

PERCEPTIONS OF THE EMOTIONAL SELF
FOR ADOLESCENTS WHO ARE GIFTED

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Abstract: Adolescence is a time of emotional turmoil as the transition to adulthood is experienced. For adolescent students who are gifted or talented, the research demonstrates unique issues such as sensitivity, perfectionism, and asynchronous development. Self-report, trait-based instruments have provided longitudinal and comparative data about adolescents. However, little has been done from the subjective viewpoint of the adolescent who is gifted. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to discover the ways adolescents who are identified as gifted describe their emotional selves.

Q methodology was used to conduct the study. The theoretical framework of emotionality was constructed in a four (Emotional intelligence, Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000) by five (Emotional development, Dabrowski, 1966) Fisherian design. Emotionality was used to sample the concourse of possible emotional indicators. The 41-item Q set was sorted by the 28 adolescents identified as gifted by the public school district personnel. Four factor arrays were interpreted using PQMethod output, field notes taken during the sorting interview, demographic information about defining sorters, and post sort interviews.

The four factor arrays were characterized by ability to detect and understand their emotional states and the emotional states of others. Further definition was observed by the coping mechanisms used to resolve conflicts within their peer group. These four groups are the *Humanitarians*, adolescents who value social justice; *Politicians*, adolescents who want to learn about the feelings of others, but are hesitate to reveal themselves; *Regulators*, adolescents who maintain a superficial life without conflict; and *Stabilizers*, adolescents who exhibit a constant tension of feelings and visibility of emotion. Results from this study inform practitioners working with students who are gifted. This study adds to the body of literature as it introduces a unique theoretical framework of subjective emotionality.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	1
Background to the Research Problem.....	2
Theoretical Framework.....	4
Emotional Intelligence Theory.....	4
Emotional Development.....	5
Statement of the Problem.....	8
Purpose of the Study.....	9
Research Questions.....	10
Definitions of Terms.....	10
II. REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE.....	13
Adolescence and Emotion.....	13
Development of Emotional Maturity.....	13
Personal and Family Characteristics.....	15
Emotional Intelligence.....	16
Emotional Development.....	20
Psychological Theories.....	20
Theory of Positive Disintegration.....	23
Gifted and Emotion.....	28
Asynchronous Development.....	28
Impact of Acceleration.....	29
Teacher Perceptions.....	29
Hypersensitivity.....	31
Characteristics of High Intelligence.....	32
Summary to the Chapter.....	33
III. METHODOLOGY.....	34
Rationale for the Methodology.....	34
Biases.....	35
Trustworthiness.....	35
Participants.....	36
Instrument Development.....	40

Procedures.....	42
Data Analysis.....	44
IV. FINDINGS.....	45
Data Analysis.....	45
Research Question One: Interpretation of the Data.....	49
Humanitarians.....	49
Politicians.....	54
Regulators.....	59
Stabilizers.....	63
Research Question Two: Demographic Patterns.....	67
Research Question Three: Theoretical Analysis.....	69
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS.....	74
Summary of Findings.....	74
Conclusions.....	76
Implications.....	78
Educational Practice.....	78
Theory.....	80
Future Research.....	81
Concluding Comments.....	83
REFERENCES.....	84
APPENDICES.....	105
A. IRB Approval.....	105
B. Q Statements with Data by Factor.....	106
C. Demographic Survey.....	108
D. Post-Sort Interview Protocol.....	110

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. School Demographics of Participating Students.....	39
2. Theoretical Construct of Emotionality.....	42
3. Factor Matrix with X Indicating a Defining Sort, *Indicates Exemplar Sort.....	46
4. Correlations between Factor Scores.....	47
5. Most Like and Most Unlike Statements for <i>Humanitarians</i>	51
6. Most Like and Most Unlike Statements for <i>Politicians</i>	55
7. Most Like and Most Unlike Statements for <i>Regulators</i>	60
8. Most Like and Most Unlike Statements for <i>Stabilizers</i>	64
9. Demographics of Emotionality by Factor.....	68

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Theoretical Depiction of <i>Humanitarians</i>	70
2. Theoretical Depiction of <i>Politicians</i>	71
3. Theoretical Depiction of <i>Regulators</i>	72
4. Theoretical Depiction of <i>Stabilizers</i>	73

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Interest in the emotional lives of students who are gifted has generated a large body of literature. The classic textbooks (Cross, 2010; Genshaft, Bireley, & Hollinger, 1995; Hébert, 2011; Neihart, Reis, Robinson, & Moon, 2002; Silverman, 1993; Webb, Meckstroth, & Tolan, 2008) include the literature and research that educators, counselors, and teachers need to ensure the healthy emotional development of children and students who are gifted (SWG), talented, or with high potential. The research that serves as a foundation for educational practices for students who are gifted (Loveless, Farkas, & Duffett, 2008) is specifically descriptive of traits such as perfectionism (Adderholdt-Elliot & Goldberg 1999; Schuler, 1999), emotional sensitivity (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009; Piechowski, 1997; Silverman, 1983), internal motivation (Goldberg & Cornell, 1998), and empathy (Renzulli, Koehler, & Fogarty, 2006). While identifying and understanding the research traits that are descriptive of children who are gifted, in this study, I aimed to give voice to adolescents who are gifted and describe their holistic emotional selves.

Researchers in the field of gifted education describe students who are gifted as often more emotionally sensitive and more mature than their peers (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009; Zeidner, Roberts, & Matthews, 2008). Yet, teacher perceptions regarding emotional development and maturity of students who are gifted remain conflicted (Ford, 2010; Moon, Zentall, Grskovic, Hall, & Stormont, 2001; Robinson,

2004). Often, emotionally sensitive students may be perceived as immature due to enacting intense reactions to common situations (Freeman, 1983; Goerss, 2011). This perception of immaturity may be exaggerated if a student is academically accelerated, because those students are even younger than the average student (Richards, Encel, & Schute, 2003; Roeper, 2008).

Studies in education for students who are gifted and talented tend to focus on aspects of general intelligence (Davis, Rimm, & Siegle, 2010), identification of giftedness (Lane & Stone, 2006; VanTassel-Baska, 2007), and motivation (Siegle, 2013). However, academic success is often connected to mature emotional development (Larsen & Samdal, 2011; Moksnes & Espenes, 2012). Emotion relates to all aspects of success. In order to understand emotion in adolescence, it is best to glean information directly from the source, the adolescent. Therefore, a determination of how students who are adolescents, or age 11-19, view themselves emotionally will provide information to better help develop the skills for emotional abilities (Roeper, 2008; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Emotionality was considered a combination of emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) and emotional development (Dabrowski, 1966) rather than a rating of individual traits. This research study has as its aim to discover how adolescents who are gifted describe themselves in terms of emotionality.

Background to the Research Problem

There is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence (EI), which includes being able to identify, assess, and control emotion (Goleman, 2006), and general intelligence (IQ) (Goleman, 2006; Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2001). Therefore, it stands to reason that students who are gifted may be emotionally intelligent. However, there is some disagreement related to children who are gifted and emotionally intelligent. Because

children who are gifted often have differing developmental patterns considered to be asynchronous development (Silverman, 1997), their intelligence level and emotional intelligence level do not seem to match. Therefore, teachers may conclude that SWG may not be as emotionally developed. High sensitivity is commonly associated with giftedness and leads children to be perceived by observers as less mature or less emotionally intelligent. Teacher perception of children who are gifted, especially of those who have been accelerated, plays a part in the belief that children who are gifted are often emotionally immature (Gallagher, Smith, & Merrotsy, 2011; Sankar-DeLeeuw, 2002; Silverman, 1997).

Emotionality is important to consider because its components help to predict success in the workplace and the ability to interact and work with others on a daily basis (Earley, Ang, & Tan, 2006; Mayer et al., 2008; Zeidner et al., 2008). Components of emotionality include emotional development (Dabrowski, 1966), emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), and emotional states (Mehrabian, 1995). For this study, emotionality includes emotional development and emotional intelligence.

Historically, developmental theories address emotional development in some capacity. Evolutionary theory (Cosmides & Tooby, 1989) and psychoanalytic theory (Arlow & Brenner, 1972; Freud, 1920/1977) consider development in terms of relationships with parents and adaptation to the world. Piaget (1964) studied how social skills were developed as children move from concrete operations and observable stimuli to abstract thinking and the ability to synthesize abstract ideas with emotional reactions. Several theories such as social role theory (Lazarus, 1991), life-span theory (Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995), and learning theory (Bandura & Walters, 1977; Skinner, 1950) value social interaction as an important aspect of emotional development. Psychosocial theory (Cassel, 1974) and

bioecological theory emphasize development through the lens of environmental interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). Dabrowski's developmental theory has levels that are not connected with specific age ranges, and while an individual's developmental level may be affected by external stimuli, Dabrowski considers emotional development to be a result of internal growth prompted by disintegration or crisis (Dabrowski, 1966).

Little is known about how students who are gifted view their emotional selves. The current study used Q methodology as a strategy to capture the subjective, holistic viewpoint of students who are gifted. This method is ideal as data can be collected in familiar and non-threatening environments. Q method is self-referent and enables analysis of data from a relatively small sample (Ellingson, Thorson, & Storksen, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks used for this study are emotional intelligence theory as developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and the positive disintegration model of emotional development as conceptualized by Dabrowski (Dabrowski, 1966; Daniels & Piechowski, 2009).

Emotional Intelligence Theory

Emotional intelligence theory as developed by Salovey and Mayer (2000) has four branches that are labeled as perceiving emotions, regulation of self, understanding of others, and regulating relationships. Learning to perceive one's own emotions and be able to label them as happiness or sadness is a step to understanding emotions (Bretherton, Fritz, Zahn-Waxler, & Ridgeway, 1986). The branch of regulation of self involves being able to understand the reasons why specific emotions are felt and how to appropriately respond (Mayer et al., 2000). The third branch of emotional intelligence involves recognizing and

understanding the emotions of others. Those who understand the emotions of others are able to adapt their own behavior and respond to the needs of others appropriately (Mayer et al., 2000). The final branch, regulating relationships, recognizes emotions of others and helps individuals to manage their interactions with other people. At the metacognitive level, it is recognized that helping others brings a greater satisfaction than helping oneself (Zimmerman, 2010).

The branches of emotional intelligence are increasingly abstract as an individual progresses through them. Early in a person's life, one is taught to understand and label how he or she feels. Is one sad? Is one happy (Widen & Russell, 2003)? In this way, one learns to label emotions. As a child grows older, he or she learns why the child feels a certain way. For example, one might be angry because he or she was told to put toys away and go to bed. Or feelings of anger are noted because the child cannot keep the toy taken from another child (Goleman, 2006). Over time, children learn that other people have emotions and those emotions can be recognized through facial expressions or body language. Because children have their own experiences with emotions, the mature child begins to develop empathy and sympathy. As an individual continues to develop, he or she begins to understand that it is possible to work with other people to alleviate pain and suffering of more than just self or solely the other person (Mayer et al., 2000).

Emotional Development

The second theoretical construct used in the current study is the theory of emotional development known as the Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD, Dabrowski, 1966). This theory is described as five levels of emotional development: primary integration, unilevel disintegration, spontaneous multilevel disintegration, organized multilevel disintegration, and

secondary integration. According to Dabrowski (1966), primary integration is described as having no inner growth. Unilevel disintegration is described as a single level of development or conflict among issues having the same level of value, and occurs when an individual continues to experience recurring problems (Ackerman, 2009). Individuals at this level experience problems that could lead to growth and development, but are unable to develop emotionally without moving to the next level. Spontaneous multilevel disintegration is described as multilevel development. It is at this level that people experience the greatest inner conflict (Ackerman, 2009). A choice is made to move toward a higher level of development or revert to a lower level with less conflict. At the level of organized multilevel disintegration or development, people begin to realize that conflicts they experience or witness are connected to forces beyond themselves. According to Dabrowski (1966), decisions revolve around benefitting as many people as possible resulting in actions for the greater good. Secondary integration is the fifth level defined as highly advanced multilevel development. At this level of development, thoughts and actions are on the world beyond self. Conflict is resolved through self-sacrifice and the intended betterment of humanity. Not all people progress through all levels (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009).

A commonly studied aspect of the TPD theory in relation to gifted education is the notion of overexcitabilities (OE) (Mendalglio, 2008). Overexcitabilities are a dynamism of level three of TPD and represent an extreme reaction in one of five areas. A dynamism is considered to be an intra-psychic trait that is a mover of development (Piechowski, 1986). The five OEs are psychomotor, sensual, imaginational, emotional, and intellectual (Dabrowski, 1966).

Psychomotor OE is the outward expression of inner energy and is manifest in over-activity. Students with psychomotor OE are often described as having high activity and having high energy (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009). The over-activity associated with psychomotor OE can be misinterpreted as hyperactivity or an attention disorder (Webb, 2005). Students with psychomotor OE have a difficult time sitting for an extended period of time and feel a compulsive need to move when they are excited about what they are doing (Piechowski, 2006; Webb, 2005).

According to Piechowski (1997), individuals with sensual OE have a heightened sensory awareness and an enhanced aesthetic appreciation. Students may experience great frustration in situations such as when their clothes do not fit properly, their sock seam bothers them, or when the environment is loud. They may be hypersensitive to tastes or smells, relishing or abhorring certain foods. Lighting that is either too dim or too bright can bring them to distraction. They are often highly skilled in music, art, design, and creating aesthetic spaces (Piechowski, 2006).

An individual with imaginal OE is characterized as having a rich imagination, fantasy play, or daydreaming (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009). Students who have imaginal OE often have imaginary friends, highly interactive experiences with inanimate objects, or believe that their toys are alive or have feelings. This rich imagination may result in a deep appreciation for literature, story-telling, or artistic creativity (Piechowski, 2006).

Emotional OE is characterized by an emotional connection with others with greater awareness of the feelings and reactions in others. Students with emotional OE experience the same emotions other people experience, but they respond with a heightened level (Daniels &

Piechowski, 2009). For example, disappointment to those with emotional OE may manifest as emotional devastation. Excitement and happiness for a great accomplishment or an amazing experience could be shown as overwhelming joy. In tandem with personal experiences, those with emotional OE have a natural capacity for empathy. They may be able to sense and tune in to the emotional experience of others and personally experience those emotions (Piechowski, 2006).

Intellectual OE is characterized by wide and deep interests (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009). In education, students with intellectual OE are easy to identify as gifted (Ackerman, 1997). While they may not dive completely into subjects that do not interest them, whatever does capture their interest is studied so thoroughly that others may call them little professor (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009).

Much of the research with gifted education uses measures of OE such as the Overexcitabilities Questionnaire (OEQ, Ackerman, 1997) and the Overexcitabilities Questionnaire II (OEQ II, Falk, Lind, Miller, Piechowski, & Silverman, 1999). The OEQ II inventory is a qualitative instrument made up of 24 questions. Research indicates that individuals who are gifted experience one or more OEs (Lind, 2001; Piirto, Montgomery, & May, 2008), and that they would have a high emotional intelligence (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009). The *Miller Assessment Coding System* (MACS, Miller & Silverman, 1987) is used to analyze the OEQ and OEQ II through the lens of the levels of TPD (Miller & Silverman, 1987).

