolving process shaped by the interplay between individual development and contextual experiences over time. The notion of 'lifespace' underscores the significance of multiple,

overlapping environments - such as the classroom, school, family, community, and both natural and built surroundings - where well-being is actively constructed. Likewise, the 'lifespan' principle acknowledges that students' needs and well-being priorities shift as they progress through different developmental stages. These ideas build on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) earlier ecological theory, which identified seven domains and three categories nested within these environments (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Lerner & Overton, 2008). For instance, the emotional climate at home may influence a student's engagement at school, while positive teacher-student relationships can enhance family communication or peer interactions. Taken together, these frameworks illustrate how student well-being is co-constructed across systems and across time, reinforcing the need for educational and policy approaches that are both developmentally responsive and contextually aware.

Building on the broader ecological and developmental perspectives, it is important to acknowledge the diversity of conceptualizations that define student well-being as a multidimensional construct. Despite differing emphases, most frameworks converge on four commonly recognized dimensions: *physical*, *psychological*, *cognitive*, and *social* well-being (Pollard & Lee, 2003). *Physical* well-being typically refers to good health, the absence of illness, and proper physiological functioning (Bornstein et al., 2003; Pollard & Davidson, 2001). *Psychological* well-being is the most extensively studied component and is often considered a core outcome of well-being research. It has been treated both as a distinct, autonomous construct (Lent, 2004; Ryff & Keyes, 1995) and as an integral part of broader conceptualizations of child well-being (Pollard & Lee, 2003). *Cognitive* well-being encompasses the mental processes involved in acquiring, processing, and using information to engage with the world effectively (Pollard & Davidson, 2001). *Social* well-being, sometimes overlapping with *emotional* well-being, is concerned with individuals' relationships and interactions, including dimensions such as empathy, trust, peer connections, and mutual responsibility (Bornstein et al., 2003; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). In some frameworks, *social and emotional* well-being are integrated into a single domain. This integration is based on the rationale that emotional states are often expressed through observable social behaviors, thereby reinforcing the interconnectedness of emotional and social experiences (Fraillon, 2004).

Though all four types of well-being are beneficial for students in different ways, *social and emotional well-being (SEWB)* is perceived as the most indispensable part in the general development of all children (Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2007; Silverman & Golon, 2008; Peterson & Morris, 2010; Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Weissberg & Schellinger, 2011; Shechtman & Silektor, 2012). This is because SEWB underpins students' ability to manage emotions, develop empathy, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions - skills that are fundamental to both personal growth and academic achievement (Peterson & Morris, 2010; Shechtman & Silektor, 2012). Research has consistently shown that when students develop social and emotional skills, they not only experience better emotional regulation and interpersonal outcomes but also demonstrate improved academic performance and classroom behavior (Durlak et al., 2011; Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2007). When students acquire skills for social and emotional learning and the ability to maintain positive relationships, their well-being is improved (Awartani, Whitman & Gordon, 2008).

With its significance to students' general well-being as well as future development, SEWB should be an important goal for education (Bridgeland et al., 2013; Weissberg et al., 2011). Fostering students' SEWB thus should be an important task of any education system, including gifted education. However, in comparison with the large body of research on SEWB among mainstream students, research on SEWB of gifted and talented students (GT) is rather

limited (Coleman & Cross, 2014). A possible assumption behind this paucity of research in this area is that there might be no big differences between gifted and non-gifted students in terms of SEWB (Nelhart et al., 2002).

However, the current literature on gifted students appears to suggest the opposite. Despite their higher academic performance, gifted students are reported to experience lower levels of social and emotional well-being compared to their non-gifted peers (McGee et al., 2011; Rinn et al., 2010). They may possess the cognitive ability to understand complex issues in the world around them, but their emotional and social development often lags behind their intellectual development (McGee et al., 2011). As a result, they are frequently found to struggle with a range of social and emotional challenges that are either unique to or more intense than those faced by other students. These challenges include: (a) initiating and maintaining relationships with others, (b) resolving personal conflicts, and (c) communicating feelings in appropriate and effective ways (Corso, 2007). They also suffer from more serious issues such as trauma, career development impasses, and poor coping mechanisms in response to stress, perfectionism, and heightened sensitivity to expectations (Peterson, 2009). In short, GT as a group may encounter unique social-emotional challenges related to their giftedness which altogether can hinder their personal development and may require different support from their teachers and parents, compared to their mainstream counterparts.

