



The Predictive Roles of Character Strengths and Personality Traits on Flourishing

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the association between personality traits, character strength, and flourishing in university students (N=384). In the study, Three-dimensional Character Strengths Scale was adapted to Turkish. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis, the Three-dimensional Character Strengths Scale was acceptable for the goodness of fit indexes. The results of the study showed that personality traits and character strength were positively related to flourishing. Multiple regression analysis revealed that personality traits, with the exception of the openness, significantly predicted flourishing. According to the standardized beta coefficients, extraversion was found to be the strongest predictor of flourishing. According to the results of multi-regression analysis, it was found that the caring, inquisitiveness and self-control sub-dimensions of the character strengths positively predicted the flourishing. According to the standardized beta coefficients, inquisitiveness was found to be the strongest predictor of flourishing. According to the t test results, it was found that the variables included in the study differed significantly according to gender. The findings were discussed with the literature.

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Personality traits, character strengths, psychological well-being, flourishing, positive psychology

1.Introduction

Personality is one of the subjects that people from almost all parts of society have been interested in and concerned about for centuries. This curiosity stems from the idea that personality, particularly for people interested in psychology, must explain at least some of human behavior (Thomas & Segal, 2006). Even if ongoing research has revealed different definitions of personality, personality in its simplest definition can be defined as the patterns of consistent behavior that make individuals different from one another and the internal processes people possess (Burger, 2008). Personality, which has a structure too complex to be limited just to behavior, has been characterized as the relatively permanent styles of emotion, thought, and action that depict individuals (Costa et al., 1995). The character strengths that emerge by emphasizing the positive features of this structure are the basic tendencies that contribute to the well-being and happiness of the individual (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Despite focusing on these positive features that distinguish character strengths from personality traits, both are similar in terms of being affected by life conditions. These points seem to be united in the flourishing features of people. Flourishing individuals experience both positive and negative

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emotions (Keyes, 2002; Seligman, 2015). In addition to all these, when considered one by one; the association between personality and flourishing (Villieux et al., 2016) and the association between character strengths and flourishing (Wagner et al., 2021) are supported by literature knowledge. However, we believe that there is a gap in the literature because the studies are recent and the variables are not considered together. In addition, we believe that examining the role of these variables in thriving (Harzer, 2020), which is more sensitive to fundamental changes than personality and character strengths (Harzer, 2020), may help people with recent questions about how to promote greater well-being in their families, workplaces, and groups (Keyes et al., 2015). Flourishing is key to maintaining the desired life (Huppert & So, 2013) and success in social and academic life (Seligman, 2011); and universities open many doors. It is not possible to accept universities as institutions where students can see the effects of their personality traits more clearly, as places where they will learn their academic skills or use them as a stepping stone for their career. This is because universities are also institutions that teach people how to live a life characterised by good character and values (Yeo, 2011). Flourishing increases life satisfaction in the long run (Huta, 2015) and is positively associated with the upbringing of productive individuals (Hone et al., 2015; Keyes, 2003). Based on this information, we can say that examining the role of university students' personality and character strengths on flourishing will expand our knowledge in understanding their well-being. Gender is an important variable during the university period, which includes many changes in well-being (De la Fuente et al., 2020; Diener et al., 2018). Such that women are twice as likely as males to experience depression from early childhood until maturity (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2001). On the other hand, social stereotypes about the well-being of men and women contain incomplete or erroneous information about the role of personality traits on flourishing (Kulik et al., 2016). For these reasons, it has become important to examine the differentiation status of the five factor personality traits, which are accepted by many researchers as expressions of personality traits (Bruck & Allen, 2003; Costa et al., 1991), and the character strengths that have a positive relationship with flourishing (Demirci & Ekşi, 2018).