Statement of the Problem

Researchers have examined various aspects of emotionality in SWG (Edmunds & Edmunds, 2004; Goetz, 2003; Mendaglio, 1995). Studies indicate that adolescents identified

as gifted/talented are emotionally mature and have a great depth of emotional understanding (Roeper, 2008); whereas, teacher perceptions indicate that adolescents who are gifted are less emotionally mature than their peers (Levy & Plucker, 2003). Literature related to emotional intelligence indicates that high emotional intelligence is often associated with high IQ (Goleman, 2006; Hoerger, Chapman, Epstein, & Duberstein, 2012; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). On the other hand, Renzulli (1978, 2002) maintains that giftedness is the interaction among above average abilities, motivation, and creativity. Furthermore, Gagné (1985, 2004) does not include emotionality in definitions of giftedness, but rather views giftedness in terms of abilities and mastery of skills. There are paradoxes and conflicts in the current literature which is primarily based on student self-report and teacher or parent observations. In order to understand how emotionality and giftedness are related, the student voice is needed. A methodology that allows subjective, holistic, and self-reference from the viewpoint of the adolescent is needed in order to analyze self-descriptions of emotionality among adolescents who are identified as gifted.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to discover the ways adolescents who are identified as gifted describe their emotional selves. In order to accomplish this purpose, a theoretical construct of emotionality based on emotional intelligence (Mayer et al., 2000) and emotional development (Dabrowski, 1966) was used to develop the study instrument. Q methodology is most appropriate for this study for several reasons. Q is a subjective methodology that holistically analyzes self-referent data (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Likert-type scales result in rating only one trait at a time, while Q methodology allows for the holistic examination of all

statements at once providing resultant factors about how adolescents describe their emotionality (McKeown & Thomas, 2013).

Research Questions

The research questions guiding the investigation in this study are:

1. In what ways do adolescents describe their emotional selves?
2. In what ways do demographic characteristics inform the understanding of the descriptions of self?
3. How do the theories of emotional intelligence and emotional development assist in understanding the descriptions of self?

Definitions of Terms:

Consensus Statements: “A statement that is not distinguishing between any of the identified factors” (van Exel & de Graff, 2005, p. 10).

Correlation: The interdependent connection between sorts as variables (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

Distinguishing Statements: A statement whose score on two factors has exceeded the magnitude of difference in order to be statistically significant (van Exel & de Graff, 2005 p. 9).

Emotional Intelligence (EI): The ability to be aware of and regulate one’s own emotions, and the ability to be aware of other’s emotion’s and one’s interactions with others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Factor Analysis: A statistical method that describes relationship among correlated variables (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

Gifted: “Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports)” (National Association for Gifted Children, 2010, p. 1).

Multi-criteria Identification of Gifted: A process used to identify students for a gifted program including referrals from teachers, evidence of advanced work, or divergent thinking (Education of Gifted and Talented Children Act 1994).

Standard Scores: Often referred to as the *z*-score (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD): A theory that differentiates between levels of thought processes while focusing on stress and tension as necessary for emotional development (Dabrowski, 1966).

Top 3 % Identification of Gifted: A process used to identify students in the top 3% that have scoring in the 97th percentile for their age on a nationally normed test (Education of Gifted and Talented Children Act 1994).

Varimax: A method of rotating the orthogonal base resulting in a small number of large loadings (Kaiser, 1958).

Q Method: Refers to statistical methods used during the process of analysis (McKeown & Thomas, 2013).

Q Methodology: Refers to the subjective, holistic interpretation of the factors (Brown, 1980).

Q Technique: Refers to the process of sorting statements onto a form (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to discover the ways adolescents who are identified as gifted describe their emotional selves. This chapter presents research and literature for adolescence as it relates to emotion development and emotional needs. Because emotionality is defined in this study as a combination of emotional intelligence and emotional development, the research relevant to these two areas is reviewed. Finally, the literature related to emotions and emotional development of learners who are gifted is presented.

Adolescence and Emotion

In the past century, the adolescent stage has been differentiated from childhood and adulthood (Heckhausen & Schultz, 1995). Prior to the early 1900's, adolescents were simply considered young adults. As adolescence has become distinguished as a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, researchers have connected emotional needs to successful transition. To better understand the literature of this age span as related to emotions, two bodies of literature will be presented. First, development of emotional maturity will be reviewed. Then, personal and family characteristics related to adolescent emotion is presented.

Development of Emotional Maturity

Landau (1998) defines emotional maturity as the “strength to actualize individual abilities within the frame of social demands” (p. 174) and states: “The emotional aspect

of maturity is the most important factor in the development of the comprehensive mature personality” (p.174). For adolescents, this means the development of the ability to control one’s own emotions and the ability to exhibit acceptable behavior in social situations (Silk, Steinberg, & Morris, 2003). Silk, Steinberg, and Morris (2003) reported that adolescents who were not able to regulate their emotions well and employed instinctual coping mechanisms had more depressive moods and more problem behaviors.

According to Freud (1923/1961), the id is the instinctive and emotional aspect for the development of self. The id is responsible for motivation and self-drive. The ego and superego understand and evaluate individual experiences. As a developmental process, emotional maturity emerges as the self-identity (Kahlbaugh & Haviland-Jones, 2000). Emotional experiences governed by the id, which is instinct, develop the personality of the individual and becomes the ego, which is the identity of the individual. For adolescents this means that their individual identity is developing and becoming more distinct. Adolescents who are involved in a variety of activities and have groups of friends are able to navigate the adolescent identity crises and develop their own sense of self (Kinney, 1993).

Development of identity, the target stage for adolescent emotional maturity is based on Freud and Erikson’s work and extended through Marcia’s (1966) work. Marcia developed identity statuses for use in research. Those statuses include identity diffusion, the state of being uncommitted or unable to make independent decisions. Identity foreclosure is the state of being willing to make decisions or commitments, but without the experience of crisis or knowledge beyond others’ expectations. Identity moratorium is the state of being in crisis and ready to make a decision based on extensive information

available. Whereas, identity achievement is the state of having gone through an identity crisis and having made a decision (Marcia, 1966). Adolescents are experiencing a transition of identity. Some may see themselves as emotionally disconnected and unable to solve their own emotional crises. Others may believe that they are able to use information available to solve problems; whereas, emotion maturity is the ability to make clear decisions (Berzonsky, 1992).

Personal and Family Characteristics

Gender differences are often studied in relation to adolescence and emotion. Moksnes, Moljord, Espnes, and Byrne (2010) examined stress, self-esteem, and emotional states in adolescents. Results indicated that there were some gender differences. Girls had higher stress and emotion. Boys had higher self-esteem. There was significant association between stressors and emotional level with home, peer pressure, adult responsibilities, and school responsibilities, which was not moderated by gender (Moksnes et al., 2010). This indicates that while girls may report higher stress and emotion and boys may report higher self-esteem, the stresses and resulting emotions from individual students is not gender specific.

Yoshikawa, Aber, and Beardsley (2012) compiled the effects of poverty on emotional development. It has been shown that poverty and poor outcomes have a strong association (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997) Poverty is defined in multiple ways, ranging from absolute poverty to financial hardship or social exclusion (Levitas, Pantazis, Fahmy, Gordon, Lloyd, & Patsios, 2007). Each aspect of poverty has been shown to lead to low emotional and behavioral outcomes (Yoshikawa, Aber, & Beardsley, 2012).

In addition to general stressors, individuals who identify as LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) may have a more difficult time learning to regulate their emotions. This is most likely a result of social stigmas related to sexual minorities (Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, and Azrael, 2009). Individuals identifying as a sexual minority tend to internalize their emotions more than others. This results in lower abilities to self-regulate emotions. In turn, this increases the likelihood that these individuals will experience anxiety and depression (Hatzenbuehler, McLaughlin, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2008).

Family environment has a significant impact on emotional development and the development of emotional regulation. Specific factors in the home that positively impact emotional well-being are education level of the mother, the mother's health and anxiety level, social support, family size, life stressors, and the occupation of the head of household (Sameroff, Seifer, Baldwin, & Baldwin, 1993). Bowes, Maughan, Capsi, Moffitt, and Arseneault (2010) used identical twins to determine the importance of family factors when it comes to bully victimization. They found that maternal and sibling warmth, as well as a positive home atmosphere, were incredibly important for individuals who experienced bullying.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence has been discussed and variously researched (Goleman, 1996; Gardner, 2003; Greenspan, 1989; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000). Goleman (1996) brought EI to popular literature and awareness of the public with the now famous marshmallow test. He began a discussion with very young children in a room, placed a marshmallow if they waited for his return, and he left the room. He found that children

who could delay gratification of the marshmallow possessed the emotional intelligence to know and predict their own feelings about enjoying the treat.

One of the well-known theories related to emotional intelligence (EI) is that of Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2000). According to the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso (MCS; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000) model, emotional intelligence is divided into two distinct areas: experiential and strategic. Experiential is defined as having two branches that are perceiving and facilitating; whereas, strategic has its two branches that are understanding and managing (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2003). According to the model the experiential branch is used to define individuals who are able to perceive either their own emotions or the emotions of others, and at the same time those individuals may be the cause of an emotional response in others or themselves. The strategic branch is used to define how an individual regulates their own emotions, or regulates their relationship with others in order to manage emotional responses (Mayer et al, 2003).

The *Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test* (MSCEIT, Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002) is designed to measure perceiving emotions correctly, using emotion to facilitate thought, understanding emotion, and managing emotion (Mayer et al., 2000). The MSC model, along with its assessment has been used extensively by those studying emotional intelligence and other aspects of emotionality (Mayer et al., 2000).

Goleman added to the work of Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso by incorporating five fundamentals into emotional intelligence. Those fundamentals include self-awareness, self-management, motivation, empathy, and social skills and translate to success in the workplace (2006). Additionally, Goleman believed that emotional

intelligence was teachable. Because social skills are intertwined with emotional intelligence, I find it important to distinguish between the two for the purposes of the current study.

The theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner 2003) incorporated emotional intelligence as either interpersonal or intrapersonal intelligence. Another theory of emotional intelligence (Greenspan, 1989) maintains that emotional control is developed through interactions between infants and caregivers. As children grow, their understanding of their own emotions and the emotions of others evolves from interactions between the child, caregiver, and environment.

The MSCEIT has been used in research studies in comparison with other emotions measures (Roberts, Schulze, O'Brien, MacCann, Reid, & Maul, 2006) or controlling for personality and intelligence (Rossen & Kranzler, 2009). Elfenbein, Barsade, and Eisenkraft (2015) used the MSCEIT to study observer ratings of emotional intelligence. They found that predictive validity was higher for observer ratings than for self-ratings (Elfenbein et al., 2015).

Research indicates that verbal skills and good memory are predictors of high emotional intelligence (Elfenbein et al., 2015; Hoerger et al., 2012). High emotional intelligence results in better individual performance in the workplace, in addition to greater resilience, positive adaptation, high self-esteem, and a greater ability to pursue goals (Klever, 2009; MacCann, Joseph, Newman, & Roberts, 2013; Parke, Seo, & Sherf, 2015). Emotional intelligence is associated with stronger families (Klever, 2009) and emotional intelligence helps individuals to be able to creatively cope with challenges (Parke et al., 2015).

The reliance on advanced verbal skills and good memory as predictors for high emotional intelligence is supported by the correlation between standardized tests and student self-reports (Elfenbein et al., 2015). Those who are better able to recall facts have greater capacity for using knowledge, better knowledge acquisition, and high emotional knowledge have greater potential for academic achievement and positive emotional outcomes (Graziano, Reavis, Keane, & Calkins, 2007). Although emotional intelligence has been identified as a separate construct from knowledge intelligence (Mayer, Salovey, et al., 2001), there are positive correlations between intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (MacCann et al., 2013).

Another important finding related to adolescents who are gifted is the strong, positive relationship that exists between EI and work performance, positive adaptation, and a greater ability to pursue goals (Klever, 2009). Individuals with high emotional intelligence are better able to accept criticism. Findings related to the workplace suggest that the greater emotional intelligence a supervised trainee has, the better they are able to adapt to various managers (Clarke, 2006; Rieck, Hausdorf, & Callahan, 2015).

High emotional intelligence has been linked to high self-esteem, which is commonly associated with resilience and positive adaptation (Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, McKenley, & Hollander, 2002). Discrepancies in the research have been observed. According to a self-report study of adolescents (Moksnes & Espenes, 2012), self-esteem measured in both girls and boys indicate that girls have lower self-esteem than boys, and that girls tend to display higher depression and anxiety than boys. However, Bartell and Reynolds (1986) used a teacher report and found no significant difference between gifted and non-gifted students in terms of self-esteem. They found that teachers tend to judge

boys as being more depressed than girls (Bartell & Reynolds, 1986). The discrepancies between these studies support the need for research from the perspective of the adolescent rather than relying solely on the perceptions of teachers and parents.

Emotional Development

Theories of psychological development often include an emotional component. Cognitive behavioral theory considers emotion as it relates to need; evolutionary theory connects emotion with attachment; psychosocial theory considers emotion to be driven by the unconscious. Cognitive development theory and social role theory both consider emotional reactions to be results of social interactions and environmental interactions. The theory of positive disintegration views emotional development as a result of an inner drive to become a better version of oneself.

Psychological Theories

Cognitive behavioral theory explains emotion as a part of an innate need (Lazarus 1991). Humans have internal drives such as hunger, fear, and attachment. These drives translate to thoughts, which become feelings and emotions that result in actions. Social-cognitive theories recognized that environmental factors interact with personal factors and behaviors of the individual (Stern 2000). Emotion is a complex process that adapts to changes in the environment. Therapy interventions based on cognitive behavioral theory including relaxation, social interaction, and conflict resolution skills helps adolescents to better adapt to and interact with their environment (Lewinsohn, Clarke, Hops, & Andrews, 1990). Adolescence is considered to be a sensitive time in which both cognitive and behavioral development progress at different rates, which means that

focusing on emotional intelligence is essential during this developmental period (Steinberg, 2005).

As theories of development and emotion have evolved, motivation has emerged as a construct intertwined with emotion. Intrinsic motivation being a result of internal drive while external motivation interacts with the environment to produce results (Steinberg, 2005). Self-regulation, which is an attribute of motivation, is considered important in emotional development (Ryan & Deci, 2006). Social or individual contexts that prevent appropriate development of emotional regulatory processes inhibit the ability to develop internal motivations (Ryan & Deci, 2006).