In Vietnam, issues related to students' social and emotional well-being have not received proper attention and investment (VA Schools, 2019). Reports in national newspapers indicate a rising number of suicide cases among Vietnamese students in general, raising concern about the psychological health of school-aged youth (Tinmoi.vn, 2016; Dantri, 2021). School time and efforts are usually sacrificed for achieving academic goals. Among these students, GT learners are not exempt from the growing psychological burden. In fact, due to heightened academic expectations and competitive pressures, they may be even more vulnerable (Dang, 2011; Phu, 2013). Apart from the normal workload, the gifted also have to bear additional pressure of achieving and maintaining a higher level of academic performance and being well prepared for a variety of examinations including the national high school exam, and other national and international competitions for talented students. However, Vietnamese GT students' SEWB has been overlooked (Huy, 2012; Thai & Falaris, 2014; Hoang, Minh & Tu, 2009), though research consistently reports an increase in stress and other negative psychological states among these students. A study conducted by Thuy (2011), for example, revealed that 82.90% of senior students in specialized high schools in Hanoi experienced stress at different levels. In another research study on stress faced by Vietnamese gifted students, Nguyen, Hoang and Nong (2015) also found that 74.00% of Vietnamese GT students were experiencing mild to medium stress levels.

However, all of these studies focused primarily on students' self-reported experiences and perceptions of their own well-being. Given the complex and multifaceted nature of social and emotional well-being, it would be worthwhile to investigate it through a more holistic lens by incorporating perspectives from other key stakeholders such as teachers, school leaders, and parents. These perspectives can provide valuable insight into the contextual factors influencing student well-being and help build more comprehensive support systems tailored to the unique needs of gifted students.

2. Research Aims

The purpose of this study was to investigate the social and emotional strengths and

weakness of GT through the perspectives of GT themselves, their teacher and parents. Such a multi-perspective approach was expected to bring about a larger picture of GT's SEWB in the Vietnamese context. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following research questions:

- What is gifted students' perception of their own social-emotional well-being?
- What is gifted students' social-emotional well-being as perceived by their parents?
- What is gifted students' social-emotional well-being as perceived by their teachers?

3. Literature Review

3.1. Giftedness

The concept of giftedness has widely been discussed throughout history, yet up to now there has been no consensus existing on how it should be conceptualized. It was first defined by Terman (1926) as “the top one percent in [terms of] general intellectual ability as measured by the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale or a comparable instrument” (p. 43). This was later supported by the theory of Robinson, Ziegler, and Gallagher (2000), which viewed giftedness as a generic, innate quality of an individual that might be assessed through some type of cognitive or IQ testing.

In addition to high intellectual ability, research has shown that gifted children often display distinct cognitive, emotional, and behavioral characteristics such as asynchronous development, heightened sensitivity, perfectionism, intense curiosity, and difficulties relating to peers (Gross, 1993; Silverman, 1998). These traits can significantly shape their experiences both inside and outside the classroom, and have important implications for how they adapt socially and emotionally.

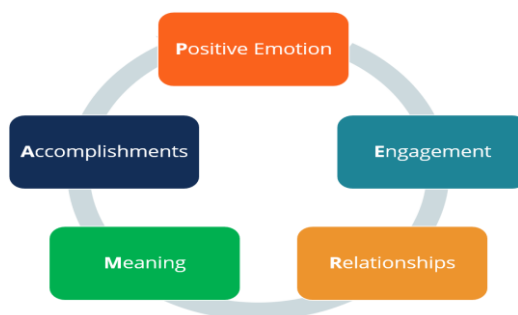
3.2. Students' Social-Emotional Well-Being

The concept of ‘well-being’ was widely conceptualized by many models throughout history. These conceptions, though differing in how they define well-being, share the same idea that “well-being” is a sophisticated and multi-dimensional construct that cannot be solely measured by a factor in a single domain (Borgonovi & Pál, 2016). As defined succinctly by the World Health Organization (2014), well-being is “a state in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of daily life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (p. 1).

SEWB is just a part in the bigger picture of well-being. It is viewed as “the way a person thinks and feels about themselves and others”, and their resilience and coping skills in dealing with daily challenges (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2012, p. 8).

