

EFL Learners' VIA Character Strengths and Willingness to Communicate: A Mixed-Methods Study

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Abstract

Considering the theoretical framework of positive psychology, the present study looked at the relationship between the Values in Action Inventory (VIA) of character strengths and WTC among Iranian EFL learners. To this end, 300 upper-intermediate Iranian EFL learners were selected. Participants were given two questionnaires to assess their VIA characteristics and WTC. To analyse the data, the researchers used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), which is a measure of the strength and direction of association that exists between the variables. The results of the quantitative phase showed that VIA characteristics have a relationship with WTC. Also, the results obtained in the qualitative phase of the study confirmed the results obtained in the quantitative phase of the study. The findings of this study can help language learners and different educational practitioners, such as school counsellors, language instructors, educational policymakers, and researchers, implement positive psychology tenets in their field.

Keywords: VIA character strengths, willingness to communicate, EFL learners, mixed-methods, positive psychology

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Introduction

The research on positive character is recognized as one of the primary objectives of positive psychology [1]. The term positive psychology was first presented by [2]. He stated that psychology required to disclose a more thorough picture of human aspects like virtues and human potentials. Positive psychology has grown considerably since a decade ago [3].

Positive psychology is an umbrella term encompassing positive emotions and positive character features [4]. It deals with studying what people do right, the process of doing it, and helping people to improve those features that guide them to have a more flourishing life [5]. Positive psychology does not ignore the negative aspects of life. It aims to show people how to achieve a good life by investigating more positive aspects of life. One of the critical contributions to continuing this aim is expanding the VIA character strength [6].

The term "virtue" can be described as a personality characteristic that involves core traits shared by religious and moral thinkers. According to [7], virtue can be defined as a psychological process that continuously makes an individual think and perform to benefit him and society.

Character strengths can be described as a subset of personality features on which moral values are placed [8]. Therefore, virtue and character differ from personality in that they have moral values. However, they likely exist in degrees rather than either-or categories, like other personality features [9]. The current study defines and categorizes various character strengths under core virtues.

The emphasis of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the recent approach language teaching and learning is improving authentic and meaningful communication. Usually, the primary reason for language learning is to use it to communicate. Foreign/second language (FL/L2) learners who wish to become proficient must use language communicatively [10].

When different individual, linguistics, social, and other relevant factors to speaking up in English are taken into consideration, the reasons why some learners avoid using English could not be simple or straightforward [11]. [12] maintain that it may not be sufficient for learners to become communicatively competent in the class.

Since a higher WTC facilitates language use, WTC can be seen as the final goal of learning a language [12]. In this regard, some researchers [12],[13] proposed that the ultimate aim of educating the second language should be to increase WTC because WTC is believed to facilitate language learning. As a result, higher WTC among language learners can lead to a higher chance of practicing language. The present study aims to investigate the relationship between the VIA character strengths and WTC in the Iranian EFL context.

Literature review

The theoretical framework of this study is centered on both positive psychology and WTC. The concept of positive psychology was coined and presented by [2]. [2] claimed that psychology was disturbed with deficiencies and difficulties, consequently limiting itself to the negative aspects of human existence. It can be defined as the study of what individuals are doing right and how they are doing it and includes aiming towards helping individuals to improve specific attributes that will enable them to live a happy and fulfilling life [5].

However, positive psychology has its opponents. For example, [14] mentioned that the positive dimensions of life cannot always be distinguished from the negative sides. According to [8]; “the good life is not the troubled life avoided or undone” (p. 424). Positive psychology is about contributing to the body of already established psychological information about overcoming problems and improving lives in terms of how to obtain a fulfilling life by examining the more favorable aspects of life [15].

An increasing number of researchers recommend applying positive psychological components in this area to eradicate the negative trend in conventional education, boost educational quality and strengthen its nature [4]; [16]; [17]. Unlike conventional accomplishment-focused curriculum, positive education implies achievements (e.g., academic accomplishment), and wellbeing are equitably essential components in creating life outcomes for students. Positive education argues that character strengths can promote accomplishments in the educational setting [4]; [18].

According to previous studies, character strengths are significant resources in the educational context, supporting academic performances [18]. However, there is a need to investigate the relationship between academic performance and VIA character strengths.

Character strengths enhance people's well-being and satisfaction. The classification of VIA character strengths presented by [19] maintains that character strengths are the central attributes or traits that permit people to be virtuous [19]. Six global virtues were outlined by [20], which were considered to be appreciated in different contexts all over the world, and these virtues are wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence, which are subdivided into 24 character strengths.