Evolutionary theory places emotional development emphasis on attachment. The four types of attachment are secure, anxious-avoidant, anxious-resistant, and disorganized attachment (Bowlby, 1988). The foundation of emotional development is attachment to the primary care-giver. The ability of the child to interact appropriately with their environment is rooted in a secure attachment. Individuals with anxious or disorganized attachment patterns are unable to develop emotions appropriately. Allen and Manning (2010) found ego resiliency and emotional intelligence have a small correlation with each other and that secure attachment is strongly correlated with emotion regulation. Allen, Marsh, McFarland, McElhaney, Land, Jodl, and Peck (2002) found that there was not a strong correlation between secure attachment and emotion regulation. Both of these studies used the Adult Attachment Interview (George, Kaplan, & Main, 1996) as their instrument. These conflicting results indicate a need for further study to best determine the importance of secure attachment in children.

According to Freud (1920), emotion is an instinctual aspect of the unconscious. Freud (1920) focused on the experiences of early childhood and the relationship between parent and child in development of his theory. The emotional health of the individual is dependent upon a reliable and responsive caregiver. Traumatic experiences in early childhood contribute to adult personality conflicts and the ability to manage impulses as an adult. Bosacki and O'Neill (2013) studied the emotional perceptions and responses adolescents had during daily activities including popular music. Findings from the study by Bosacki and O'Neill indicate that adolescents have a strong emotional attachment to experiences that include music.

Cognitive development theory connects emotion with social interactions. Knowledge of how one interacts with others increases as individuals develop schemes (Piaget 1964). Social cognition focuses on how the individual acts toward others and understands others. There is an emphasis on being able to see situations from another person's point of view or perspective taking. Choudhury, Blakemore, and Charman (1996) found that as adolescents age, they are able to see situations from the perspective of another person more quickly. Additionally, this theory focuses on the way children understand the behavior of others in the theory of mind. A study on adolescent anger considered whether anger would be mediated by time or gender. It was found that dimensions of anger may differ over time by gender (Kollar, Groer, Thomas, & Cunningham, 1991).

Social role theory is based on the relationship between the person and the environment. Emotion is considered a result of the features of that relationship. This relationship is either a benefit or a harm to the individual. Lazarus (1991) examined

appraisal patterns and found that if the individual appraises the interaction as positive, the emotions resulting will be that of happiness, pride, love, or something similar; whereas, interactions that are appraised as negative will result in emotions such as anxiety, guilt, or shame. Roseman (1991) found that students who appraised brief stories experienced significant emotional impact.

Theory of Positive Disintegration

The Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD, Dabrowski, 1966) is a theory of emotional development that is structured around five developmental processes. This section explains reasons that TPD is different from other emotional development theories, as well as describing the five levels of development, multilevelness, dynamisms, and overexcitabilities.

Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD) is different from other emotional development theories for several reasons. Unlike stage theory (Bandura & Walters, 1977; Piaget, 1964), in which development is based on stages that are associated with general age categories, the developmental level of emotion in TPD is not based on age or physical development. Second, emotional development in TPD is a central component of all development in the same way that physical, cognitive, and social development areas are important (Ryan & Deci, 2006). Psychoneurosis has traditionally been perceived as a negative aspect of development (Freud, 1920/1977), but in TPD psychoneurosis is viewed as an essential part of the growth process. Finally, in TPD persons at each level have distinct behaviors and values that are exhibited and not every value system is equal (Ackerman, 2009). Furthermore, TPD acknowledges attributes that directly influence

emotional development such as heredity, environmental, and internal processes unique to individuals, including inner conflict or self-awareness (Ackerman, 2009).

According to Dabrowski (1966), the Theory of Positive Disintegration has five levels of development and developmental processes. The first two levels are unilevel processing while levels three, four, and five are multilevel processes (Ackerman, 2009). This means that an individual functioning in one of the first two levels stays in that same level. Individuals in the higher three levels may function in more than one level at the same time, or may move back and forth between levels (Dabrowski, 1967).

The first level is unilevel processing. A person functioning in level one experiences no inner emotional growth. There is little introspection or little inner conflict and therefore no emotional development (Ackerman, 2009). If a person at this level experiences a crisis, he or she will likely avoid resolution. There is no drive toward inner growth (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009). Level two, unilevel development, involves crisis and resolution. People functioning at level two are likely to experience the same types of problems over and over because resolution does not lead to continued growth. At this level, individuals have the desire to continue development towards a higher level (Dabrowski, 1967)

Multilevel processes occur in levels three through five (Dabrowski, 1966). Level three is called spontaneous multilevel development and presents as the greatest point of inner angst and emotional crisis. At this level, individuals experience a pull between upward growth toward what should be and lower regression toward what already exists (Battaglia, 2002). Level four is advanced multilevel development. When an individual functions at level four, the focus is on ideals and principles. Development at level four

involves an increasing goal for service to others (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009). When an individual functions at level five, their guiding purpose is to serve humanity. The work is in serving others, and this work is its own reward (Ackerman, 2009).

One commonly studied concept of TPD is multilevelness, which is experienced when an individual varies between two or more levels. Circumstances may push them toward one level, while other situations occurring simultaneously will push them toward another (Piechowski, 1986, 1997). Multilevelness is most prominent when someone is in the third level of development as this level involves the greatest emotional crisis. Those who are unable to resolve situations with no change to circumstances regress back to level two, while others move toward resolution and advance to level four (Dabrowski, 1967).

Dynamisms are dispositional traits that shape emotional development (Brennan & Piechowski, 1991). Each level in TPD has dynamisms that include traits such as guilt, shame, ambivalence, self-control, self-awareness, autonomy, and inner conflict (Brennan & Piechowski, 1991). An important dynamism of the third level of development is overexcitability. There are five overexcitabilities: Psychomotor overexcitability (OE) is the outward expression of a child's inner energy (Piechowski, 1997). In classroom settings, psychomotor OE is often seen as hyperactivity and teachers who are unfamiliar with giftedness and OEs will often misread this hyperactivity as an attention disorder (Webb, 2005). Sensual OE involves a heightened sensory awareness and an enhanced aesthetic appreciation. Students with sensual OE are often excellent artists with an exceptional eye for color or musicians with an amazing sense of how sounds work together. In classroom situations, these students may be the ones who complain when it

is just a little too hot or cold. They may be frustrated with their clothing, noise from other classrooms, or even the lighting (Dabrowski, 1967).

Imaginational OE is characterized by a rich imagination. Students with imaginational OE are often great story tellers. They may see their stuffed animals as being alive or having their own personality, and they often play with imaginary friends. Students with imaginational OE may be daydreamers in class (Gallagher, 1985).

Emotional OE is exhibited by having deep emotional connection and a keen awareness of emotions in others. Students with emotional OE have a great sense of how people are feeling and are able to empathize with those in pain (Miller, Silverman, & Falk, 1994).

Wide and deep interests characterize intellectual OE. Individuals with intellectual OE spend hours researching and learning about topics of interest to them. Students with this OE are often called on in class to explain or describe complex concepts (Bouchet & Falk, 2001).

Research using TPD with individuals who are gifted (Bouchard, 2004; Gross, Rinn, & Jamieson, 2007; Piirto et al., 2008; Tieso, 2007) tends to focus on overexcitabilities. Several studies use the Overexcitabilities Questionnaire (OEQ, Ackerman, 1997) or the Overexcitabilities Questionnaire II (OEQ II, Falk et al., 1990). The OEQ II is a qualitative instrument used to indicate that overexcitabilities are shown to be present in high levels among students who are gifted (Alias, Rahman, Majid, & Yassin, 2013; Anderson, 2002; Miller et al., 1994).

Bouchard (2004) developed a Likert-type scale to measure overexcitabilities based on teacher observations of 373 students. After a factor analysis, items with strong connections to the five overexcitabilities were selected resulting in a 30-item scale. This

scale was again used by teachers to describe students and identify overexcitabilities. The idea behind this scale is that it could be an alternative assessment to identify students who are gifted. This study relies on teacher perspectives and perceptions of their students. While some teachers could be particularly intuitive regarding their students, many children learn at a very young age that there are appropriate ways to behave and respond in school settings. This behavior may not be an authentic depiction of what the students are really like. Altering behaviors to be more socially acceptable may skew results from surveys that are reliant on teacher observations.

The OEQ II was used in the study by Gross, Rinn, and Jaimeson (2007). The short form used was a 50-question Likert-type questionnaire. Students (248) who are gifted participated in the study. The sample was drawn from individuals attending a Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP) summer camp for students who are gifted. This study was from the student perspective, which the current study hopes to capture holistically rather than item based. The use of a Likert-type scale could result in potential skew of the results as individuals could choose all 5's or all 1's in their responses. The current study used Q methodology which allows for a holistic analysis of all the data.

A comparison between Korean students and US students was conducted by Piirto, Montgomery, and May (2008). This comparison study used the OEQ II, a 50-item Likert-type scale. The OEQ II allows for quick response and quick analysis as opposed to the original OEQ. Ten items measure each of the five overexcitabilities. This particular study compared students who are gifted in Korea with students who are gifted in the United States who completed the same questionnaire. As with other studies using a Likert-type scale, depth of responses and resulting depth of results analysis is sacrificed.

Tieso (2007) conducted a study that compared OE's of adolescents with OE's of parents. Multivariate analysis was conducted accounting for age and gender. It was found that the variance between individuals was due to family groups.

Gifted and Emotion

Emotions and emotional development are often discussed in relationship to students who are gifted. There are general schools of thought in the discussion about giftedness and emotions. One perspective states that those who are gifted are not as emotionally developed as their peers (Cornell, Callahan, Bassin, & Ramsay, 1991), while the other perspective reports that higher emotional intelligence is linked with higher intelligence (Mayer, Salovey, et al, 2001). This section contains a review of literature from four topics related to the discussion of emotion and gifted. They are asynchronous development, the impact of acceleration, teacher perceptions, and hypersensitivity.

Asynchronous Development

Asynchronous development refers to the discrepancies between intellectual development and perceived emotional development that an individual experiences. Asynchrony, the discrepancy between intellectual development and physical or social development, is a characteristic of giftedness (Goerss, 2011; Silverman, 1997). Teachers of students who are gifted often observe asynchrony when intellectual maturity does not correspond with the emotional behaviors an individual exhibits (Silverman, 1997; Webb, 2005). This misconception between intellectual and emotional ability leads teachers and other professionals to draw the conclusion that a child who is gifted is emotionally immature (Cross, 2010; Fornia & Frame, 2001). Additionally, the lack of understanding

between a teacher and student may lead to a lack of support for emotional development that otherwise may have been available (Goerss, 2011). The current study seeks to inform instructors so that they are better able to address emotional concerns.

The Impact of Acceleration

Academic acceleration allows a student to study material at a faster or more advanced rate than his age peers. Acceleration of content is an important topic in relation to emotional development because educators are hesitant to agree to acceleration due to concerns about emotional maturity (Siegle, Wilson, & Little, 2013). Throughout the past century, various studies have been conducted specifically examining the emotional health of students who have been academically accelerated during their school years. In their study of accelerated math students, Richardson and Benbow (1990) found that students expressed no negative emotional effects on their emotional wellbeing. High-achievers seek out older peers and therefore have little difficulty interacting with older students that attend the same classes (Neihart et al., 2002). Students with extremely high verbal abilities may experience more emotional difficulties as they grow older. The emotional difficulties exhibited may be the reason teachers are hesitant to consider academic acceleration as a viable option for advanced students despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary (Robinson, 2004).

Teacher Perceptions

Literature suggests that the perspective a teacher has toward students influences the classroom environment and the overall learning experience (Ames, 1992; Copley, McKenna, Baker, & Wattie, 2009). Teacher perceptions have been shown to be related to age stereotypes (Copley et al., 2009) and gifted stereotypes (Baudson & Preckel,

2013). Professional development for educators has been shown to change teacher perceptions (Hoogeveen, van Hell, & Verhoeven, 2005).

It is possible that gifted students are younger than their class peers simply because they may have been accelerated at some point in time. Teachers have been shown to have a more positive attitude toward students who are born in the first half of the academic school year and a more negative attitude toward students born later in the year or over the summer (Cobley et al., 2009). This negative perception stems from the belief that younger students are less emotionally mature (Cobley et al., 2009; Rist, 1970).

Other research indicates a division in perspective of gifted children between parents and teachers (Colangelo & Dettman, 1983; Richards et al., 2003). Parents view their children as having a higher level of emotional development, while teacher perceptions seem to be the opposite (Hargreaves, 2000; Richards et al., 2003).

Perceptions related to students who are gifted have both positive and negative qualities. Teachers perceive students who are gifted to be open to new experiences, but less agreeable, less emotionally stable, and more introverted than mainstream students (Baudson & Preckel, 2013; Preckel, Baudson, Krolak-Schwerdt, & Glock, 2015). This perception is contradicted by research, which indicates that students who are gifted have strong social skills and are as emotionally stable as their peers (Baudson & Preckel, 2013; Betts & Neihart, 1988; Vespi & Yewchuk, 1992). It is difficult to identify the reasons why teachers perceive gifted students as less agreeable, emotionally stable, or introverted. Understanding the student perspective may shed light on differences in viewpoints between students and teachers. Therefore, further research from the student perspective s

warranted (Baudson & Preckel, 2013) to better understand the student themselves, rather than depending on the perspective of the teacher.

Interventions with teachers of students who are gifted have been found to be effective in regulating teacher perceptions of the emotional well-being of students who have been accelerated (Hoogeveen et al., 2005). After additional professional development, teacher perceptions of gifted children and emotional development were more positive (Hoogeveen et al., 2005).

Hypersensitivity

Characteristics identified and used by parents and professionals to identify a student as gifted include such traits as a hypersensitivity in feelings, intense compassion for others, and insightful sense of humor (Silverman, Chitwood, & Waters, 1986). Students who are gifted are sometimes misunderstood because of high sensitivities, and often battle depression, isolation, anxiety and suicidal thoughts (Gardner, 2003; Webb, 2005). Students who are gifted often pick up on subtleties of emotion that may not be overtly expressed by parents or teachers.

Adolescents who are gifted may spend conscious effort throughout the day to control and limit their emotions and feelings rather than allowing them to be expressed (Roeper, 2008). In times of crisis, individuals who have been perceived as troublemakers or oppositional are better able to cope than others (Mayer, Perkins, Caruso, & Salovey, 2001). This indicates that their opposition comes from a strong sense of self. The present study focused on self-perceptions of adolescents who are gifted.

High emotional intelligence generally results in overall higher morale and positive behaviors in the classroom (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Even though depression in gifted

students is a concern for educators, Baker (1995) noted that there is not a distinguishable difference between gifted and non-gifted students. However, there are times when inappropriate behavior, as a result of inadequately developed coping skills, is more closely related to depression than disruptive classroom behaviors (Webb, 2005). Environmental effects and psychiatric conditions are strong mediators for externalized disorders (Davis & Humphrey, 2014). In other words, a student may behave badly in class for several reasons including home environment, psychiatric conditions, or depression rather than low emotional intelligence. Advanced emotional development combined with low self-confidence, family dysfunction, and low socioeconomic status results in the individual becoming vulnerable to external stressors and internalize negative emotion (Ford, 2010; Mendaglio, 1995). Therefore, external behaviors may not be an accurate indicator of emotional intelligence level.