Figure 1

The PERMA Model of Well-Being (Seligman, 2011)



One of the most influential frameworks contributing to the understanding of SEWB is the *PERMA model* developed by Seligman (2011) within the field of positive psychology. The model identifies five core elements that contribute to human flourishing: *Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment*. These five dimensions collectively represent a holistic perspective of well-being that goes beyond the absence of distress, highlighting the role of emotional experiences, social connections, personal fulfillment, and goal achievement. In the context of education, the PERMA model has been widely applied to examine students' psychological health, suggesting that the promotion of these five domains can lead to enhanced motivation, resilience, and life satisfaction (Norrish et al., 2013; Kern et al., 2015). Importantly, for gifted students-who may experience intensified emotions, heightened expectations, and unique social challenges-the PERMA framework offers a relevant lens to explore how well-being manifests across both cognitive and emotional dimensions. As such, it provides a complementary approach to understanding SEWB, particularly in relation to individual strengths and capacities within supportive learning environments.

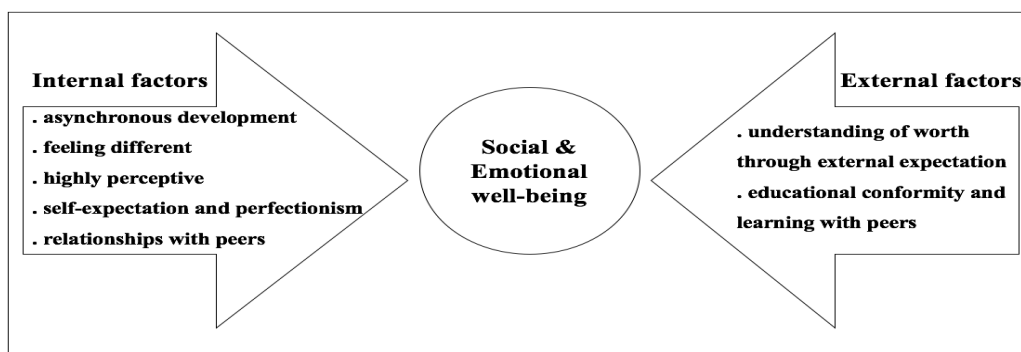
3.3. Social and Emotional Well-Being of Gifted Students

Gifted students often show a unique pattern of social and emotional development, with both clear strengths and noticeable difficulties. On the one hand, they are frequently described as being highly empathetic, emotionally sensitive, and capable of forming deep and meaningful relationships (Silverman, 2008). These strengths may support the development of advanced moral reasoning, strong concern for fairness, and a heightened capacity for perspective-taking. On the other hand, the same characteristics that distinguish gifted learners can also predispose them to emotional difficulties. For instance, their heightened awareness and sensitivity may lead to overexcitability, perfectionism, or an acute sense of being “different” from peers (Silverman, 2002; Gross, 1993). Moreover, the mismatch between their intellectual capabilities and emotional maturity-often referred to as asynchronous development-can result in challenges in peer interactions, emotional regulation, and social adjustment. These dual aspects of giftedness underscore the importance of examining both the personal traits and contextual influences that shape their social and emotional well-being.

These unique characteristics and challenges of gifted students can be better understood when viewed through a dual-lens framework of Hamilton and Redmond (2010) about internal and external influences, as shown in *Figure 2*.

Figure 2

Internal and External Factors Impacting Upon the SEWB of Gifted Children



Hamilton and Redmond (2010) proposed that the social and emotional well-being (SEWB) of gifted students is influenced by a dynamic interplay between internal and external

factors. As illustrated in Figure 2, internal factors refer to the personal and psychological characteristics often associated with giftedness, including *asynchronous development, the sense of being different, high perceptiveness, self-expectation and perfectionism, and challenges in peer relationships*. These traits can enrich the child's inner world and learning experiences, but may also create emotional tension and social difficulties. In contrast, external factors are shaped by the social and educational environment in which the gifted child develops. These include being misunderstood by others, experiencing intense performance expectations, learning in environments that do not match their cognitive needs, and deriving self-worth from external validation. Together, these internal vulnerabilities and external pressures create a complex developmental context that can either support or hinder the social and emotional well-being of gifted students.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Site

The study was conducted at a school for the gifted in the middle of Vietnam. This school included around 1300 GT specializing in 12 different subjects (Literature, History, Geography, Russian, English, French, Japanese, Mathematics, Information Technology, Physics, Chemistry and Biology). Students were selected into these classes based on their academic records from their secondary school education, including their secondary school teachers' report of conduct and learning attitude, as well as scores from a very competitive selection exam (MOET, 2012). Their ages ranged from 15 to 18 (grade 10 to 12).