1.1. Big Five Personality Traits

Although the general view exists that people often behave similarly to one another, traits are considered to exist that essentially distinguish people from one another. Allport (1931), who expressed this case as trait theory, indicated that the distinguishing trait should be emphasized, not the stimulus, while identifying exhibited behaviors. The classifications made related to these traits laid the groundwork for forming the five-factor personality classification frequently used today (Bacanlı et al., 2009; Costa, Busch et al., McCrae, 1986; Costa & McCrae, 1995; McCrae & Costa, 1987, 1991). This five-factor personality structure is formed from five dimensions: conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness, and extroversion (Costa et al., 1991; Costa & McCrae, 1995; McCrae & Costa, 1987). Individuals possessing the trait of conscientiousness are individuals who strive to be self-disciplined, orderly, determined, competent, and successful (Costa et al., 1991; Costa & McCrae, 1995). Agreeableness demonstrates the trend of showing more interpersonally harmonious behaviors (Costa et al., 1991). Individuals with high levels of neuroticism have feelings such as fear, sadness, nervousness, shame, guilt (Bruck & Allen, 2003), agitation, and pessimism (Goldberg, 1993) and are unable to show emotional stability. Extroverts are defined as individuals with high self-confidence who are energetic, social, talkative, and warm (McCrae & John, 1992; Costa et al., 1986). Open-mindedness is used for people who are open to experiences and who look at events from a broad perspective (McCrae & Costa, 1989). As a result, the five-factor personality model is useful enough to be able to characterize individual differences. At the same time, it can be said to be easy for studying in various cultures and an effective classification in determining personality traits in terms of providing similar comprehensive results in the research that has been done over the years (Caspi et al., 2005; Günay & Çarıkçı, 2019; Lau, 2013).

1.2. Character strengths

In recent years, character strengths have become an important research area of positive psychology. According to Colborn (2016), the psychology remains incomplete in the tendency to focus on the development of human well-being, which means it is also incomplete on the issue of paying attention to the character traits that contribute to well-being. Peterson and Seligman (2004), who emphasized the concepts of character strengths and personal virtues on this topic, stated character strength as the character traits that support universal basic virtues based on the species' biology and survival. This perspective focuses on how positive individual differences can be developed and used most efficiently (Bakker & Van Woerkom, 2017). Peterson and Seligman (2004), who conducted the pioneering study on character strengths, gathered 24 character strengths under six

personal virtues. However, because the character strengths that appear in the classification do not differ by cultural and social norms (Kristjánsson, 2010), the presentation of variation in cultural context (Seibel et al., 2015; Ana Paula & Zanon, 2018) laid the groundwork for revealing the character strengths approach in three dimensions (Duan et al., 2012; McGrath, 2015): caring, curiosity, and self-control. Caring determines the character strengths that play a role in maintaining acceptable relationships with others. The fact that individuals associate their self with creativity and inquisitiveness in their lives shows that they use the character strengths inquisitiveness. Finally, self-control is related to the ability to adapt to regulation (Duan & Bu, 2017). Individuals use this character strengths on the way to their desired goals and values.

1.3. Flourishing

Flourishing is more than people being happy. Through the development of positive psychology based on identifying strong directions and positive individual traits (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), well-being has been addressed as two different approaches: the hedonic tradition, which relates more with happiness, and the eudemonic tradition, which emphasizes human potential more (Keyes & Simones, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Flourishing, which has been placed in the tradition of positive psychological functionality (Eudemonics; Ryff & Singer, 2008), can be defined as the ability to positively advance one's life personally and socially, to be productive, and to have the potential of strengths that can be utilised at any moment in life (Keyes, 2002; Ryff, 1989). In short, well-being can be said to be psychological for individuals who are psychologically and socially functional and who can say their life is going well (Huppert & So, 2009; Keyes & Haidt, 2003). Diener et al. (2010), who considered these theories to be individually insufficient at explaining psychological well-being, integrated the perspectives of theorists such as Seligman, Maslow, Ryff, Deci, and Ryan by also including certain items like "being connected and interested" and "optimism" (Telef, 2013). In this regard, flourishing is related to having high levels of both hedonic and eudemonic well-being (Huppert & So, 2013; Keyes, 2002). Diener et al. (2010) defines flourishing as a concept that describes important aspects of human relationships, from positive relationships to a sense of competence and a sense of meaning and purpose in life. is a concept that explains important aspects of human relationships. Also, when looked at from this angle, flourishing emphasizes the social-psychological aspect of well-being, unlike other theories on well-being. Much research is available that has investigated the relationship of flourishing to personality in support of this idea (Dewal & Kuma, 2017; Drezno et al., 2019; Gonzalez et al., 2014; Hussain, 2018; Kjell et al., 2013; McCrae & Costa, 1991; Salami, 2011; Yasin, 2016; Ziskis, 2010).