Characteristics of High Intelligence

Characteristics of individuals with high intelligence include perfectionism, moral sensitivity, intensity, preferring older companions, vivid imagination, and a tendency to question authority (Silverman, 1993). Betts and Neihart (1988) defined six types of gifted students. The first type is the successful gifted student. The successful gifted student progresses through school without much direction and assistance. These students are often considered to be just fine without intervention from teachers or other professionals (Betts & Neihart, 1988). The second type is the challenging gifted student. These students may be challenging in the classroom. They are highly creative, but tend to be frustrated as their abilities tend to go unnoticed and unchallenged (Betts & Neihart, 1988). The third type, the underground gifted student is likely to go through school

without being identified at all. These students are quiet, do not draw undue attention to themselves, and may deny their talent (Betts & Neihart, 1988). The fourth type, the dropout gifted students, are frustrated with a system and adults who fail to meet their needs while the fifth type, the double labelled gifted student are gifted, but also have a learning or emotional disability. Double labelled are often frustrated in school settings because they are not challenged enough. The sixth type is the autonomous gifted learner. These students are able to work through the system to achieve their own goals. They have positive self-concepts and are self-directed (Betts & Neihart, 1988).

Summary

In this chapter, I presented research related to adolescence and emotion, emotional intelligence, emotional development theories and research, and emotion as related to giftedness. The purpose of this study was to identify the ways adolescents who are identified as gifted describe their emotional selves. In the next chapter, I describe instrument development, the process of data collection and the analyses conducted.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to discover the ways adolescents who are identified as gifted describe their emotional selves. In this chapter, I present the rationale for the methodology chosen, the participants, instrumentation, and procedures. An overview of the data analysis concludes the chapter.

Rationale for the Methodology

Q methodology captures the subjective perspective of each participant (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Because each person, known as a sorter, views a Q set of items or statements through his or her own experiences and self-reference. Each sorter inherently defines their individual viewpoint based on the statement position within the factor array (Brown, 1980). Q methodology is a method of factor analysis which allows for individual sorters with similar viewpoints to cluster together. Q methodology identifies multiple viewpoints among a group of sorters (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Holistic analysis and interpretation of the group factor (clustered viewpoints) is supported by data from each individual whose sort (viewpoint) defines that factor (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The processes of factor analyses and interpretation produces a typology from which possible courses of action can be determined. Q methodology, a technique of sorting or arranging, allows the participant to place each item into a pre-determined pattern or array. Survey researchers using a Likert-type scale analyze only one item at a time. In Q methodology,

a completed array demonstrates the subjective comparison of each statement to all other statements within the array (McKeown, & Thomas, 2013).

Biases

It is important for every researcher to consider his or her personal biases and to ensure that they are either avoided or accounted for during the research process. (Bloomberg, & Volpe, 2012). One inherent bias I hold as a researcher is that I am a parent of a child who is gifted. It is important to allow the data to speak for itself rather than interpret based on what I would like to find. As someone who has spent time studying and understanding the field of gifted education, I am able to interact with empathy with the students involved, yet employ the listening skills necessary for working with adolescents. Because of my role as an officer in the professional organization for gifted education, I knew many of the gifted teachers in the district where data were collected. This familiarity facilitated my work with the parents of the students invited to participate. In order to minimize bias throughout this study, the analysis of my findings was read by my faculty advisor, a colleague within my department, and individuals outside of my affiliate university.

Trustworthiness

There are three aspects of trustworthiness that were accounted for in this research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The first is credibility. I have worked to avoid my own personal biases in the collection and interpretation of the data by having other researchers review my work in progress. In addition, I sought to include participants representing diversity. I found, however, that gaining participation from students from a lower socioeconomic status was more difficult due to transportation issues before and after

school. Dependability is another aspect of trustworthiness of the data and was demonstrated by my ability to analyze deeply, thoroughly, and carefully to present a holistic picture of each factor or viewpoint taking demographic patterns into account as well as analyzing the whole factor array in comparison to the other factors or viewpoints (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

Transferability is the third aspect of trustworthiness I considered. It is important to me that research conducted has a meaningful purpose for the results to be used in positive ways for appropriate circumstances. Even negative results can be used to bring about positive change. For example, understanding that an adolescent may act in a way that is contrary to how they feel brings about greater awareness for teachers and encourages them to work towards a deeper understanding of their own students. As I analyzed the data and discussed my findings, I worked to ensure that the results included useful information for a variety of professionals and families (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

I believe that the purpose of research is to benefit society in some manner. Those who work with adolescents benefit from research related to the understanding of social and emotional development of students who are gifted or talented. As parents, teachers, and researchers, it may be easy to draw conclusions about students based on personal observations; however, it is most important that the voices of adolescent learners have an opportunity to be heard in research.

Participants

In this study, I worked with adolescents; therefore, of great importance is careful consideration of the research process according to IRB regulations (See Appendix A),

safety of the participants, and comfort throughout the research process. Parents completed a consent form after which students completed an assent form before agreeing to participate in this study. I was careful to remove identifying details such as any names of the students or names of the schools they attended. All personal participant information was removed from the data. Once the permission and assent forms were signed, they were kept separate from the data collected. All adolescents were informed that if they were uncomfortable, they were free to leave without completing the study. Nothing in this study caused distress beyond what these students normally encounter. All data collection took place at school locations at the approved school district in order to provide easy accessibility and convenience for parents as well as participants.

Participants were 28 adolescents between the ages of 11 and 15 years old. Adolescents were chosen because individuals in this age group may be experiencing various levels of identity development. Students were identified in this school district either through scores on ability tests or through a multi-criteria portfolio process according to state regulations. Identification of giftedness through ability tests is defined by achieving 97th percentile (top 3%) on a nationally standardized test, such as the *Otis-Lennon School Ability Test* (OLSAT; Otis, 1993) or the *Cognitive Abilities Test* (CoGAT; Lohman, Thorndike, Hagen, Smith, Fernandes, & Strand, 2001)(Education of Gifted and Talented Children Act 1994). Identification of giftedness through the multi-criteria process includes documentation of grades, inventories, teacher or parent checklists, and samples of student work (Education of Gifted and Talented Children Act 1994).

Students were recruited from four middle schools in a large, urban, public school district in a Midwestern state. This district was chosen for its diversity, as well as the

effort to consistently identify and work with students who are gifted. Demographic information for the schools is detailed in Table 1.

Twenty-eight students between the ages of 11 and 15 years old participated in this study. Ten of the participants were male, and 18 were female. Each adolescent participant attended a public middle school or junior high school in an urban area of a Midwestern state. All of the participants were identified as gifted/talented in their school district and were a part of the gifted program at their school. Eighteen students were identified through testing and scoring in the top 3% according to a nationally standardized assessment such as the *Cognitive Abilities Test* (Lohman et al., 2001). Nine students were accepted into the gifted program through a multi-criteria process, and one student had no accessible records as she had been identified by her previous school district. Eleven participants were active in one or more music programs including band, choir, and orchestra. Five participants were active in sports programs such as soccer or dance. Five participants were active in both sports and music programs. Five participants indicated that they were active in other extra-curricular activities such as drama, debate, or art. Two participants indicated that they were not involved in any extra-curricular activities. Responses to ethnicity indicated seventeen participants identified as white, three were identified as Hispanic, one African American, two Asian American, one East Indian, and three participants were identified as mixed-race.

At all four of the participant schools, faculty and students were very helpful and cooperative. Early in the data collection process, I contacted parents of students for whom I had received signed permission forms. I made arrangements to meet with the students from school 2 (See Table 1) at the on-site library after school in hopes that I

would not cut into instructional time and that this time and location would be convenient for both students and parents. I was running late on the first scheduled day and I arrived at the school just before the final bell. I was able to park in a space right by the front door. There were approximately 40 vehicles in the parking lot. This was surprising to me as schools in my district of residence often have dozens of cars at schools half the size waiting for almost an hour before the end of school bell to take their children to a variety of after school activities. Once inside, I was escorted to the library and waited for the students. None of the students stayed after school that day. I made arrangements with the principal and gifted coordinator for that site to come back during the school day and meet with the students at a time that would not be a critical class. Later that week, I collected data at school 4 (See Table 1). I had spoken with eight parents and had left messages for a few more. I met with 10 participants in the library after school that day. Several parents came into the library and waited while I met with their adolescents. These contrasting experiences helped me to understand the types of challenges that the participants in this study face.

Table 1.

School demographics of participating students

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
Population	425 students	719 students	654 students	954 students
Free and reduced lunches	96%	100%	46%	65%
% Math proficiency Averaged across grades 6-8	41% 10% advanced	25% 2.5% advanced	71% 28% advanced	61% 17% advanced

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
% Reading proficiency Averaged across grades 6-8	55% 7% advanced	51% 3% advanced	89% 25% advanced	86% 19% advanced
Racial and ethnic diversity in percentages	Caucasian 48 Black 23 Asian 1 Hispanic 14 Native American 13	Caucasian 31 Black 21 Asian 1 Hispanic 41 Native American 7	Caucasian 61 Black 14 Asian 2 Hispanic 16 Native American 8	Caucasian 58 Black 13 Asian 2 Hispanic 21 Native American 7

Instrument Development

In Q methodology, the instrument is the Q set. The Q set is a representative group of statements sampled from the concourse. The concourse is a “collection of all possible statements (van Exel, 2005)” about a particular topic. Developing the concourse from which this Q set is sampled occurred in several steps. First, it was necessary to integrate the Theory of Positive Disintegration with Emotional Intelligence Theory in order to represent statements of emotionality, the definition of the combination of TPD with EI. For example, TPD level 1 combined with EI 1st branch is: No conflict and little awareness of self (See Table 2).

Once the definition of all combinations of TPD and EI was completed, I listened informally to the high school students I see on a regular basis for three things: (1) How do you know what an individual is feeling? (2) How do you manage your feelings? and (3) What do feelings have to do with your relationships with your friends? Statements to reflect the definitions were identified from the literature on emotional development (Dabrowski, 1966, Piechowski, 1986) and emotional intelligence (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000). Additional statements were constructed based on the definition of each

cell of the table (See Table 1). From the adolescent conversations, literature, and constructed statements, the concurrence of multiple statements was generated. At that point, I added statements to reflect dynamisms of the Theory of Positive Disintegration (Dabrowski, 1966). Dynamisms are said to be the motivation and drive for the inner conflict, which may result in emotional development (Mendaglio, 2008). In other words, dynamisms are the motivational forces for emotional development. These statements include “I am motivated to do what others expect from me,” or “I like to keep things the same.” The concurrence of nearly 100 statements represented approximately three to six statements in each of the theoretical cells (See Table 2) with the lowest and highest levels and branches having fewer statements than categories in the middle. The statements were revised for clarity and redundancy. Adolescents known to the researcher were asked to read through the statements to ensure that the vernacular would be understood by students as young as 11 years old. Statements that were of similar meanings to other statements, or were generalizable to everyone were removed. For example, statement 28 originally stated: My vocation must benefit humanity. The final version of the statement was: I want to benefit humanity. Representative samples of the cell were chosen as statements to be included in the Q set. Finally, a Q set of 41 statements was constructed and statements from each cell can be noted in Appendix B.

Table 2.

Theoretical Construct of Emotionality

		Theory of Emotional Intelligence			
		Understanding of Self. E1	Regulation of Self. E2	Understanding of Others. E3	Regulating relationships E4
Theory of Emotional Development	Level 1 No inner growth T1	No conflict and little awareness of self.	Minimal self-regulation	Understanding of others is deregulated	Regulation of relationships is unpredictable at best. No resolution of external conflict
	Level 2 Little to no introspection T2	Some understanding of personal emotions	Lack of resolution, some regulation	Identifying with surface-level needs of others	Relationships revolve around cost-benefit
	Level 3 Strong vertical tension between what is and what ought to be T3	Knowledge of personal emotions, conflict is experienced as greater awareness of external issues develops	Working to resolve internal conflict and regulate emotions	Understanding the inner conflict of others	Understanding how inner conflict affects relationships/Regulating relationships involves either resolution of conflict-moving to level 4, or turning away from conflict leading to no resolution-moving to level 2
	Level 4 Personal Sense of mission T4	Less conflict. More self-direction	Self is driven by service toward others	Understanding the need of others is important to self-understanding	Regulating relationships with others revolves around solving problems and providing solutions for the greater good
	Level 5 Connection with humanity-depth of consciousness T5	Little to no inner conflict. Great depth of consciousness and personal awareness	Self is driven toward continued work with others. Self is less important than others	Understanding of others lays the foundation for work to be done	Self-sacrifice for the good of humanity. Connection with someone "larger than us."

Procedures

Data collection began once approval was obtained from the IRB, the district office of the school, and the supervisor and teachers of the schools where data were collected. The committee in charge of research for the school district required the

translation of all parent documents into Spanish for accessibility by parents of students who are primarily Spanish speakers. Packets of recruitment materials including flyers, permission forms, letters to parents explaining the study, and student assent forms were delivered to the teachers identified by district personnel as those who work primarily with students who are gifted. These teachers agreed to distribute to potential participants. Selected students were given the packet of recruitment materials. Gifted education coordinators at each school site selected students to participate. Site coordinators completed a form for each student with descriptors including the process of identification for program placement, general socio-economic status of the family, diversity, and cultural background.

Arrangements for data collection were made with participants and parents who contacted the researcher and were available for this study. Some students met with the researcher during the school day as necessary in an effort to address convenience for parents. Other students stayed after school and met with the researcher in the school library to complete sorting, talk with the researcher, and fill out the demographic form. Data collection continued until 28 students had participated in the study. Once data were collected, the final analyses were conducted. Follow up interviews for the exemplars of each factor were then attempted by phone or via email (Appendix C).

Participants were given a set of 41 statements, a form board, a demographic questionnaire, and a record form. The form board had cells arranged in a bell-like shape and marked from left to right as -5, -4, -3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Participants were instructed to place statements on the board according to the condition of instruction: What is most like you? Once the form had been filled and all the statements used,

participants were then asked to document the statement numbers and complete the demographic questionnaire (Appendix D).