4.2. Data Collection Instruments

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ; Goodman, 1997), which is a brief screening instrument designed to detect emotional and behavioral problems of children and adolescents aged 2 to 17 years old was adopted in the current study. The instrument includes 25 items, which are divided into five subscales, including *emotional problems, conduct/behavioral problems, hyperactivity/inattention problems, peer problems, and prosocial behavior*. There are 5 questions measuring strengths (*prosocial behavior*) and 20 questions measuring weaknesses of students (*emotional problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity problems, peer problems*). For each question, participants are required to respond to a three-point scale from 1 to 3, where 1 = "not true", 2 = "somewhat true" and 3 = "certainly true".

The SDQ was determined as an appropriate measure of SEWB in this study as firstly, it is advantageous compared to related instruments in that it is very short and includes both strengths and difficulties. Secondly, the SDQ is considered a suitable measure of overall child mental health problems and has been employed in numerous studies across the globe (Goodman et al., 2010). It has been translated into more than 40 languages and prioritized as a practical, economic and user-friendly instrument (Vostanis, 2016). Versions are available for self-reporting by adolescents between the ages of 11 and 17, as well as for their parents and teachers. Furthermore, the psychometric properties of the questionnaire have been deeply investigated and proved positively in several researches in different countries (Stone et al., 2010; Goodman, 2001; He et al., 2013; Gómez-Beneyto et al., 2013). These researches reported a consistent agreement that the factor analysis of SDQ parent, teacher and/or self-report versions suggests a five-factor structure that correlates to the domains that are intentionally measured by the questionnaire. Finally, the reliability of the SDQ was proved to be satisfactory (Nielsen et al., 2013; Giannakopoulos et al., 2009; Koskelainen et al., 2001). In the current study, the reliability

of the questionnaire was also at an acceptable level, which was presented in section 5.

4.3. Data Collection Procedure

Three versions of the questionnaire, one for gifted students, one for parents, and one for teachers of the gifted were translated into Vietnamese through a strict translation and back-translation process, and piloted with 45 gifted students, two teachers and two parents before being used with the participants.

In three days, 3900 questionnaires were distributed (1300 questionnaires for each group). It should be noted that while each student and parent completed one survey only, each form teacher had to do from 30 to 35 questionnaires according to the total number of students in the class that he/ she was in charge of.

In the end, 2258 out of 3900 surveys were successfully collected with 936 questionnaires from GT (72% return rate), 622 questionnaires from the parents (47.8% return rate) and 700 questionnaires from teachers (53.8% return rate). Parents’ lowest response rate may be explained by the fact that (i) the researchers could not have direct contact with parents (information about the research, the questionnaires, and consent forms were sent to parents through students), (ii) some students, though reminded by the researcher, forgot to give the survey to their parents, (iii) some students were living far from home and so were also unable to give the questionnaire to their parents.

The SDQ questionnaires after being collected were entered in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, and thereafter, imported into IBM SPSS (Version 23) for analysis. The resulting data were used to assess the reliability of the scales and to generate descriptive statistics (mean scores and standard deviations), which are reported in Section 5.

5. Findings

Initial analysis of scale reliability revealed that the scale had fair to good level of reliability with Cronbach’s alpha values on the SDQ subscales ranging between 0.63 and 0.85 (George & Marley, 2003).

Table 1

Cronbach’s a Reliabilities of Five Sub-Scales (GT’s, Parents’, Teachers’ SDQ)

Subscales	Items	Cronbach’s alpha		
		Students’ SDQ	Teachers’ SDQ	Parents’ SDQ
1- Emotional problems	E3, E8, E13, E16, E24	.77	.77	.77
2- Conduct problems	E5, E7, E12, E18, E22	.77	.79	.80
3- Hyperactivity	E2, E10, E15, E21, E25	.69	.82	.68
4- Peer problems	E6, E11, E14, E19, E23	.77	.85	.76
5- Prosocial	E1, E4, E9, E17, E20	.84	.63	.70