Despite the fact that research shows the association between character qualities and flourishing (Duan & Ho, 2018; Gustems & Calderon, 2014; Wagner et al., 2021) have begun to become widespread, the need for research on the role of personality traits and character strengths on flourishing together formed the basis of this research. As a result, it is seen that personality traits are strongly associated with flourishing (Keyes et al., 2015). Supporting this, development was found to be positively related to conscientiousness and extraversion, and negatively related to neuroticism (Diener & Seligman 2002). When personality traits are kept constant, the important role of character strengths on flourishing emerges (McGrath, 2015). It can be said that character strengths emerge by reframing five basic personality traits with positive traits (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Park & Peterson, 2006). Therefore, there is a strong relationship between character strengths and personality traits (Noronha & Campos, 2018).

1.4. Current Study

Flourishing is an important concept in terms of making important life decisions for university students who are trying to mature their own identities, particularly in their social life, and in terms of its use at the highest level for its potential within human relations (Hone et al., 2014). In addition, based on studies that emphasize the importance of gender effect on flourishing, the gender factor was also examined in this study. When they are predicted to change with increased environmental stimuli, individuals' personality traits and existing strengths appear likely to contribute to awareness of their own thoughts and feelings and positively affect their individual development. Examining the relationships among flourishing, personality traits, and character strengths is considered able to contribute to the positive psychology literature especially in holistically evaluating these three concepts together in Turkey, aside from the fact that no study is encountered to have researched them. This research aims to investigate the relationship among personality traits, character strengths, and flourishing. Accordingly, answers to the following questions are sought: (1) Does a significant

relationship exist between personality traits and flourishing? (2) Does a significant relationship exist between character strengths and flourishing? (3) Do personality traits, character strengths, and flourishing significantly differ with respect to gender?

2. Methodology

2.1. The Research Design

Correlational research designs are studies that seek to determine the level of change between two or more variables (Fraenkel et al., 2012). In this study, the correlational research design and the causal-comparative research methodology were utilized to investigate the links between personality traits, character strengths, and flourishing. A correlational research design was used to determine which character strengths and personality traits predict flourishing. A causal-comparative research design was used to whether flourishing, character strengths, and personality traits differ according to gender.

2.2. Research Sample

The sample of the research consists of 384 university students (196 women, 188 men) studying at various faculties of Karadeniz Technical University and Kocaeli University (ie faculties of medicine, architecture and dentistry) in the 2018-2019 academic year. Participants' ages range from 18 to 34 years, with their mean age calculated at 21.81 (\pm 1.95). The study group was determined using the convenience sampling method (Büyüköztürk, 2015), which is used in applicable cases due to existing limitations in terms of time, money, and labor.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

The Flourishing Scale. The Flourishing Scale, which contains eight items, describes the human function of important objects, from positive relations to feelings of competence and having a meaningful and purposeful life. The Flourishing Scale was developed by Diener et al. (2010), and the Turkish adaptation study was performed by Telef (2013). The Flourishing Scale is a 7-point Likert-type scale whose items are evaluated from 1 to 7 (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The scale is formed of one dimension and has no reverse-scored items. Example items for the Flourishing Scale are "I lead a purposeful and meaningful life." and "I am optimistic about my future." The scores obtainable on the scale range from 7 to 56. Higher scores indicate the person has more psychological resources and strengths. 42% of the total variance is explained as a result of the scale's exploratory factor analysis. The factor loadings for the items on the scale have been calculated between .54 and .76. Goodness-of-fit values have been found sufficient in the confirmatory factor analysis. Cronbach's alpha of internal consistency was obtained from the scales reliability study and calculated as .80.

The Big Five Inventory-2 Short Form (BFI-2-S). The BFI-2-S was developed by Soto and John (2017) and consists of five subdimensions (extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness, and neuroticism), each containing six items. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Cemalcılar et al. (2017). The scale consists of 30 items in total, is scored as a 5-point Likert-type. Example items for the The Big Five Inventory-2 Short Form are "I consider myself a very worried person." and "I see myself as an extroverted, social person." As a result of the inventory's exploratory factor analysis, 91% of the total variance explained by the long form was determined to be preserved. The factor loadings of the scale's items vary from .39 to .81. Cronbach's alpha of reliability varies from .73 to .84 for each of the five traits. The test-retest reliability coefficient ranges from .69 to .88.