As [20] mentioned, three to seven of the most dominant individuals' traits are to be regarded as their signature strengths. However, in several pieces of research, it has been contended and often implemented that the top five core strengths of individuals are to be regarded as their signature strengths e.g., [4], and these are the attributes that a person identifies with, they are fundamental to his or her character and make a person feel contentious, enthusiastic and trustworthy when used [20]. It has also been discovered that the utilization of the other personality traits is also associated with an individual's quality of life [21] and contributes to improved psychological and personal wellbeing [22].

It is also noticed to be correlated with ideas such as morality, dignity, fairness or integrity, etc. [23]. However, the exact definition is still lost through different interpretations and understandings of the word 'character,' and people still believe that character is eternal and will still be the same [23]. The word 'character' alludes to those attributes or traits that are unique to people, helping them to be aware of their abilities and grow eventually.

Although human strengths and talents have many parallels, they also vary considerably from each other. Strength is an internal issue, but talents are respected because of the measurable outcomes [20]. Therefore, from human strengths, each person holds the natural ability and possesses inherent skills to thrive and develop [24]. One of the main results of several studies in the field revealed that each person has strengths of character and is expressive in degrees based on the setting or situation a person is in, and this makes each person particular [23].

Different studies have explored the association between different types of achievement scores and VIA character strengths. For instance, [8] explored the association between VIA character strengths and Grade Point Average (GPA). They controlled learners' IQ, and their results showed that among different character strengths, perseverance, fairness, hope, and perspective predicted students' achievement score.

Recently, [18], using a longitudinal analysis design, explored the relationship between character strengths and satisfactory educational outcomes. The results presented possible explanations on the significant impact of character strengths on academic achievements or wellbeing and also support theoretical and empirical studies to improve students' academic achievements and positive developments by interventions based on character strengths.

WTC has been described as an individual's ability to voluntarily participate and engage in a communication event when it is required [25]. WTC was initially examined in the context of L1 communication. However, WTC in L1 is not as complicated as it is in a foreign language. In the L1 context, [26] consider WTC a fixed personality characteristic and illustrate that individuals show similar tendencies in different communication situations. However, it turns to be a different construct when it is applied in second or foreign language learning. The addition of foreign language proficiency and communicative competence to WTC makes the concept complicated in a foreign language. According to [27], WTC has been a critical concept of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in modern language teaching literature. The WTC model has been developed by [12]. They define willingness to communicate as "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using L2" (p. 547). The increase of WTC is therefore assumed to be the final goal of second and foreign language teaching [12]. Because the lack of WTC, which leads to shyness, makes learners avoid communication [25].

[12] presented a pyramid model that shows the different layers at which a learner arrives at a point in time where he or she might choose to communicate or not. The current study is significant because if a relationship between VIA character strengths and WTC is found, it can be suggested that VIA is added to the layers of the pyramid model proposed by [12]. Some studies, on the one hand, have explored the relationship between VIA character strengths and other variables except WTC [28]; [29]). In the context of EFL, different studies are investigating the relationship between WTC and other variables except for VIA character strengths [30]; [31]; [32]; [33]. Consequently, few studies have comprehensively explored the implications of possessing the character strengths, and based on the previous research, it seems it worth exploring the relationship of character strengths and WTC.

The primary goal of the current study was to find the relationship between VIA characteristics and WTC among Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners. Specifically, to examine the relationship between the six VIA virtues (courage, justice, humanity, temperance, wisdom, and transcendence). To show the objective of the study, the researcher considered the following quantitative and qualitative research questions:

Q1. Is there any statistically significant relationship between the major categories of VIA characteristics, including wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, transcendence and WTC inside and outside the classroom?

Q2: What are Iranian EFL learners' perceptions about the relationship between VIA characteristics and WTC?

Methodology

Research Design and Context

To answer the research questions, this study employed a mix-methods approach, in which both quantitative and qualitative data are collected, analyzed, and mixed at some phase of the research procedure [34]. The reason for fixing quantitative and qualitative data is that both methods complement each other and present more complete answers to the research questions [35]. The type of mixed-methods of this study was explanatory design. In this design, first, quantitative data are collected and analyzed. The results of the quantitative phase are used to inform the qualitative phase. Therefore, data collection happens in two phases: the quantitative phase and the qualitative phase. Typically, the focus is put on the quantitative phase with a more minor focus on the qualitative phase [34]. Therefore, the research load is on the quantitative phase. This design can be most helpful when the researchers want to investigate the relationship with quantitative data but also they want to explain the reasons behind the relationships [34]. The setting of the study was not controlled, and the researchers collected data without changing the situation. Its advantages were considered its closeness to real-life situations, and it was suitable for studying inherent human characteristics [36].

This study comprised two phases, including 1) the correlational survey and 2) the interview phase. Each of these phases had its participants with distinct characteristics. In order to clearly show who participated in each phase, the following subsections are provided.