Attempts were then made to compare the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the subscales. It should be noted that the higher the score for *emotional problems*, *conduct problems*, *hyperactivity*, and *peer problems* are, the more difficulties the GT are perceived to experience. Scores regarding *prosocial* scale, on the other hand, provides the total score for strengths. Data from the students’ questionnaire, teachers’ questionnaire, and parents’ questionnaire are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2*Mean and Standard Deviation of GT's SEWB (GT's, parents', teachers' SDQ)*

	GT's perception Mean (SD)	Teachers' perception Mean (SD)	Parents' perception Mean (SD)
1- Emotional problems	1.42 (SD=.69)	1.16 (SD = .57)	1.4 (SD = .84)
2- Conduct problems	1.23 (SD=.66)	1.02 (SD=.57)	1.15 (SD=.54)
3- Hyperactivity	1.67 (SD=.75)	1.55 (SD=.54)	1.64 (SD=.87)
4- Peer problems	1.28 (SD=.57)	1.24 (SD=.54)	1.52 (SD=.69)
5- Prosocial	2.63 (SD=.02)	2.37 (SD=.81)	2.70 (SD=.66)

It could be seen from Table 2 that all groups of participants shared a positive view towards the social and emotional strengths of GT as the scores given for *prosocial subscale* were all between 2.37 and 2.7 (medium to high level). It is also noticeable that parents' ratings on the prosocial domain (M.3.5= 2.7) were statistically the highest among three groups, which revealed that GT's SEWB was perceived the most positively by their parents.

With regard to the obstacles, the evaluations varied among three groups of participants on the four subscales. It should be noted that teachers' ratings on the difficulties (M.2.1=1.16, M.2.2=1.02, M.2.3=1.55, M.2.4=1.24) were always the lowest among three groups, implying that they are the least attentive to the downside of GT's SEWB. In contrast, parents and GT paid comparatively high attention to GT's social and emotional weakness.

Of the four social emotional problems investigated, all three groups also appeared to share the same view that *hyperactivity* was the most challenging issue for the GT (M.1.3=1.67, M.2.3=1.55, M.3.3=1.64) whereas *conduct problems* were perceived as least problematic (M.1.2 =1.23, M.2.2=1.02; M.3.2 =1.15).

However, there were also some discrepancies between GT's perception of their social and emotional problems and those of their parents and teachers. As could be observed from Table 4.7 above, the GT rated *emotional problems* relatively high (M.1.1=1.42, SD.1.1=0.69). This was also their second concern after *hyperactivity*. However, for teachers and parents, this did not appear to be as serious as *peer problems* (M.2.4=1.24, M.3.4 =1.52). Another noteworthy point was that parents' scores were closer to that of GT's than teachers' scores in most cases (except for peer problems), which was also understandable and would be discussed later in the study.

6. Discussion

Firstly, *prosocial behavior* emerged as a key positive aspect in the overall SEWB of gifted students. Items such as being considerate of others' feelings, sharing with peers, helping those in need, and volunteering to assist were consistently rated positively. These findings suggest that gifted students possess strong interpersonal values, which may be partly attributed to their advanced cognitive and emotional development. As Silverman (1993) noted, many gifted children show early moral sensitivity and a deep sense of empathy. In the Vietnamese context, cultural values such as collectivism, respect for others, and community-mindedness are deeply embedded in both family and school life. These values are regularly reinforced in both formal and informal educational settings - through citizenship education, school moral lessons, youth union activities, and family upbringing (Pham & Nguyen, 2020). In gifted schools, where students are placed in structured, achievement-oriented environments alongside

like-minded peers, prosocial norms may be further encouraged as part of the broader school culture. This supports Awartani, Whitman, and Gordon's (2008) argument that emotionally supportive and values-based learning contexts can significantly foster the development of prosocial behaviors among students.