Data Analysis

Data were entered into PQmethod (Schmolck, 2013) which is a computer program used for Q analysis. The statistical method portion of Q methodology included a correlation matrix of all sorts related to each other followed by analysis of the matrix. Rotation of factors was necessary. Finally, a *z*-score was calculated for each of the statements within each factor (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Comparison data including distinguishing statements, statements that distinguish one factor from the others, and consensus statements, statements that are similar across all factors are considered. The findings in a Q study involve multiple steps interpreting the meaning of the factors. The ordering of the statements within each factor according to the highest positive to the highest negative *z*-scores, the use of the comparison data across factors, the consideration of demographic data, field notes, teacher comments, and interview data all contribute to the understanding of the factors. I provide the details in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

In this chapter, I presented the data analysis and interpretation my findings. My purpose in this study was to discover the ways adolescents who are identified as gifted describe their emotional selves. I asked the following research questions:

1. In what ways do adolescents describe their emotional selves?
2. How do demographic characteristics assist in understanding the descriptions of self?
3. How do emotional intelligence and emotional development assist in understanding the descriptions of self?

In this chapter, I present the results from the factor analysis and the analysis for the first research question. I conclude with the response to the second and third research questions.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using PQMethod (Schmolck, 2013). The statistical portion of Q methodology is known as the method (Brown, 1980; Stephenson, 1953) and includes correlation of all sorts to each other, factor analysis of the correlation matrix, and the calculation of z-scores for each statement within each factor to be used for interpretation. Once data were entered into the program, various trials were examined. Initially, a centroid analysis was used (Brown, 1980; Stephenson, 1953), revealing one strong factor

with a second, likely weaker factor, with judgmental rotation providing little success in identifying other viewpoints. Subsequent to this observation, a principal component factor analysis and rotation using varimax for three factors and then four factors was explored. Using the unrotated factor matrix for three factors, attempts were made to rotate around two different factors (one and two, two and three, and one and three). The data were rotated using specific participants who seemed to be exemplars, individuals with high loads on one factor and low loads on all other factors, or outliers. It was then decided that the principal component analysis with a varimax rotation for the four factor solution was most efficient (Table 3), because it accounted for the most defining sorts had the least sorts confounded, achieving significance on more than one factor, and revealed another viewpoint that was important to interpret due to unique demographic details. Table 3 is the factor matrix with X indicating sorts that define each factor.

Table 3.

*Factor Matrix with an X Indicating a Defining Sort, and *an Exemplar Sort*

Participant (gender (M/F), grade, age)	1	2	3	4
1 (m, 6, 11)	.58X	.02	.42	-.03
6 (m, 6, 11)	.67X	-.04	-.02	-.44
7 (m, 7, 13)	.53X	.37	.36	.06
9 (m, 8, 13)	.74X	-.09	.42	.01
*10 (m, 6, 12)	.81X	-.02	-.04	-.02
13 (f, 6, 11)	.57X	-.04	.18	.04
14 (f, 6, 12)	.63X	.10	.22	.14
18 (f, 8, 13)	.46X	.32	-.05	-.18
*24 (f, 7, 13)	.72X	.07	-.16	.36
26 (f, 8, 13)	.60X	-.01	.24	.10
3 (m, 6, 11)	-.10	.64X	.09	.20
4 (m, 7, 13)	-.08	.61X	.22	.07
11 (f, 7, 13)	-.13	.49X	-.02	-.43
20 (f, 8, 14)	.23	.62X	-.02	-.10
23 (f, 7, 13)	.39	.45X	.12	.09
*28 (f, 8, 13)	.06	.72X	-.05	-.18

Participant (gender (M/F), grade, age)	1	2	3	4
2 (m, 6, 11)	.43	.18	.49X	-.13
5 (m, 6, 12)	.39	-.09	.54X	-.37
*8 (m, 8, 13)	.25	-.03	.72X	.04
16 (f, 7, 12)	.37	-.31	.54X	-.09
*17 (f, 6, 12)	.13	.20	.75X	.14
25 (f, 8, 13)	-.33	.26	.48X	-.22
27 (m, 6, 11)	.09	.06	.69X	.35
15 (f, 7, 13)	.01	-.09	.12	.75X
*21 (f, 8, 15)	.12	.06	-.07	.81X
12 (f, 6, 12)	.55	.47	.04	.13
22 (f, 7, 13)	-.03	.46	.65	-.09
19 (f, 6, 12)	.45	.44	.34	-.06
Percent of explained variance	20	12	14	8
Number of defining Sorts	10	6	7	2

Note: Defining sorts are determined to be at or higher than .44. Exemplar sorts are very high for one factor and very low for all other factors

Initially, I had some concern about the four-factor solution because of moderate correlation between factors one and three (Table 4). However, when analyzing the factor arrays, it became apparent that factor one and three were two distinct viewpoints.

Another concern was that only two significant sorts defined factor four. Brown (1980) recommends four or five sorts to define a factor; yet, the distinct and high factor loadings of these two sorts indicate a minority viewpoint.

Table 4.

Correlations between factor scores

	1	2	3	4
1	1.0000			
2	0.1175	1.0000		
3	0.4777	0.1371	1.0000	
4	0.1005	-0.0568	0.1058	1.0000

The formula for calculating significance for the relationship of a sort to a factor at $p < .01$ is $2.58(1/\sqrt{N})$, where N equals the number of statements in the Q set (Brown, 1980; McKeown & Thomas, 2013; Watts & Stenner, 2012). With 41 statements, the significance level was 0.33. When reviewing the factor matrix, the defining sorts for each factor was determined to be at 0.44 or above on only one factor. Defining sorts were used to calculate the z-score for each statement for each factor, which were necessary for the subsequent factor interpretation. With this four-factor solution, there were 10 sorts defining factor one, six sorts defining factor two, seven sorts defining factor three, and two sorts defining factor four. There were three sorts that were not used as defining sorts for any of the four factors as they were either confounded (showing significance for more than one factor) or not showing significance on any factor.

After factors had been extracted, statements were arranged in the array form used for collecting data according to the order of associated z-scores for each factor. For the purposes of analysis, factor arrays were printed on large pages. Data from other sources were added to each factor array in order to create data profiles. Other data sources included demographic information of the defining sorters, field notes, post-sort interviews, gifted coordinator forms, and distinguishing and consensus statements. Distinguishing statements are those statements that distinguish each factor from the others. Consensus statements are those statements with similar z-scores across all four factors. Once the data were arranged into factor profiles, the interpretation of individual factors could begin. This technique for organizing all data allows the researcher to

consider all the information related to each factor at the same time providing a holistic analysis of the viewpoint (Watts & Stenner, 2005, 2012).

Using the data profiles for each factor, I first concentrated on both the positive and negative ends of each array. I initially separated the most neutral statements from this group. I analyzed the ends of each array and manually sorted the statements into alike groups. I compared statement groupings to create each theme or conceptual understanding of what the data revealed. Qualitative data collected during the sorting interview and post-sort phone calls were considered as supporting detail to the themes. After several themes for each factor had been created, I considered the themes and the sense of the factor I had gained throughout the analysis to develop the overarching factor names. The factor names are: *Humanitarians*, *Politicians*, *Regulators*, and *Stabilizers*. Each viewpoint is presented here with a description of the adolescents whose sorts defined the factor, followed by a summary of viewpoint, and the data sources supporting the summary. After analysis of data, results were reviewed by my faculty adviser.

Research Question One: Interpretation of Data

The first research question is: In what ways do adolescents describe their emotional selves. In order to answer this question, the data interpretation is detailed here.

Humanitarians

The first factor is defined by the sorts of five females and five males ranging in age from 11 to 13 years old. Demographic information revealed that participants in the *Humanitarians* said that they enjoyed deep relationships with select people such as their parents or a few friends. Seven students were accepted into their program through testing into the 97th percentile, three were accepted through multi-criteria. When asked other

demographic questions, most said that they had many friends and that they would not necessarily characterize themselves as specifically shy or outgoing but somewhere in between. In addition, they get along well with people of all ages. However, in response to the demographic questionnaire, the *Humanitarians* felt that their emotions were not well understood by other people.

The *Humanitarians* viewpoint of emotionality is characterized by three themes that I revealed through the interpretation of all data sources and is described as altruism, understanding, and positivity. To summarize the ways that *Humanitarians* describe their sense of emotionality, the interpretation of the data demonstrates a strong sense of needing positive outcomes with a social justice perspective. They seek to understand those with whom they interact and having empathy is one way they understand others. They observe the world and seek to right wrongs and believe that honesty is an important part of conflict resolution. They prefer to talk about their feelings with others and encourage that same openness with those they know. They are quick to forgive because positivity in relationships is a key ingredient to their happiness and development. They have many friends and enjoy making other people happy. This viewpoint is called the *Humanitarians* because of their need to understand and care for others. They are driven to help as many people as possible succeed. Table 5 lists the most like and most unlike statements for *Humanitarians*. Higher array position and *z*-score determine most like statements and lower array position and *z*-score determine most unlike statements.

Table 5.

Most like and most unlike statements for Humanitarians

Statement number	Array position	z-scores
27 I am excited when I make others happy	5	2.072
31 It is important to me that I understand what others are going through before I judge them	5	1.625
36 I like solutions which benefit as many people as possible	4	1.370
40 I must step in when I see others being treated badly	4	1.217
28 I want to benefit humanity	3	1.200
2 I am motivated to do what others expect from me	3	1.082
34 I am friends with everyone	3	1.072
9 I am able to solve my own personal problems	2	0.783
14 When I have an issue with a friend, I try to fix it in a way that benefits both of us	2	0.759
32 I get along better with people who are motivated and want to learn	2	0.717
25 I want to resolve conflict	2	0.682
16 I am sometimes depressed by the suffering in the world	-2	-0.568
10 It is difficult for me to forgive others	-2	-0.611
12 I like to keep things the same	-2	-0.719
24 It is ok to say you agree with others in order to resolve conflict, even if it is not true	-2	-0.840
18 I like to talk about my feelings	-3	-1.145
3 I keep things to myself	-3	-1.352
6 My friends are affected by my anger	-3	-1.592
7 Other people's problems do not affect me	-4	-1.669
8 I do not even talk to my close friends about my feelings	-4	-1.804
4 When I am angry, I act out	-5	-1.883
1 I am not bothered by conflicts and issues	-5	-1.977

Note: Bold denotes distinguishing statements at $p < .05$. Higher array position and z-score indicate most like. Lower array position and z-score indicate most unlike.

The *Humanitarians* are adolescents motivated by altruistic projects and ideas that benefit others. Their goal is to help others succeed, which is more important for them than making money. Other people's problems bother them and they feel that they must step in to make the world a better place by helping to resolve conflicts. They are able to forgive others and work toward resolution. This viewpoint values actions that benefit others. The following list of data indicates the statement number, statement, array position and z-score of statements that support the theme of altruism in *Humanitarians*. Distinguishing statements are indicated in bold.

25	I want to resolve conflict	2	1.2
28	I want to benefit humanity	3	1.2
30	I am driven by the desire to help others succeed	1	.56
38	It is more important for me to help others than to make money	1	.42
6	My friends are affected by my anger,	-3	-1.59
7	Other people's problems do not affect me.	-4	-1.67
10	It is difficult for me to forgive others.	-2	-.61

Participants identified as exemplars responded to follow up questions. Sorter 24 is described by her teacher as being delightful, always helping others, and happy. She was quite talkative while she was sorting, and according to field notes enjoyed the fact that her stories and ideas would be helpful to the study. Her friendly demeanor and willingness to help others is an example of altruism.

Those who identify with the *Humanitarians* viewpoint focus on understanding. *Humanitarians* make judgments about others based on what they understand about their situation. They understand other people's feelings, envision themselves in the other person's place, and step in when they see others being treated unfairly. The following list of statements supports the theme of understanding others.

31	It is important to me that I understand what others are going through before I judge them	5	1.63
36	I like solutions which benefit as many people as possible	4	1.37
39	I understand how others feel by putting myself into their situation	1	.59
40	I must step in when I see others being treated badly	4	1.22
5	I find it hard to know what others are feeling	-1	-.54

I talked with Sorter 14 while she was sorting her statements and took field notes. She wondered why I was conducting this study and how it would help teachers and other students. She understood that some students in the class may be difficult for teachers to work with and appreciated that there might be ways to help a teacher to work better with a student and have better understanding of how that student thinks. Her focus on understanding of others and of the research study ties in with this theme.

Humanitarians like to maintain positivity. They set achievable goals, are friends with everyone, and enjoy making others happy. *Humanitarians* do not project their frustrations onto their peers and they willingly talk about problems and situations. They do not really like to talk about their feelings. Truth is important to the *Humanitarians*. They like for others to be happy with them and work to resolve situations in ways that are mutually beneficial. Conflict resolution involves truth and understanding for this group. They get along well with people who are motivated by the same goals they have. Sorter 26 is described by her teacher as a people pleaser who works hard in school. Sorter 7 is described by his teacher as really liking adult affirmation. This list of statements support the theme of positivity.

2	I am motivated to do what others expect from me	3	1.08
14	When I have an issue with a friend, I try to fix it in a way that benefits both of us	2	.76
27	I am excited when I make others happy	5	2.02
32	I get along better with people who are motivated to learn	2	.72
34	I am friends with everyone	3	1.07
3	I keep things to myself	-3	-1.35

4	When I am angry, I act out,	-5	-1.88
18	I like to talk about my feelings	-3	-1.15
24	It is ok to say you agree with others in order to resolve conflict, even if it is not true	-2	-.84

Sorter 10 is a male exemplar of the *Humanitarians*. He was very quiet during sorting. He did not interact with me unless absolutely necessary. His site coordinator describes him as sometimes being taken over by other personalities. When asked if people understand their emotions on the demographic survey, Sorter 24 responded “I guess so,” while Sorter 14 responded “I think so.” The boys in the *Humanitarians* are described by the site coordinators as shy, feelings hurt easily, don’t always get jokes, and slow to open up. Girls, on the other hand, were describe by site coordinators as in the *Humanitarians* are outgoing and highly social. The girls have many friends, work hard in school, and enjoy helping others.

The *Humanitarians* is focused on helping others, understanding others, and maintaining a positive atmosphere. Based on site coordinator descriptions of the students, there is a discrepancy between how girls are described and how boys are described by teachers. This discrepancy is apparent in prior research related to teacher perceptions (Siegle & Reis, 1998).

Politicians

Two males and four females defined the second factor named *Politicians*. Four of the *Politicians* were identified through multi-criteria. This group reported themselves to be outgoing. In response to the demographic question asking: Do you feel that other people understand your emotions? *Politicians* stated that they feel as though their

emotions are not understood by others. They tend to hang out with kids who are older than they are and do have deep relationships with others.

The *Politicians* viewpoint of emotionality is characterized by three themes revealed through the interpretation of all data sources which I described as independent, achieving homeostasis, and knowing about others. To summarize the ways that *Politicians* describe their sense of emotionality, the interpretation of the data demonstrates the strong sense of maintaining independence, while using knowledge to resolve conflict. They believe in treating others fairly and appreciate understanding of other people. They want to be involved in everyone’s business. It is important for them to be able to know about others and to avoid change. They are an independent group and choose to solve their own problems rather than depend on other people to help them. This viewpoint is labeled the *Politicians* because they are very interested in everybody’s business and want to be involved, while also keeping their own emotions and problems private. Table 6 lists the most like and most unlike statements for *Politicians*.