The Three-dimensional Inventory of Character Strengths (TICS). The TICS, developed by Duan and Bu (2017), consists of three sub-dimensions: caring, inquisitiveness, and self-control. The scale consists of 15 items in total (5 items for each dimension) and is scored as a 5-point Likert-type scale. The scale has no reverse-scored items. As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis of the scale's 15-item 3-dimensional structure, the scale is seen to provide adequate fit. Example items for the Three-dimensional Inventory of Character Strengths are "I can find something of interest in any situation." and "I enjoy being kind to others." The Cronbach's alphas calculated for the original form of the inventory are .86 for the total score, .85 for the caring subdimension sub-dimension of caring, .81 for the sub-dimension of inquisitiveness, and .79 for the self-control subdimension (Duan & Bu, 2017). For the adaptation study of the TICS to Turkish, Wenjie Duan who developed the TICS was contacted by email, and permission to adapt was obtained. The item pool from the Chinese Virtues Questionnaire, which was formed by adapting the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) to Chinese

culture, was used while developing the measurement tool. The measuring tool consists of 15 items, with 5 items for each of the sub-dimensions of caring, inquisitiveness, and self-control. The translate-retranslate method has been used to translate the TICS to Turkish. Validity factor analysis of the scale’s structure has been examined using the internal consistency method. Item analysis has been examined through corrected item-total score correlations. LISREL and SPSS programs have been used for the validity and reliability analyses.

Item Analysis and Reliability. Item analysis was performed to establish the predictive strength and discrimination of the scale items' total score. The corrected item-total score correlation for the items in the scale ranged from .57 to .70 for the positive caring subdimension, from .53 to .68 for the sub-dimension of inquisitiveness, and from .50 to .66 for the self-control subdimension. Cronbach's alphas of internal consistency for the TICS were calculated as .86 for the total scale score, .85 for the caring subdimension sub-dimension of caring, .81 for the sub-dimension of inquisitiveness, and .79 for the self-control subdimension. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Descriptive statistics and Corrected Item-Total Test Correlations for the TICS

	Item Number	Min	Max	\bar{X}	SD	r_{itt}	r_{its}
Caring	1	2	5	3.87	0.88	0.47	0.70
	2	1	5	3.91	0.96	0.52	0.70
	3	1	5	3.79	0.91	0.56	0.68
	4	1	5	3.86	0.99	0.48	0.69
	5	1	5	3.65	1.05	0.50	0.57
Inquisitiveness	6	1	5	3.69	1.07	0.49	0.57
	7	1	5	3.85	1.06	0.54	0.58
	8	1	5	3.73	0.97	0.62	0.68
	9	1	5	3.81	0.92	0.56	0.60
	10	1	5	3.51	0.95	0.57	0.53
Self-control	11	1	5	3.52	1.10	0.39	0.60
	12	1	5	3.40	1.05	0.34	0.57
	13	1	5	3.52	1.02	0.38	0.66
	14	1	5	3.62	0.94	0.52	0.55
	15	1	5	3.81	1.07	0.47	0.50

r_{itt} = Item-Total Correlations for Total Scale; r_{its} = Item-Total Test Correlations for Subscales

Structure Validity. Confirmatory factor analysis has been performed to assess the three-dimensional structure of the TICS’ original form. Apart from the RMSEA value, the goodness-of-fit values for the first established model are seen to be acceptable. After checking the modification indices, modifications were made to the error variances for items 2 and 3 from the caring subdimension and for items 14 and 15 from the self-control subdimension. Table 2 shows the fit index values derived from the confirmatory factor analysis. The factor loadings for the scale range from .52 to .78. When examining the latest model’s fit indexes, the scale’s three-dimensional has an acceptable level of fit.

Table 2. Goodness-of-Fit Indexes of Measurement Models

	χ^2	sd	CFI	NFI	NNFI	SRMR	RMSEA	ECVI	AIC
First Model	359.64	87	.94	.92	.93	.079	.090	1.11	425.64
Second Model	284.72	85	.95	.93	.94	.082	.078	0.93	354.72

2.4. Data Collection and Analysis Process

At the stage of collecting the research data, the participants were informed about the goal of the study and how the data would be used. Data collection was carried out by applying the paper-pencil test. The data set obtained was examined and the data set of 9 participants was separated due to empty or incomplete filling. In this way, analyzes were carried out on a total of 384 data. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis examined the relationships among personality traits, character strengths, and flourishing. Network analysis was utilized further to clarify the relationship between personality traits, character strengths, and flourishing. The EBICglasso estimation techniques was used to network analysis. Independent samples t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in terms of gender. Analyzes were performed using the trial version of the SPSS 22.0 package program and JASP 0.13.1.