Participants of the Quantitative Phase

The participants were 350 Iranian EFL learners, 175 males and 175 females. Their level of English was upper-intermediate, and they were learning English just in English private schools. Their ages varied from 20 to 24. All of them were Persian native speakers. All participants gave their written consent and participated voluntarily. They were also assured that their responses would be kept confidential.

Participants of the Qualitative Phase

The participants for this part were four Iranian EFL learners- two females and two males- who had participated in the quantitative phase of the study. The respondents for this phase participated to share their ideas about the relationship between the variables.

Instruments

Oxford Quick Placement Test (QPT)

The QPT was administered to find students' proficiency level. It is a valid English proficiency test designed by Oxford University Press to provide teachers with a time-saving and reliable method of determining the learners' level of English. In order to check the reliability of the test with dichotomous items (0 and 1), KR-20 was utilized.

Administering the QPT is fast and easy, and it is also ideal for placement testing and examination screening. The pen and paper (P & P) version was used in the present study. The pen and paper version consists of two Parts. All candidates answered Part 1 (questions 1-40), and candidates whose score was higher than 35 out of 40 in Part 1 answer Part 2 (questions 41-60). Table 1 shows the range of scores for different proficiency levels based on the test [37].

Since the present study needed upper-intermediate learners, only the students who scored 40-47 were selected, and the other participants were removed.

Table 1. The range of Scores for different proficiency levels

	Level	Score out of 60
1	Beginner	0-10
2	Breakthrough	11-17
3	Elementary	18-29
4	Lower intermediate	30-39
5	Upper-intermediate	40-47
6	Advanced	48-54
7	Very Advanced	55-60

VIA-IS (VIA Inventory of Strengths)

The version of 72-item VIA-IS (VIA-Inventory of Strengths) was used in the current study to assess the character strengths (see Appendix 1). It is a brief version of the original VIA long form consisting of 240 items developed by [9]. The brief form has reliability and validity scores, almost parallel to the original long-form and has been successfully used in many kinds of research in different countries. It is an English self-report questionnaire that measures 24 widely valued character strengths.

WTC Scale

To assess the EFL learners' level of WTC, the version developed by [38] was utilized (see Appendices 2 and 3). This scale has been extensively used in the literature. It should be noted that the WTC scale includes both productive and receptive skills.

This questionnaire includes 27 items of WTC inside the classroom and 27 items outside the classroom concerning four skill areas, i.e. speaking (8 items), reading (6 items), writing (8 items), and comprehension (5 items).

Semi-Structured Interview

In this study, a semi-structured interview was used to collect the qualitative data. The interviews began with general questions about the relationship between the six moral virtues of wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and excellence with a desire to communicate with language learners, and they gradually ended with more specific questions about why and how the relationship between VIA and WTC exists. The focus of the interviews was: In your view, is there a relationship between wisdom and the WTC? In your experience, is there a connection between courage and WTC in language learners? In your opinion, what is the relationship between humanity and the WTC relationship in language learners? Do you think there is a relationship between justice and the WTC? And so on.

Procedure

Quantitative Phase

To select the participants, the researchers used the QPT as a placement test for selecting upper-intermediate EFL learners. It was administered to 400 participants. According to designers of the QPT test, participants who scored between 40 and 47 in the test are upper-intermediate. Based on this rating, some participants whose scores were not within these ranges were removed. Then, the

remained upper-intermediate learners were given two questionnaires to assess their VIA characteristics and WTC. All these processes were online using Google forms.

Qualitative Phase

For the last phase of this study, four participants who had participated in the quantitative phase of the study were selected based upon their willingness and availability to share their experiences for the purposes of the research. Due to the prevalence of Covid 19, face-to-face interviews were not possible. Therefore, to know the learners' experiences and perceptions, each participant individually was interviewed virtually, and then the full text of the interview was transcribed. Participants took part in this phase voluntarily, and they were assured that their information would be used confidentially and anonymously. In each interview, this information and the purpose of the study were presented orally to the participants. Then the concepts reached saturation with questions such as how, why, please explain more. The interviews lasted for one week from June 19 to July 26, 2021 and the average interview time was from 3 to 8 minutes.

Table 2. Demographic data in the qualitative phase

participants		f	%
gender	male	2	50
	female	2	50
age	21 to 22	2	50
	23 to 24	2	50
Education	bachelor student	3	75
	master student	1	25
Length of learning English	3 to 4 years	3	75
	5 to 6 years	1	25

Data Analysis

Quantitative Phase

First, the assumption of normality of the data was checked by computing the skewness and kurtosis ratios. It was required to verify the homogeneity of variances of the data sets. The values for asymmetry and kurtosis between -2 and +2 were considered acceptable to prove normal univariate distribution. Accordingly, the normality assumption was assumed for the 24 subcategories of the VIA scale and WTC inside and outside the classroom.