Table 6.

Most like and most unlike statements for Politicians

Statement number	Array position	z-scores
11 I get along better with some people rather than others because of their personality	5	2.228
3 I keep things to myself	5	1.998
40 I must step in when I see others being treated badly	4	1.353
9 I am able to solve my own personal problems	4	0.980
35 In order to build a friendship, I must be able to accept who	3	0.952

Statement number	Array position	<i>z</i> -scores
14 When I have an issue with a friend, I try to fix it in a way that benefits both of us	3	0.947
10 It is difficult for me to forgive others	3	0.902
23 I can tell how someone is feeling based on the way they react to certain things	2	0.868
2 I am motivated to do what others expect from me	2	0.833
26 I understand my emotions well	2	0.650
38 It is more important for me to help others than to make money	2	0.519
39 I understand how others feel by putting myself into their situation	-2	-0.421
16 I am sometimes depressed by the suffering in the world	-2	-0.499
20 I often have goals that are too difficult to achieve	-2	-0.620
18 I like to talk about my feelings	-2	-0.781
22 I judge other people's feelings by the way they treat others	-3	-0.796
41 If there is someone I do not get along with, I only talk with, I only talk with them about things we can agree about	-3	-1.092
6 My friends are affected by my anger	-3	-1.405
37 My feelings are not as important as helping others	-4	-1.469
33 I am sensitive to the needs of others and can usually anticipate what they are	-4	-1.593
34 I am friends with everyone	-5	-2.476
24 It is ok to say you agree with others in order to resolve conflict, even if it is not true	-5	-2.558

Note: Bold denotes distinguishing statements at $p < .05$. Higher array position and *z*-score indicate most like. Lower array position and *z*-score indicate most unlike

Politicians are fiercely independent. They keep their own problems to themselves and work to solve them alone. Because they keep their feelings in, they do not project anger or other emotions onto their peers, so it may be difficult to determine how they feel about situations. It is difficult for them to forgive others. This may be because they do not project their emotions outwardly, so when others project their frustrations toward them it may create

animosity. They are generally calm, cool, and level-headed. One exemplar, sorter #28, was described by her teacher as socially withdrawn with a small group of good friends. According to field notes, during sorting she questioned the viability of polarized gender on the demographic sheet, and wondered aloud what a person should put if they identified as neither male nor female. This indicates an awareness of complex social issues as well as the desire to be able to independently respond. This list of statements support the value for independence characterized by *Politicians*.

3	I keep things to myself	5	2.0
9	I am able to solve my own personal problems	4	.98
10	It is difficult for me to forgive others	3	.90
26	I understand my emotions well	2	.65
6	My friends are affected by my anger	-3	-1.41
18	I like to talk about my feelings	-2	-.78
34	I am friends with everyone	-5	-2.48

Politicians like to maintain the status quo. They are motivated by others' expectations as well as being able to keep things manageable. They set goals for themselves that are reasonable and achievable. They seek to accept others for who they are and to resolve conflict through compromise. Sorter 23 is described by the teacher as someone who "gets sucked into drama easily." This description supports the idea that they like to know what everyone else is doing, and the desire to help resolve other people's problems. The following statements indicate the desire for homeostasis.

2	I am motivated to do what others expect from me,	2	.83
11	I get along better with some people rather than others because of their personality	5	2.23
12	I like to keep things the same,	1	.41
14	When I have an issue with a friend, I try to fix it in a way that benefits both of us.	3	.95
35	In order to build a friendship, I must be able to accept who the other person is	3	.95
20	I often have goals that are too difficult to achieve.	-2	-.62

Politicians feel a great sense of justice based on knowledge and understanding. They will step in when others are being treated unfairly. Understanding of the experience of others guides what kind of judgments *Politicians* make. They feel that helping others is important, however, they believe that their feelings and their perspectives carry equal value compared to the feelings or perspectives of other people. *Politicians* are likely to step in if they feel that another student is being treated unfairly by a teacher, and believe that their opinion of activities and assignments carries as much value as those in charge. The following statements indicate the value of understanding and knowledge.

23	I can tell how someone is feeling based on the way they react to certain things	2	.87
38	It is more important for me to help others than to make money	2	.52
40	I must step in when I see others being treated badly	4	1.35
16	I am sometimes depressed by the suffering in the world.	-2	-.5
22	I judge other people's feelings by the way they treat others	-3	-.8
24	It is ok to say you agree with others in order to resolve a conflict, even if it is not true	-5	-2.56
33	I am sensitive to the needs of others and can usually anticipate what they are	-4	-1.59
37	My feelings are not as important as helping others	-4	-1.47
41	If there is someone I do not get along with, I can only talk with them about things we can agree about	-3	-1.09

Politicians feel misunderstood. When asked what else he would like to say, Sorter 4 stated "Very much don't like to talk about my feelings, very misunderstood. Very stubborn." Sorter 20 described the statements on his survey saying "A lot of them seemed to be about people understanding me and that's not how I am." *Politicians* enjoy deep relationships with a few close friends. They do not like change but seek to understand those around them.

Regulators

The *Regulators* is defined with three females and four males between the ages of 11 and 13 years old. Five are Caucasian, one is African American, and one is East Indian. The members of this group all feel that they connect best with others their own age. They have deep relationships and feel that other people understand their emotions. Five were identified in the top 3%, and two were identified through multi-criteria. *Regulators* have several friends. Some *Regulators* are shy, while others are outgoing once they get to know people.

The *Regulators* viewpoint of emotionality is characterized by three themes revealed through the interpretation of all data sources which I described as reconciliation, let's all get along, and lofty goals. To summarize the ways that *Regulators* describe their sense of emotionality, the interpretation of the data demonstrates the strong sense of needing resolution with keeping others happy and striving towards achievable goals. The *Regulators* was the only viewpoint that considered it to be acceptable to lie in order to resolve a conflict. Participants who identified with this viewpoint have a goal of conflict resolution. They seek peace. They do not trouble others with their problems and they like to make others happy when they work toward achieving goals or making good grades. While conflict resolution is a positive attribute and should be encouraged among all people, there are possible negative aspects to this viewpoint. *Regulators* are driven by the happiness of others at the possible expense of their own personal needs and goals. This viewpoint is called the *Regulators* because they are driven to regulate their environment and the relationships they have with other people. They want to maintain peace at all costs. Table 7 lists the most like and most unlike statements for *Regulators*.

Table 7.

Most like and most unlike statements for Regulators

Statement number	Array position	z-scores
27 I am excited when I make others happy	5	1.978
23 I can tell how someone is feeling based on the way they react to certain things	5	1.468
3 I keep things to myself	4	1.428
28 I want to benefit humanity	4	1.350
20 I often have goals that are too difficult to achieve	3	1.325
11 I get along better with some people rather than others because of their personality	3	1.227
25 I want to resolve conflict	3	1.132
24 It is ok to say you agree with others in order to resolve conflict, even if it is not true	2	1.044
36 I like solutions which benefit as many people as possible	2	0.970
2 I am motivated to do what others expect from me	2	0.894
13 My feelings toward others determines how I treat them	2	0.701
7 Other people's problems do not affect me	-2	-0.672
8 I do not even talk to my close friends about my feelings	-2	-0.725
16 I am sometimes depressed by the suffering in the world	-2	-0.737
39 I understand how others feel by putting myself into their situation	-2	-0.785
1 I am not bothered by conflicts and issues	-3	-0.910
10 It is difficult for me to forgive others	-3	-0.995
5 I find it hard to know what others are feeling	-3	-1.450
6 My friends are affected by my anger	-4	-1.682
18 I like to talk about my feelings	-4	-1.858
19 I manage my feelings by reading or painting or sketching	-5	-1.860
4 When I am angry, I act out	-5	-1.956

Note: Bold denotes distinguishing statements at $p < .05$. Higher array position and z -score indicate most like. Lower array position and z -score indicate most unlike.

Sorters who identify with the *Regulators* viewpoint focus on reconciliation through understanding of various perspectives and working to create a solution to benefit many people, however, they prioritize conflict avoidance over resolution. In contrast to the other viewpoints, *Regulators* believe that it is acceptable to lie in order to reach a resolution or to avoid conflict. Their decisions seek to benefit as many as possible. If they must interact with people they do not agree with, they avoid conflict with them by discussing topics they know will not create tension. They understand others' emotions and are bothered by conflict and the suffering of others. Sorter 8 is described by their teacher as "so smart and processes things differently. Doesn't connect with a lot of his peers. . . doesn't want to 'play the game' of school." This is an example of interacting with people as they must, and going through with school, even if they do not want to.

These statements indicate the desire for reconciliation.

25	I want to resolve conflict.	3	1.13
24	It is ok to say you agree with others in order to resolve conflict, even if it is not true	2	1.04
23	I can tell how someone is feeling based on the way they react to certain things.	5	1.47
36	I like solutions which benefit as many people as possible	2	.97
1	I am not bothered by conflicts and issues	-3	-.91
5	I find it hard to know what others are feeling	-3	-1.45
7	Other people's problems do not affect me	-2	-.67
19	I manage my feelings by reading or painting or sketching	-5	-1.86

While *Regulators* avoid conflict, they seek and maintain positive relationships. They do not like to talk about their feelings, with the possible exception of their close friends. If *Regulators* become angry, they do not project their feelings and frustrations on to their friends, and they are quick to forgive others. They see themselves as being friends with everyone, but

they do get along better with some rather than others because of their personality. Sorter 25 is described by their teacher as having difficulty choosing the right friends in order to avoid poor decision making. Sorter 2 said on the demographic survey that “It was hard to sort the ones that were least like me.” Sorter 16 is described by her teacher as “bubbly and happy except when something goes wrong and attention is drawn to her.” These responses are examples of students focusing on being positive and getting along. These statements support the theme of let’s all get along.

3	I keep things to myself	4	1.43
13	My feelings toward others determines how I treat them	2	.70
11	I get along better with some people rather than others because of their personality	3	1.23
4	When I am angry, I act out	-5	-1.96
6	My friends are affected by my anger	-4	-1.69
8	I do not even talk to my close friends about my feelings	-2	-.73
10	It is difficult for me to forgive others	-3	-1.0
18	I like to talk about my feelings	-4	-1.86

Regulators want to make people happy, which can result in stress or emphasis on perfection. Sorter 17 is described by his teacher as working for straight A’s, but having a meltdown when she received a bad grade. They want to find resolution, they seek peace and they want happiness. They are motivated by others’ expectations and have lofty goals of achieving such things as world peace or an end to poverty and famine. Their goal is to benefit humanity. Understanding of others is not a priority for them. Often, when they set goals, they find that the goals are bigger than they anticipated and are not able to achieve them on their own. Sorter 27 later said of his sort that he is “highly motivated by consequences. . . not by rewards.” This list of statements support the idea of having lofty goals.

2,	I am motivated by what others expect from me	2	.89
20,	I often have goals that are too difficult to achieve	3	1.33
27,	I am excited when I make others happy	5	1.98
28,	I want to benefit humanity	4	1.35

16, I am sometimes depressed by the suffering in the world	-2	-.74
39, I understand how others feel by putting myself into their situation	-2	-.79

Regulators see the world in various shades of grey. They accept that lying is sometimes necessary in order to resolve conflict. Sorter 17 stated on his survey “The answers that I put are more complex than yes or no.” This response supports the idea that a situation may be complicated and therefore be different for various individuals. The primary focus for *Regulators* is to resolve conflict and maintain peace. Conflict resolution is more important than truth. *Regulators* are happy when the people around them are getting along. If family conflict arise, it may create situations in which these adolescents withdraw or resort to negative behavior. *Regulators* set very high goals for themselves and do not always achieve them, which can be a source of stress.

Stabilizers

The *Stabilizer* viewpoint of emotionality is comprised of two Caucasian females aged 13 and 15 years old. They describe themselves as not having many friends, although they do have deep relationships. They feel that some people may understand their emotions, but not many. They seek connections with those who are older and younger than they are. They are outgoing with their friends, but may be shy in situations where they don’t know people. Even though both participants are Caucasian, their ethnicity is a minority in the school they currently attend. They attend one of the most impoverished schools in the district. Both students were from school 2 (See Table 1). These details might contribute to their description of emotionality.

The *Stabilizers* viewpoint of emotionality is characterized by three themes revealed through interpretation of all data sources which I described as transparency of

emotion, awareness of emotion in others, and doubt. To summarize the ways that *Stabilizers* describe their sense of emotionality, the interpretation of the data demonstrates a transparency of emotions. Their emotions are close to the surface and they are not afraid to express them. They see the way that they affect others with their anger, but do not try to change, nor do they try to resolve conflict. The factor name comes from the idea that even though their emotions seem to simmer just below the surface, they are not driven to change. They know that they are angry, that their emotions affect others, and they perceive the emotions of others, but work to stabilize as they are. Table 8 lists the most like and most unlike statements for *Stabilizers*.

Table 8.

Most like and most unlike statements for Stabilizers

Statement number	Array position	z-scores
6 My friends are affected by my anger	5	2.281
13 My feelings toward others determines how I treat them	5	1.755
4 When I am angry, I act out	4	1.632
17 I sometimes ask myself if what I am feeling is normal	4	1.509
22 I judge other people's feelings by the way they treat others	3	1.176
23 I can tell how someone is feeling based on the way they react to certain things	3	0.860
33 I am sensitive to the needs of others and can usually anticipate what they are	3	0.842
32 I get along better with people who are motivated and want to learn	2	0.719
27 I am excited when I make others happy	2	0.649
14 When I have an issue with a friend, I try to fix it in a way that benefits both of us	2	0.597

Statement number	Array position	z-scores
21 I am motivated by rewards such as prizes or money	2	0.579
3 I keep things to myself	-2	-0.526
30 I am driven by the desire to help others succeed	-2	-0.719
10 It is difficult for me to forgive others	-2	-0.772
34 I am friends with everyone	-2	-0.790
19 I manage my feelings by reading or painting or sketching	-3	-0.965
5 I find it hard to know what others are feeling	-3	-1.176
24 It is ok to say you agree with others in order to resolve conflict, even if it is not true	-3	-1.562
9 I am able to solve my own personal problems	-4	-1.632
26 I understand my emotions well	-4	-1.895
8 I do not even talk to my close friends about my feelings	-5	-1.895
1 I am not bothered by conflicts and issues	-5	-2.018

Note: Bold denotes distinguishing statements at $p < .05$. Higher array position and z-score indicate most like. Lower array position and z-score indicate most unlike.

Even though they may be quick to become angry, *Stabilizers* are not interested in resolution. They understand the emotions of others and conflict bothers them. They are aware of the effect their emotions have on other people, however, they do not feel that they understand their own emotions nor do they feel that they are able to solve their own personal problems. *Stabilizers* are not concerned with altruistic pursuits such as benefitting humanity or helping others.