Before starting the analysis, the convergence of the normal distribution of the data was examined with the Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients (see table 3). The values obtained were between -1 and $+1$ (Tabachnic et al., 2007) and met the normality assumption. In addition, by looking at the Durbin-Watson value (2.0), it was seen that there was no autocorrelation problem in the research data (Büyüköztürk et al. 2015) and the Variance Inflation Factors value was less than 4 (Hair et al. 2010). Therefore, it is accepted that there is no multicollinearity problem in the data. Regression analyzes, correlation and t tests were used to test hypothetical relationships. The findings were evaluated at .05 significance level.

3. Findings

The relationship between the variables and flourishing has been examined using the Pearson product-moment correlation analysis method. The findings obtained as a result of the analysis are presented in Table 3. When examining the relationship of flourishing with the sub-dimensions of character strengths in Table 3, flourishing is seen to have statistically significant relationships with caring (positive mid-level; $r = .42, p < 0.01$), inquisitiveness (positive mid-level; $r = .47, p < 0.01$), and self-control (positive low-level; $r = .32, p < 0.01$). When examining the relationship between flourishing and personality traits, flourishing is seen to have positive statistically significant relationships with extroversion ($r = .35, p < 0.01$), agreeableness ($r = .29, p < 0.01$), conscientiousness ($r = .32, p < 0.01$), and openness ($r = .22, p < 0.01$) and a negative statistically significant relationship with the sub-dimension of neuroticism ($r = -0.33, p < 0.01$).

Table 3. Correlation Coefficients Regarding the Relationships Among Variables

Scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Caring									
2. Inquisitiveness	.508**								
3. Self-control	.169**	.401**							
4. Extroversion	.209**	.200**	.160**						
5. Agreeableness	.183**	.198**	0.081	.164**					
6. Conscientiousness	.499**	.297**	.135**	.251**	.309**				
7. Neuroticism	-.260**	-.203**	-.379**	-.330**	-.241**	-.421**			
8. Openness	.177**	.138**	.102*	.323**	.302**	.172**	-.162**		
9. Flourishing	.417**	.473**	.321**	.347**	.293**	.322**	-.329**	.219**	
Mean	19.08	18.59	17.87	20.15	22.03	20.28	17.49	21.31	41.96
SD	3.80	3.74	3.83	4.70	3.98	4.18	4.35	4.15	8.13
Skewness	-.45	-.33	-.34	.00	-.27	.06	.00	-.26	-.52
Kurtosis	-.15	-.30	-.21	-.41	-.39	-.39	-.23	-.06	-.20
Cronbach	.85	.81	.79	.73	.68	.66	.66	.67	.88

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

After examining the correlation analyses, a multiple-regression analysis of character strengths' status for predicting flourishing was performed. The analysis results are given in Table 4. The results of the multiple-regression analysis have determined the established model to have a positive, mid-level statistical significance ($R = 0.538, p < 0.001$), and the three sub-dimensions of character strengths altogether explain 28% of the total variance in the variable of flourishing ($R^2 = 0.284; F = 51.565, p < 0.001$). When examining the *t*-test results regarding the significance of the regression coefficients, the three sub-dimensions are positive and statistically significant (i.e., caring [$t = 4.885, p = 0.01$], inquisitiveness [$t = 5.220, p < 0.001$], and self-control [$t = 3.523, p < 0.001$]). In terms of the standardized regression coefficient (β), the relative order of importance for the sub-dimensions of character strengths on flourishing are: inquisitiveness ($\beta = 0.282$), caring ($\beta = 0.245$), and self-control ($\beta = 0.166$). When looking at the beta coefficients, the sub-dimension of inquisitiveness is seen to be the most significant predictor of flourishing ($\beta = 0.282, p < 0.001$).