Secondly, the current study indicated that *hyperactivity problems or psychomotor over-excitabilities* were the most outstanding challenges faced by the GT. In the current study, behaviors such as poor attention, lack of persistence with tasks, impulsivity, restlessness and nervous-type habits were reported to be prevalent among GT. This finding is supported by recent research conducted by Kerry-Ann and Wright-Scott (2018) which aimed at investigating SEWB of gifted primary students in Australia. The result also suggested that gifted children found it difficult to deal with problems related to hyperactivities. It is important to note that the participants of this study, primary-aged students, tended to lack experience or skill to regulate their feelings or behaviors in specific situations, leading to psychomotor over-excitabilities becoming their outstanding weakness. For students in the current study, although students were more mature and possessed different characteristics from the younger gifted children in the study, the problem with hyperactivity could be justified by other reasons. From the behavior-environment relationship hypotheses, the decrease in environmental stimuli experienced by GT could have led to increase in hyperactivity as a way of self-stimulation to compensate for the tedious learning atmosphere. Motivation is another potential cause for this type of difficulty (Haenlein & Caul, 1987). It is believed that when the learning tasks assigned to GT are not intrinsically appealing, students' motivation to learn may decrease, making it hard for students to maintain their attention.

Thirdly, although parents and teachers were generally aware of the issues faced by the gifted learners, there remained discrepancy between and among different groups. For example, with *conduct and behavioural problems*, teachers seemed to be less aware of the related issues (i.e., displaying anger; losing temper) than parents. These findings were generally in line with findings from Van der Meulen et al.'s (2014) study among parents and teachers of 89 gifted children in Amsterdam which showed that parents put more emphasis on conduct disorders compared to teachers. That teachers were least aware of conduct difficulties faced by GT could probably be justified by the fact that gifted children tended to behave differently in the two contexts. At school, GT may display more appropriate behaviors to meet the expectations of teachers, resulting in the teachers' positive perspective on conduct problems among their pupils.

With reference to *peer difficulties*, which were also significant problems reported by GT; parents and teachers also had different views. The great number of peer problems among GT can be attributed to a variety of reasons. Firstly, it can be due to asynchronous development (Akin, 2005), feeling of difference in ability and motivation (Coleman, 2015; Gross, 1989), and being perceived as different (Coleman & Cross, 2014). Secondly, the gap in peer relationships may be further widened when GT find that their non-gifted peers do not share the same interests, intensity, or standards in social interactions, making it difficult for them to form meaningful connections (Peterson & Moon, 2008; Wellisch, 2012). Likewise, GT' heightened emotional sensitivity could also put them under greater pressure when socializing with others (Clarke, 2008). Such difficulties related to peer relationships have also been pointed out in other studies. For instance, Cross (2005) found that gifted adolescents often feel socially disconnected due to a mismatch in interests and communication styles with their peers. Similarly, Peterson and Ray (2006) observed that many GT experience a sense of isolation or misunderstanding, particularly when their emotional depth or intellectual curiosity is not reciprocated by those around them. These relational difficulties may lead some GT to withdraw socially or mask their true selves

in an attempt to fit in, which can negatively affect their emotional well-being.

In terms of the *emotional problems* scale in the current study, 'worry' was the most highly rated by all groups of respondents, indicating that GT had difficulties in staying calm and confident when facing new situations. Research undertaken by Winstead (1998) that involved 12 GT revealed that such worries came from difficulties in the intellectual, social, emotional, or physical domains. It should be noted that in Winstead's study, parents perceived their children to worry more than GT actually reported, which was in line with the current study in the higher levels of emotional and peer relationship difficulties reported by parents compared to their GT. Therefore, teachers should pay particular attention to their GT's worries to help them cope better. Awareness of the GT's worries can enable parents and teachers to have a meaningful discussion and support for the gifted. To ensure appropriate support, ongoing communication and collaboration between parents, teachers, and gifted students themselves is essential, as it helps all parties better understand the students' inner experiences and respond effectively (Moon, 2002).

7. Conclusion and Implications

As one of the very first studies that investigated the socio-emotional well-being of gifted students in the Vietnamese context, the study brought about important insights into the problems as well as suggested important implications for gifted education in Vietnam and beyond. First of all, it should be noted that being selected and nurtured in gifted schools places positive impacts on gifted students' social and emotional well-being, which could be found in high scores for prosocial behavior as well as low scores on conduct problems and peer problems. However, the relatively high scores on hyperactivity may indirectly suggest the gifted programs should be modified so that they could be more motivating and engaging to students (in order to hold their attention, and maintain their focus; and accordingly reduce hyperactivities). Another important implication from the current study is the establishment and maintaining of information exchange and collaboration between education staff, parents and other relevant persons in a student's life in order to promote the social and emotional well-being of gifted students.

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