Stabilizers struggle with keeping their emotions in check. They do not hide it when they are angry, or frustrated about various situations. They do what they can to avoid conflict. *Stabilizers* are likely to be on their best behavior when required, but are genuine in their expression of feelings. They are able to read other people's emotions well and are selective with their friends. Sometimes they vent to their friends, or may project their frustrations with

others on those they love. These statements indicate the transparency *Stabilizers* have with their emotions.

4	When I am angry, I act out	4	1.63
6	My friends are affected by my anger	5	2.28
1	I am not bothered by conflicts and issues	-5	-2.02
5	I find it hard to know what others are feeling	-3	-1.18
10	It is difficult for me to forgive others	-2	-.77
34	I am friends with everyone.	-2	-.79

Stabilizers are able to read the emotions of others well. They are observant and make judgments about other people based on their behavior toward the people around them. Because they are good at reading people, they are able to anticipate needs and understand feelings. They work to resolve conflict in mutually beneficial ways. While they do avoid conflict, they are mostly focused on conflict in their immediate environment and are not focused on situations beyond their immediate zone of influence. These statements indicate the awareness of needs and desires of others.

14	When I have an issue with a friend, I try to fix it in a way that benefits both of us	2	.6
22	I judge other people's feelings by the way they treat others	3	1.18
23	I can tell how someone is feeling based on the way they react to certain things	3	.86
33	I am sensitive to the needs of others and can usually anticipate what they are	3	.84
24	It is ok to say you agree with others in order to resolve a conflict, even if it is not true.	-3	-.56

Research related to adolescent behavior describes adolescents as being emotionally adrift (Lesko, 2011). *Stabilizers* feel that they do not understand their own emotions well and wonder if their feelings are normal. Even though they are able to read the emotions and understand the feelings of others. They feel that they are unable to solve personal problems on their own. They like to talk about their feelings, and like to talk through situations. Their

treatment of others is based on how they feel about other people. These statements demonstrate doubt and uncertainty in the *Stabilizers*.

13	My feelings toward others determines how I treat them	5	1.76
17	I sometimes ask myself if what I am feeling is normal	4	1.51
3	I keep things to myself	-2	-.53
8	I do not even talk to my close friends about my feelings	-5	-1.9
9	I am able to solve my own personal problems	-4	-1.63
19	I manage my feelings by reading, or painting, or sketching.	-2	.97
26	I understand my emotions well	-4	-1.9

Stabilizers tend to be students who are not highly active socially. They are able to read other's emotions while feeling a little bit uncomfortable in their own skin. *Stabilizers* are the friends who are able to be supportive of others even without knowing all the details of a situation. They are loyal to their friends and their friendships are strong since they are selective with their friendships. They may react to various situations and other people in a negative way and do not seek immediate resolution to conflict.

Research Question 2: Demographic Patterns

The second research question was: In what ways do demographic characteristics inform the understanding of the descriptions of self? Table 9 assists in comparing these descriptors across the four types of descriptors of emotionality.

Table 9.

Demographics of the Emotionality Divided by Factor

		Humanitarians	Politicians	Regulators	Stabilizers
Gender	Male	5/10	2/10	4/10	0
	Female	5/18	4/18	3/18	2/18
Identification Process	Top 3%	7	1	5	2
	Multi-Criteria	3	4	2	0
Socio-Economic Status	High-Moderate	9	5	7	0
	Low	1	1	0	2
Ethnicity		4 Caucasian 2 Hispanic 2 Asian 2 Mixed	4 Caucasian 1 Hispanic 1 Mixed	5 Caucasian 1 African American 1 East Indian	2 Caucasian

Based on the demographic information provided by the participants and their teachers, there are no conclusions that can be drawn, however, there are interesting observations. The *Humanitarians* in this study are predominantly identified in the top 3% using a nationally normed test. There was minimal information available for the students in *Stabilizers*, however, these sorters are older than other participants and portray anger to a greater extent than the other participants. In addition, the *Stabilizers* both came from school 4 (See Table 1) where all the students are eligible for free or reduced lunches and few students are able to pass the state tests at the end of each year. This could be a factor leading to increased frustration.

Research Question 3: Theoretical Analysis

The third research question was: How do emotional intelligence and emotional development assist in understanding the descriptions of self? This study was framed by the work of Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso and their theory of Emotional Intelligence (Mayer et al., 2000) and the work of Dabrowski and his theory of Emotional Development (Dabrowski, 1966). In Chapter 3 I provided a description for how I combined each of the areas of EI with the levels of emotional development to design statements for the Q set that accommodated the growth and development within each theory. For each of the four perspectives, there is a figure that depicts the theoretical coding of the categories of emotionality as conceptualized in the Q set with the combination of the two theories. Emotional development has five levels and EI has four branches.

Analysis of the theoretical depiction of the arrangement of statements for the *Humanitarians* yielded interesting results. Humanitarians are highly focused on interpersonal relationships as identified by several statements in emotional intelligence four scored positively. There is some conflict regarding emotional development as noted by the development level three statements scored positively, but *Humanitarians* tend to focus on solutions that benefit the greater good, as noted by the many development level four statements scoring positively. The majority of the development level one and two statements scored negatively. *Humanitarians* tend to have a higher level of emotionality. This focus on others and the best solution for most supports the altruistic theme demonstrated by these adolescents. The arrangement of statements for *Humanitarians* is shown in Figure one.

										T3-E4																							
										T1-E3		T3-E3		T3-E3																			
										T3-E3		T2-E4		T5-E1																			
										T3-E4		T4-E2		T4-E1		T5-E2		T3-E4															
										T2-E2		T2-E4		T2-E3		T2-E4		T4-E3		T4-E3		T4-E4											
T1-E1	T2-E1	T1-E2	T2-E2	T3-E2	T4-E3	T4-E3	T3-E4	T1-E2	T5-E4	T3-E4																							
T1-E4	T2-E4	T3-E2	T3-E1	T3-E1	T4-E4	T5-E3	T3-E1	T4-E4	T4-E4	T4-E2																							
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5																							
Most unlike me										Most like me																							

Figure 1.
Theoretical depiction of the *Humanitarians*.
T-levels 1 through 5. E branches 1 through 4.

Analysis of the theoretical depiction of the arrangement of statements for the *Politicians* also yields interesting results. It is apparent that there is inner conflict with this group as they have several statements from emotional development in levels two, three, and four that scored positively. This is a reflection of the inner conflict people experience when they predominantly function in level three. Their emotional intelligence focus is on their relationships with other people. There are several emotional intelligence items from branches three and four that scored positively. *Politicians* have a moderate level of emotionality. They sometimes choose to regress, but do sometimes choose to move toward higher levels. Figure 2 depicts the theoretical arrangement of statements for *Politicians*.

					T4-E2					
				T3-E2	T5-E1	T2-E4				
				T2-E1	T3-E4	T2-E4				
			T3-E2	T4-E4	T1-E4	T4-E3	T5-E3			
		T2-E2	T3-E4	T1-E3	T4-E1	T4-E3	T4-E1	T2-E2		
T3-E4	T3-E3	T3-E4	T3-E1	T4-E3	T4-E2	T3-E4	T1-E4	T3-E4	T3-E1	T1-E2
T4-E4	T4-E2	T3-E3	T5-E3	T2-E4	T1-E1	T2-E2	T3-E3	T4-E4	T5-E4	T2-E3
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Most unlike me					Most like me					

Figure 2.
Theoretical depiction of Politicians.
T-levels 1 through 5. E branches 1 through 4.

Analysis of the factor array for *Regulators* indicates a strong trend toward regulation of self, and regulation of others. This is evidenced by several items from emotional development branches two and four that scored positively. Regarding emotional development, statements that scored positively range from one through five. With varied levels scoring highly positive. This is an indication of internal conflict experienced by these adolescents. *Regulators* tend to resolve conflict with a move to developmental level two which does not indicate emotional growth from conflict, but focuses on resolution and perhaps ignoring of an issue. *Regulators* have a moderate level of emotionality that tends to regress to lower levels. Figure three depicts the theoretical arrangement of statements for *Regulators*.

					T2-E2					
				T4-E4	T3-E3	T3-E2				
			T3-E4	T4-E3	T3-E4					
		T5-E3	T5-E2	T3-E1	T4-E4	T2-E4				
	T1-E3	T3-E1	T3-E2	T2-E4	T4-E3	T1-E4	T3-E4			
T1-E4	T3-E2	T2-E2	T1-E1	T4-E1	T5-E4	T3-E3	T4-E4	T2-E3	T4-E4	T3-E3
T5-E1	T2-E2	T1-E1	T2-E4	T4-E1	T4-E3	T3-E4	T3-E4	T3-E2	T1-E2	T4-E2
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Most unlike me								Most like me		

Figure 3.
Theoretical depiction of *Regulators*.
T-levels 1 through 5. E branches 1 through 4.

Analysis of the theoretical depiction of the factor array tells us that *Stabilizers* experience much inner conflict. This is noted by several statements from emotional development level three. *Stabilizers* have a high understanding of others around them, as noted by several emotional intelligence branch three statements scoring positively, however, they choose not to spend time regulating those relationships as noted by only a few emotional intelligence level four statements. They have a low understanding of self, as noted by the emotional intelligence branch one statements scoring negatively. *Stabilizers* have a lower level of emotionality. They do not move toward growth and tend to recycle conflict. Figure four depicts the theoretical arrangement of statements for *Stabilizers*.

					T4-E1					
				T3-E1	T2-E3	T3-E4				
			T2-E2	T3-E2	T4-E4					
		T4-E4	T5-E4	T2-E4	T3-E2	T2-E4				
	T3-E4	T2-E2	T4-E4	T5-E2	T3-E4	T3-E4	T3-E3			
T1-E1	T4-E1	T1-E3	T3-E2	T5-E3	T4-E3	T3-E4	T4-E2	T3-E3	T3-E2	T2-E4
T2-E1	T3-E1	T5-E1	T1-E2	T4-E3	T4-E4	T1-E4	T4-E3	T3-E3	T4-E4	T2-E2
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Most unlike me									Most like me	

Figure 4.
Theoretical depiction of *Stabilizers*.
T-levels 1 through 5. E branches 1 through 4.

Conclusion

Chapter four discussed the results and analysis of the study findings. In response to the question about ways adolescents describe their emotional selves, four emotionality types were identified. Those types are named *Humanitarians*, *Politicians*, *Regulators*, and *Stabilizers*. Demographic characteristics were considered and interesting trends related to identification process and socio-economic status were observed. The emotionality types were analyzed using the theory of emotionality which is a combination of the theories of emotional intelligence and emotional development. Implications and applications for these results are discussed in chapter five.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to discover the ways adolescents who are identified as gifted describe their emotional selves. Each participant in this study was identified as gifted through criteria established by their school district. This chapter presents a summary of the findings and describes the conclusions based on these findings. Finally, a discussion of the implications of the conclusions regarding existing literature is offered for contributions to educational practice, theory, and research.

This study adds to the body of literature related to gifted education. This particular study allowed gifted adolescents the opportunity to share their voice and provides a perspective that is not often available. Whereas other studies refer to parent perspective or teacher perspective when discussing emotional development, the findings here offer the perspective of the adolescent.

Summary of Findings

The results of this study were interpreted as four types of emotionality that have been labeled as the *Humanitarians*, *Politicians*, *Regulators*, and *Stabilizers*.

Humanitarians care about other people. They are young and positive about the world.

Humanitarians work for the good of society. They do not feel as though others understand them, but they are skilled at managing their relationships with others. They may be quiet, but they are outgoing and comfortable interacting with others.

Humanitarians are friends with everyone.

The participants in this study who defined *Humanitarians* included individuals from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and attended schools including students from a wide range of socio-economic situations.

Politicians know everything that is going on around them. They listen to conversations and watch how others interact. *Politicians* keep their feelings to themselves and may hold grudges. *Politicians* will stand up for those they feel are oppressed. They are not friends with everyone and like to maintain their independence. *Politicians* do not like change but prefer to maintain homeostasis. *Politicians* tended to be identified for gifted programs through a multi-criteria process. These participants attend schools with varied socio-economic situations.

Regulators avoid conflict. They focus on regulating their own emotions and regulating their relationships with others. They want everyone around them to be happy and get along. *Regulators* want world peace and experience stress when their environment is in turmoil or when negative attention is focused on them. Participants that represent the *Regulators* attend a school with high socio-economic status and include a represent a variety of ethnicities.

Stabilizers have a transparency to their emotions. Everyone around them knows how they feel. They are aware that their displays of anger and other emotions affect their friends, but they are not motivated to change. *Stabilizers* do not have a lot of self-understanding and do not manage their feelings well. They wonder if how they feel is normal, and they are not able to solve their own problems. The participants representing this viewpoint were identified through testing into the top 3% and attended a school with a high rate of poverty.

Conclusions

Upon reviewing the findings of this study several conclusions can be made. The major conclusion is that there are four emotionality types among young adolescents.

Those types are the *Humanitarians*, *Politicians*, *Regulators*, and *Stabilizers*.

Humanitarians work for the betterment of those around them. They have a strong need for social justice and they are motivated by solutions that create success for many. Their emotionality type is highly developed (Dabrowski, 1966; Mayer et al., 2000). Although they all hold the same themes, site coordinator descriptions indicated that male *Humanitarians* are shy and sensitive while female *Humanitarians* are outgoing. This is an interesting conclusion in light of literature indicating discrepancies in teacher perceptions (Richards et al., 2003).

Politicians spend much of their day learning about what is going on in everybody else's life, even though they do not share their emotions and feelings with others. They are calm, cool, and level-headed as they seek out information. This calm façade may be interpreted as maturity. This emotionality type is developing as they (Dabrowski, 1966) have a strong sense of who they are, but when making decisions related to interpersonal relationships oscillate between advanced development or regressing toward no conflict (Dabrowski, 1966; Mayer et al., 2000) Their leadership abilities should be encouraged and nurtured (Whitehead, 2009).

Regulators are highly focused on avoiding conflict. They are willing to take extreme measures to ensure resolution (Chung & Asher, 1996). Their emotionality is developing (Dabrowski, 1966) and concentrates on regulation of relationships with others (Gross & John, 2003; Mayer et al., 2000).

Stabilizers experience emotionality at a surface level (Dabrowski, 1966; Mayer et al., 2000). Higher level development has not occurred and there is no interest in developing emotionality. When they are angry, people around them are aware and feel the effects. Awareness of others is considered to be an advanced stage of emotional intelligence (Mayer et al., 2000). The *Stabilizers* are highly aware of the emotions of others, but they are unsure of their own emotionality, which contradicts current understanding in that self-awareness and regulation come before awareness of others (Mayer et al., 2000).

There were no specific conclusions that could be drawn from demographic data. However, there were interesting observations. *Humanitarians* and *Regulators* in this study were predominantly identified for program placement in the top 3%. *Politicians* were predominantly identified using the multi-criteria process. There were no clear gender distinctions. Because participants are not randomly sampled, it is not possible to generalize these observations or trends to all adolescents who are gifted.