The regression analysis results regarding how personality traits predict flourishing are given in Table 5. The results of the multiple-regression analysis have determined the established model to have a positive and mid-level statistical significance ($R = 0.479, p < 0.001$), and the sub-dimensions of personality traits together explain 22% of the total variance in the variable of flourishing ($R^2 = 0.219, F = 22.505, p < 0.001$).

Table 4. Multiple-Regression Analysis Results on the Predictive Role of Character Strengths on Flourishing

Predictor	B	Se	β	t	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	F	95% CI	
(Constant)	14.220	2.316		6.139***	.538	.289	.284	51.565***	9.665	18.774
Caring	.525	.107	.245	4.885***					.314	.736
Inquisitiveness	.614	.118	.282	5.220***					.383	.845
Self-control	.353	.100	.166	3.523***					.156	.550

***p<.001

When investigating the *t*-test results regarding the significance of the regression coefficients, while extroversion (*t* = 4.353, *p* < 0.001), agreeableness (*t* = 3.240, *p* < 0.001), and conscientiousness (*t* = 2.835, *p* < 0.001) are statistically significant in the positive direction, neuroticism (*t* = -2.857, *p* < 0.01) is statistically significant in the negative direction. Only the sub-dimension of openness has been seen to not be a significant predictor of flourishing (*t* = 1.016, *p* > 0.05). According to the standardized regression coefficient (β), the relative order of importance for the sub-dimensions of personality traits regarding flourishing are seen as: extroversion (β = 0.219), agreeableness (β = 0.160), conscientiousness (β = 0.146), and neuroticism (β = -0.148). When looking at the β coefficients, the sub-dimension of extroversion is seen to be the most significant predictor of flourishing (β = 0.282, *p* < 0.001).

Table 5. Multiple-Regression Analysis Results Regarding How Personality Traits Predict Flourishing Levels

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	F	95% CI	
(Constant)	24.074	4.109		5.859***	.479	.229	.219	22.505***	15.994	32.153
Extroversion	.378	.087	.219	4.353***					.207	.549
Agreeableness	.328	.101	.160	3.240**					.129	.527
Conscientiousness	.285	.100	.146	2.835**					.087	.482
Neuroticism	-.276	.097	-.148	-2.857**					-.467	-.086
Openness	.099	.097	.050	1.016					-.092	.289

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

Network analysis was utilized to further clarify the relationship between flourishing, character strengths, and personality traits. The analysis results of relationships among personality traits, character strengths, and flourishing are visualized in Figure 1.

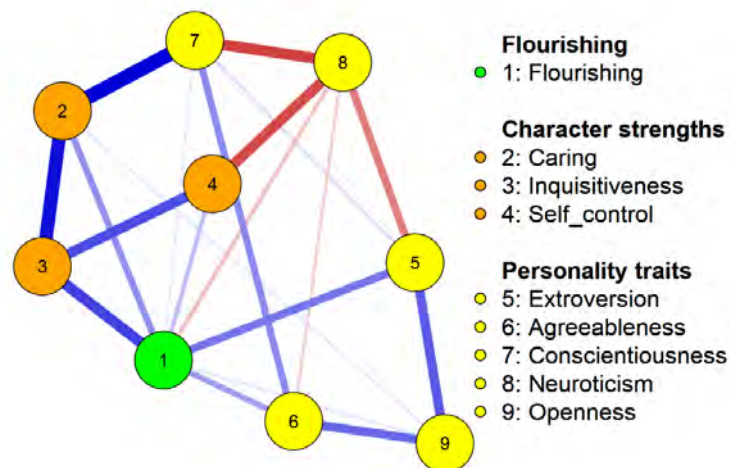


Figure 1. The network structure of relationships among flourishing, character strengths, and personality traits (Blue lines show positive relationships and red lines show negative relationships. Thicker edges represent stronger relationships).

According to network analysis, flourishing has connection with personality traits and character strengths. Flourishing was strongly associated with inquisitiveness, which was followed by extroversion, caring, and agreeableness. Positive correlations are shown by blue edge Blue edges show positive correlations, whereas negative correlations are represented by red edges.

The results of the *t*-Test for gender differences regarding the scores received on the BFI-2-S, TICS, and Flourishing Scale are given in Table 6. Statistically significant differences have been determined for TICS' sub-

dimensions of caring ($t = 3.207, p < 0.05$) and inquisitiveness ($t = 2.193, p < 0.05$); BFI-2-S' sub-dimensions of extroversion ($t = 2.305, p < 0.05$), agreeableness ($t = 4.574, p < 0.05$), and conscientiousness ($t = 3.331, p < 0.05$); and the scores from the Flourishing Scale ($t = -1.556, p < 0.05$). When looking at the means for man and women, this differentiation for all the scales and sub-dimensions is seen to be in favor of women. No statistically significant difference has been determined for the sub-dimensions of self-control ($t = 3.331, p > 0.05$) from TICS and neuroticism ($t = 1.593, p > 0.05$) from the BFI-2-S.

Table 6. Results of the *t*-Test for Gender Differences

Scales	Women ($n = 196$)		Man ($n = 188$)		t	p	Cohen's d
Caring	19.68	± 3.62	18.45	± 3.89	3.207	0.001	0.33
Inquisitiveness	19.00	± 3.45	18.17	± 3.98	2.193	0.029	0.22
Self-control	17.57	± 3.63	18.18	± 4.01	-1.556	0.121	-
Extroversion	20.69	± 4.68	19.59	± 4.68	2.305	0.022	0.24
Agreeableness	22.91	± 3.86	21.10	± 3.90	4.574	0.000	0.47
Conscientiousness	20.97	± 4.18	19.57	± 4.06	3.331	0.001	0.34
Neuroticism	17.83	± 4.45	17.12	± 4.23	1.593	0.112	-
Openness	22.03	± 4.21	20.57	± 3.96	3.507	0.001	0.36
Flourishing	42.84	± 7.83	41.04	± 8.36	2.175	0.030	0.22

4. Conclusion and Discussion

This study aimed to adapt the Three-dimensional Inventory of Character Strengths (TICS) to Turkish and investigate the predictive power of personality traits and character strengths on flourishing. Firstly, TICS psychometric properties have been found acceptable by performing validity and reliability analyses. Similarities are seen for the reliability findings from TICS' original form (Duan & Bu, 2017) and from the Turkish form that has been adapted.

Multiple-regression analysis has been done to investigate the relationships among personality traits, character strengths, and flourishing. When examining the findings in this direction, the results have been reached that personality traits (except openness) and character strengths effectively predict flourishing. Character strengths are a stronger predictor of flourishing than personality traits.

Of the subdimensions of personality traits, extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness significantly predict flourishing in a positive direction and neuroticism in a negative direction. When examining the standardized beta coefficients, the personality trait that best predicts flourishing is seen to be extroversion. When examining the literature, extroversion and neuroticism have been found as the strongest predictors of subjective well-being in one research done on health workers (Gutierrez et al., 2005). Extraversion, conscientiousness and neuroticism play an important role in subjective and psychological well-being (Meléndez et al., 2019). When evaluated from this perspective, the findings can be said to support the literature.

Character strengths clearly play a significant role for university students' happiness and well-being (Karris, 2007). When examining the standardized beta coefficients, the result has been reached that the sub-dimension of inquisitiveness is the best predictor of flourishing. Previous studies have concluded that character strengths are significant predictors of well-being (Lounsbury et al., 2009). Research that has been done supports the findings from this study (Demirci & Ekşi, 2018; Proctor et al., 2011).

Similar to the results of this research, one study showed that of the 24 character strengths, the strong aspects associated with happiness (hope, vitality, gratitude, curiosity, and love) had greater and more significant correlations with well-being and subjective well-being than the other character strengths (Hausler et al., 2017). Some character strengths, aside from significantly predicting well-being, are also seen to be effective at reducing symptoms of depression (Murrell, 2015). Similar to the results of the current study, the aforementioned studies have shown that the character strength of inquisitiveness has an important place in explaining well-being. Individuals who are chasing vital goals and searching for their psychological needs, especially university-aged individuals, can be expected to have increased inquisitiveness strength and be able to provide ideas (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