Analysis through the lens of theory showed that *Humanitarians* are at a high level of emotionality in terms of emotional development and emotional intelligence (Dabrowski, 1966; Mayer et al., 2000). These students are similar to the autonomous gifted learners identified by Betts and Neihart (1988). They understand the needs of others and work to regulate their relationships. *Politicians* experience emotional conflict, and they focus on understanding others and regulating relationships. These students may be most like the challenging gifted learners (Betts & Neihart, 1988). *Regulators* experience emotional conflict. They focus on regulating relationships and their own emotions. These individuals are likely to be the underground gifted learners (Betts &

Neihart, 1988). *Stabilizers* are at the lowest level of emotionality. They do not understand their own emotions, but they do understand the emotions of others. These students are similar to the drop out gifted learners identified by Betts and Neihart (1988). Regulation of interactions with other people occurs after others have felt the effects of their emotions.

Implications

This section presents the implications for the practice of working with adolescents who are gifted. Then, interesting implications for using a theory of emotionality is presented followed by suggestions for further research. The conclusions of this study allow for teachers, parents, and others who work with young adolescents who are gifted to have a deeper understanding of the emotional development and the emotional intelligence for those students. Understanding of each type helps to identify characteristics of their students in order to be more effective when working with them. For example, if a student identifies with the *Stabilizers*, they may feel insecure about themselves and their abilities even while being able to understand the feelings and needs of others around them. Another student may identify with the *Humanitarians* and be highly motivated by helping others around them to succeed, but not be willing to open up and share their own struggles. Each of these types presents both positive and negative aspects that ought to be encouraged and managed respectively.

Educational Practice

It is important to understand the emotionality of adolescents identified as gifted (Hébert & Kent, 2000; Piechowski, 1986). The four types analyzed in this study provide

a framework that teachers, counselors, and parents can use to better meet the emotional needs of these students.

Humanitarians will thrive on assignments and projects that help to promote truth and justice. Because of their focus on justice, it may be necessary to be aware of the trend for *Humanitarians* to sacrifice their own goals in order to maintain peace in their classroom or in their home. To honor their need for truth, professionals will do well if they are honest and present as many perspectives on issues as possible (Kahne & Westheimer, 2003). Opportunities for community engagement may facilitate emotional development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Hinck & Brandell, 1999; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010)

Politicians value their independence and want to know more about others. Adults may help them to learn about others through bibliotherapy (Hébert & Furner, 1997; Hébert & Kent, 2000). Presenting situations that allow for the development of self-regulation and autonomy such as rule-making (Ryan & Deci, 2006) or involvement in organizations that develop leadership skills such as Model United Nations or student council will like be beneficial (Goleman, 2003; Whitehead, 2009).

Regulators are interested in getting along, resolving conflict, and reaching for lofty goals. The primary motivation is avoidance or resolution of conflict. Therefore, when working with *Regulators*, a focus on developing strategies to appropriately resolve conflict (Moore, 2014). Professionals may focus on helping these students to set goals and develop executive function strategies (Anderson, 2002).

Stabilizers are sensitive to the needs and emotions of others, they are motivated by rewards, and they experience anger and self-doubt. *Stabilizers* will benefit from

involvement in programs allowing them to express a variety of emotions such as theater (Larson & Brown, 2007). A component of their education may include self-compassion (Neff, 2003). Helping *Stabilizers* understand themselves and establish their own goals ought to be a high priority for professionals working with these students (Dweck, 1991). *Stabilizers* display all their emotions, especially anger. Unlike the *Politicians*, *Stabilizers* like to talk about their emotions. Opportunities to talk with others and develop healthy communication skills will benefit *Stabilizers*. Their abilities to understand the emotions of others, coupled with their openness has the potential to create situations where others feel safe (Chandra & Minkovitz, 2007).

Theory

Emotionality was a unique definition of the combination of emotional intelligence (Mayer et al., 2000), and emotional development (Dabrowski, 1966). Using emotionality as a framework for this research revealed the need to better understand the nuances of the levels of emotional development and branches of EI. For example, I believe that the emotionality theory combination neglected the deeper meanings in each of the emotional development levels.

A theoretical innovation of this study was the use of emotionality as the combination of emotional intelligence (Mayer et al., 2000) integrated with emotional development (Dabrowski, 1966). The conclusion that early adolescents who are gifted might concentrate on the emotional needs and awareness of others rather than self-knowledge was evident for *Humanitarians* and *Regulators*, although to a different extent and or different reasons. *Humanitarians* work to meet the needs of others, while

Regulators work to achieve balance. This conclusion may offer emotionality as a new theory for understanding young adolescents who are gifted.

Use of Q methodology allows for the viewpoints to be holistically analyzed and adds a fresh description to the current theory related to emotional development. Because of the methodology, it was possible to allow adolescents to describe their own emotionality and for the data to reveal the unique viewpoints of the participants (Thompson & Subotnik, 2010).

Future Research

This study discovered four types of emotionality as described by adolescents who are gifted. The resulting viewpoints and theoretical structure provide a stepping stone for further research into the understanding of emotionality among learners. More research based on this study and how the statements define emotionality is needed.

Because of the difficulty in obtaining data from low-income schools, conclusions cannot be made related to students attending high poverty schools or at risk populations. It is interesting that the two who defined *Stabilizers* were attending a high poverty school. Perhaps the sensitivity of students identified and participating in the gifted program exacerbates the difficulties expressed by these adolescents. It may be possible that they feel more anger because they are frustrated with where they are in the system (Betts & Neihart, 1988). They could feel as if they are being held back and not allowed to flourish. They may feel less inclined toward humanitarianism simply because they have physical needs of their own that are not being met. Additionally, these students are two white girls in a school with high populations of ethnic minorities. In this situation, these girls are the minority at their school. The complexities of this viewpoint are difficult to

address without more knowledge. Further research specifically focusing on high poverty schools would provide a deeper understanding of the frustrations experienced by students who are gifted in that setting.

This study specifically focused on students who are gifted. Each participant was identified using criteria set by the state of residence. Future research using this theoretical model could include non-gifted populations and non-urban populations.

Other directions for future research may include an inclusion of teacher perspectives. The differences noted from teachers descriptions of males and females in *Humanitarians* leads one to including teachers' beliefs about student emotionality in comparison to students' viewpoints. Boys do not respond in the same ways that girls do. They do not respond well to face to face interactions, but rather to side by side interactions (Hébert, 2017).

Humanitarians range in age from 11 to 13 years old. *Stabilizers* were 13 and 15 years old. It is noteworthy that the *Humanitarians* are young. Even at this young age their focus and motivation is for the betterment of others. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that there is frustration seen with adolescents who are older in the *Stabilizers*. Further investigation into these phenomena may provide deeper understanding of the emotionality of these two viewpoints.

It is unknown whether participants in this study have received any instruction related to emotional development. However, directions of future research could include studies in which populations of students are pre-tested, given instruction, and then post-tested at a specified time later. This could determine both the effectiveness of instruction

for emotional development and whether the concourse and results would change over time as is suggested by the emotional development model (Dabrowski, 1966).

Concluding Comments

Challenges to research with adolescents include finding a district personnel who are willing to work with researchers to learn from studies conducted in their schools. I was fortunate in my choice of districts that it employed professionals who were very interested in connecting research with practice. Use of minors in research is particularly challenging as it is important that any research conducted does not cause trauma or harm. Additionally, using Q methodology with minors was a positive experience for both the students and me.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Thursday, December 08, 2016
IRB Application No: ED16127
Proposal Title: Perceptions of the Emotional Self for Adolescents Who Are Gifted

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 12/7/2017

Principal Investigator(s):

Elizabeth Anne Albright 702 S. Orchard St. Stillwater, OK 74074	Diane Montgomery 424 Willard Stillwater, OK 74078
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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of the research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Dawnett Watkins 219 Scott Hall (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Hugh Crethar, Chair
Institutional Review Board

Appendix B-Q Set

Number	Statement	z-scores by factor				TPD/EI
		1	2	3	4	
1	I am not bothered by conflicts and issues	-1.98	0.16	-0.91	-2.02	T1E1
2	I am motivated to do what others expect from me	1.08	0.83	0.89	0.51	T1E2
3	I keep things to myself	-1.35	2.00	1.43	-0.53	T1E2
4	When I am angry, I act out	-1.88	0.09	-1.96	1.63	T1E4
5	I find it hard to know what others are feeling	-0.54	-0.12	-1.45	-1.18	T1E3
6	My friends are affected by my anger	-1.59	-1.40	-1.68	2.28	T2E2
7	Other people's problems do not affect me	-1.67	-0.06	-0.67	0.00	T2E4
8	I do not even talk to my close friends about my feelings	-1.80	-0.18	-0.72	-1.90	T2E1
9	I am able to solve my own personal problems	0.78	0.98	0.14	-1.63	T3E1
10	It is difficult for me to forgive others	-0.61	0.90	-0.99	-0.77	T2E2
11	I get along better with some people rather than others because of their personality	-0.39	2.23	1.23	-0.07	T2E4
12	I like to keep things the same	-0.72	0.41	-0.30	-0.33	T2E2
13	My feelings toward others determines how I treat them	0.26	0.23	0.70	1.75	T2E4
14	When I have an issue with a friend, I try to fix it in a way that benefits both of us	0.76	0.95	0.39	0.60	T3E4
15	I think about my feelings for a long time before I express them	-0.27	0.09	-0.35	-0.07	T4E1
16	I am sometimes depressed by the suffering in the world	-0.57	-0.50	-0.74	-0.46	T3E1
17	I sometimes ask myself if what I am feeling is normal	-0.34	-0.35	0.35	1.51	T3E2
18	I like to talk about my feelings	-1.14	-0.78	-1.86	0.39	T3E2
19	I manage my feelings by reading or painting or sketching	0.42	0.01	-1.86	-0.97	T5E1
20	I often have goals that are too difficult to achieve	-0.40	-0.62	1.33	0.00	T3E2
21	I am motivated by rewards such as prizes or money	0.06	0.31	0.14	0.58	T2E4
22	I judge other people's feelings by the way they treat others	-0.41	-0.80	0.44	1.18	T3E3

23	I can tell how someone is feeling based on the way they react to certain things	0.42	0.87	1.47	0.86	T3E3
24	It is ok to say you agree with others in order to resolve conflict, even if it is not true	-0.84	-2.56	1.04	-1.56	T2E4
25	I want to resolve conflict	0.68	0.06	1.13	0.46	T3E4
26	I understand my emotions well	0.21	0.65	-0.35	-1.90	T4E1
27	I am excited when I make others happy	2.07	0.09	1.98	0.65	T4E2
28	I want to benefit humanity	1.20	-0.17	1.35	-0.19	T4E4
29	How I interact with others says a lot about who I am	0.47	0.33	-0.24	0.14	T4E3
30	I am driven by the desire to help others succeed	0.57	-0.02	-0.37	-0.72	T4E3
31	It is important to me that I understand what others are going through before I judge them	1.63	0.35	-0.47	0.26	T3E4
32	I get along better with people who are motivated and want to learn	0.72	0.32	0.41	0.72	T4E3
33	I am sensitive to the needs of others and can usually anticipate what they are	-0.01	-1.59	-0.25	0.84	T3E3
34	I am friends with everyone	1.07	-2.48	0.40	-0.79	T4E4
35	In order to build a friendship, I must be able to accept who the other person is	0.36	0.95	-0.58	0.26	T4E4
36	I like solutions which benefit as many people as possible	1.37	-0.07	0.97	0.33	T4E4
37	My feelings are not as important as helping others	0.27	-1.47	0.32	-0.12	T4E3
38	It is more important for me to help others than to make money	0.42	0.52	-0.38	0.14	T5E2
39	I understand how others feel by putting myself into their situation	0.59	-0.42	-0.78	-0.14	T5E3
40	I must step in when I see others being treated badly	1.22	1.35	0.31	-0.26	T5E4
41	If there is someone I do not get along with, I only talk with them about things we can agree about	-0.10	-1.09	0.50	0.51	T3E4

Note: T is emotional development level, E is emotional intelligence branch.

Appendix C

Demographic Survey

1. What is your gender (check one)? Female Male
2. What is your age? _____ years old
3. What grade are you currently enrolled in? _____
4. What types of classes and activities have you participated in during your school career?
 - Band
 - Choir
 - Orchestra
 - Special Education
 - Debate
 - Drama/Theater
 - Enrichment Program Options (Gifted classes)
 - Sports (What sport? _____)
 - Academic Clubs
 - Advanced or accelerated classes (Advanced Placement)
 - Cheerleading/Pom Squad
 - Dance
 - Other school activities, please specify:

5. Please check the item that best describes your ethnicity. Check all that apply.
 - African American
 - Hispanic/Latino(a)
 - White
 - Asian American
 - American Indian
 - Other, please specify: _____
6. What activities do you do with your friends?
7. How often do you hang out with friends outside of school?
8. Would you say you are shy or outgoing?
9. Would you say that you have many friends?
10. Do you tend to have deep relationships?

11. Do you connect better with people your own age, or people of other ages (older/younger)?

12. Do you feel that other people understand your emotions?

13. What else can you say about the items that you sorted?

14. Sometimes, it is helpful for the researcher to follow-up with participants in a study.

Would you be willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview? If so, please provide an alias _____ and a way to contact you.

_____. (Contact

information will be destroyed once the study is complete.)

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix D

Post-Sort Interview Protocol

Hello, my name is Elizabeth. I came to your school and you sorted some statements for me. I was wondering if I could speak with you about that for about 10 minutes.

I have a few ideas about the statements that you sorted for me and I was wondering if you would tell me how you felt about those statements.

They are: (Insert statements from highest and lowest z -scores)

VITA

Elizabeth Anne Albright

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: PERCEPTIONS OF THE EMOTIONAL SELF FOR ADOLESCENTS WHO ARE GIFTED

Major Field: Educational Psychology

Biographical:

Education: Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July 2017. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Educational Psychology at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in 2012. Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Music Education in Vocal Music Education at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in 2001.

Experience: Presently, program assistant and lecturer at Oklahoma State University; Teacher at Covenant Community School; Choir director at Salem Lutheran Church. Previously, Vocal Coach and Music Director for Stillwater Children's Theatre from 2005 through 2010. Music Teacher at Morrison Public Schools from 2006 to 2008. Music Teacher at Stillwater Public Schools from 2004 to 2006

Professional Memberships: Member (2009) and officer (2010-2011; 2013-2015) of Educational Psychology Student Society; Member (2009) Officer (2014-2017) of Oklahoma Association of Gifted Creative and Talented. Member of the National Association for Gifted Children (2014-2017), American Education Research Association (2015-2017), International Society for the Scientific Study of Subjectivity (2013-2017). Golden Key Honor Society (2009), and Phi Eta Sigma (1997).