This is similar to the literature where character strengths are more powerful than personality traits explaining flourishing. One research performed on university students found character strengths to predict

flourishing/life satisfaction more than the five-factor personality traits, which supports this finding (West, 2006). In another study, character strengths that were observed to be strongly related to life satisfaction (i.e., curiosity, vitality, hope, gratitude, and love) were found to be more predictive of life satisfaction than the five-factor personality traits; furthermore, the difference between character strengths and the five-factor personality traits in explaining well-being is not that surprising (Park et al., 2004). The structure of personality traits, which seems to be more stable compared to character strengths, may be considered more effective in this case than the structure of character strengths, which vary with trends and changes related to life such as education and social support. In addition, the culture factor also plays an important role. This is because an individual's sense of self and being satisfied with his or her life is necessary for survival, as opposed to character strengths, which are highly valued in cultures (Brdar et al., 2011). The results of studies on what factors are related to well-being also support this idea. When the variables of personality traits and socio-demographics are held constant in research, the situational factors of social support and positive life events are found significantly related to well-being (Schotanus-Dijkstra et al., 2016). As a result, character strengths are expected to have a protective position in reducing the negative emotions that accompany social life to affect individuals' well-being and to be a point of support in increasing positive emotions.

According to the findings obtained as a result of investigating whether or not the participants' scores from the scales differ according to gender, no statistically significant difference was determined for the self-control and neuroticism. Significant differentiations were seen for all remaining variables with respect to gender in favor of women. Flourishing significantly differs with respect to gender, and this differentiation favors women. According to these findings, women tend to be much more psychologically well than men. They can be said to have greater strength at finding existing psychological resources in functional relationships that are used positively and can provide direction to existential goals. Ryff and Singer's (1998) research supports this study's finding where women have greater flourishing levels than men. A study on adolescents (Pennell et al., 2015) found female teens to have greater well-being than male teens. Different from the findings from this study, Littman-Ovadia and Steger (2010) reached the result that showed men to have higher levels of well-being than women. In a study performed with university students on a sample in Turkey (Yılmaz, 2013), women were similarly found to have significantly greater flourishing compared to men.

Differences exist broadly for individuals' levels of flourishing, and evidence exists regarding "social factors and early environment" having determinant roles in this process (Huppert, 2009). When evaluated in this respect, the result of this difference obtained with respect to gender can be thought to source from the internalization of the social successes of women with university educations in the face of the impositions of a patriarchal social structure. In addition, women's internal resources can be considered strong to realize goals throughout life. Apart from this, such a difference may exist because women express their positive and negative feelings more than men. The reasons for and consequences of this difference must be further researched.

According to this study's findings, aside from the positive relationship being seen between well-being and character strengths, character strengths are seen to significantly differ in favor of women with respect to gender. A study in the United Kingdom (Linley et al., 2007) found that women's character strengths have significant differentiations from men's except for creativity. A study performed on Mexican undergraduate students (Romero et al., 2018) investigated character strengths' relationship with life satisfaction and found that the relationship between character strengths and life satisfaction is much greater in men than in women. Evaluating these results, which do not coincide with the current study's findings, is considered important in the cultural context. The gender roles assigned to men and women in different cultures and their conveyed social roles are different, and these differences can have many reasons. Aside from this, a lack of information exists on the issue of whether or not personal and demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, education, marital status) affect the scope to which an individual's strengths are utilized (Duan & Ho, 2017).

The limitations of this research, which has investigated the relationship among personality traits, character strengths, and flourishing, are as follows: The research is limited by the study group, which has been selected from the various faculties of Karadeniz Technical University and Kocaeli University (i.e., faculties of medicine, architecture, and dentistry). The research is limited by data from the 2018-2019 school year. The research is limited by the scales used in the study. Research findings are limited to university students in the identified study group.

5. Recommendations

According to the research results, character strengths are the stronger predictor of flourishing when compared with personality traits. Studies can be expanded using concepts or demographic variables such as happiness orientations, multi-dimensional well-being models, and psychological needs that can have an intermediary or regulatory role in the relationship between these concepts. Doing detailed research on character strengths, which is still a fresh topic in Turkey's domestic literature, and its dual nature with flourishing can be suggested and organizing training programs on developing character strengths. Regarding research results, when the significant appearance of female preference in favor of gender in all variables is examined, flourishing can be examined with the gender roles variable. The relationship between flourishing and character strengths can be examined in different cultures and different sample groups. Also, contribution is expected to create a range of ideas about results researching the flourishing of individuals using various sample groups such as married and or employed, and such. Lastly, performing longitudinal studies can be considered helpful in understanding the relationships among character strengths, personality traits, and flourishing.

6. References

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