Cronbach's alpha was used as a measure of the internal consistency reliability of a set of VIA measures. The measures with a reliability above 0.7 are considered ideal. As Table 2 shows, the reliability is 0.779.

Table 3. Reliability of character strengths 72-Item version statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.779	72

In addition, Cronbach's alpha was further used to measure the internal consistency reliability of WTC inside the class measures. As can be seen in Table 3, reliability is 0.992.

Table 4. Reliability of WTC inside the class

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
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Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.992	27

Also, the internal consistency reliability of WTC outside the class measures was calculated. As it is seen in Table 4, the reliability is 0.972.

Table 5. Reliability of WTC outside the class

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.972	27

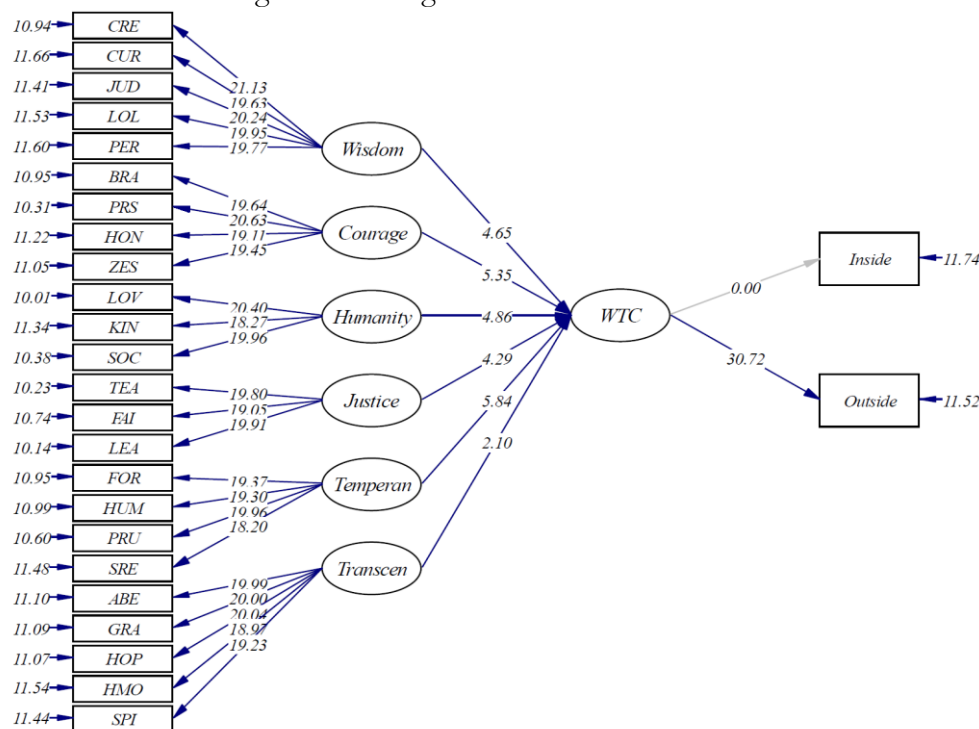
Evaluation of the Structural Part of the Research Conceptual Model. The results of the first and second-order factor analysis in the measurement of endogenous and exogenous variables showed that all of the structures have acceptable validity and reliability, so the general structure of the conceptual research model is examined to determine whether the theoretical relationships between the variables considered by the researchers during the formulation of conceptual framework were verified by the data. Three issues are taken into account in that regard. First, signs (positive and negative) of parameters related to the paths between the latent variables show if the computed parameters have confirmed the direction of the hypothetical relationships. Second, the value of the estimated parameters shows how strong the predicted relationships are. The estimated parameters should be significant (i.e., the absolute value (t-value) must be greater than 1.96). Third, the squared multiple regression (R²) shows the variance of each internal (dependent) latent variable explained by the external (independent) latent variables. The larger the value (R²), the higher the variance.

Figure 1 shows the significant level of the structural model. All of the estimated parameters in the structural model are at a significant level, and the sign of all parameters is positive, indicating the relationship between the latent variable and each of its observed variables is monotonic, which is based on the predefined hypothetical relations. Table 5 shows the structural model fit indices. Regarding the significant values obtained and the values of the fit indices, the model and data have an acceptable fit, and thus, the validity of the given research model is confirmed.

Table 6. The Fit Indices of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Fit Index	Accepted Value	Result
χ^2/df	< 3.00	1.071
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	> .90	.94
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	< .08	.014
RMR (Root Mean Square Residual)	< .05	.023
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	> .90	.99
NNFI (Non-Normed Fit Index)	> .90	1.00
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	> .90	1.00

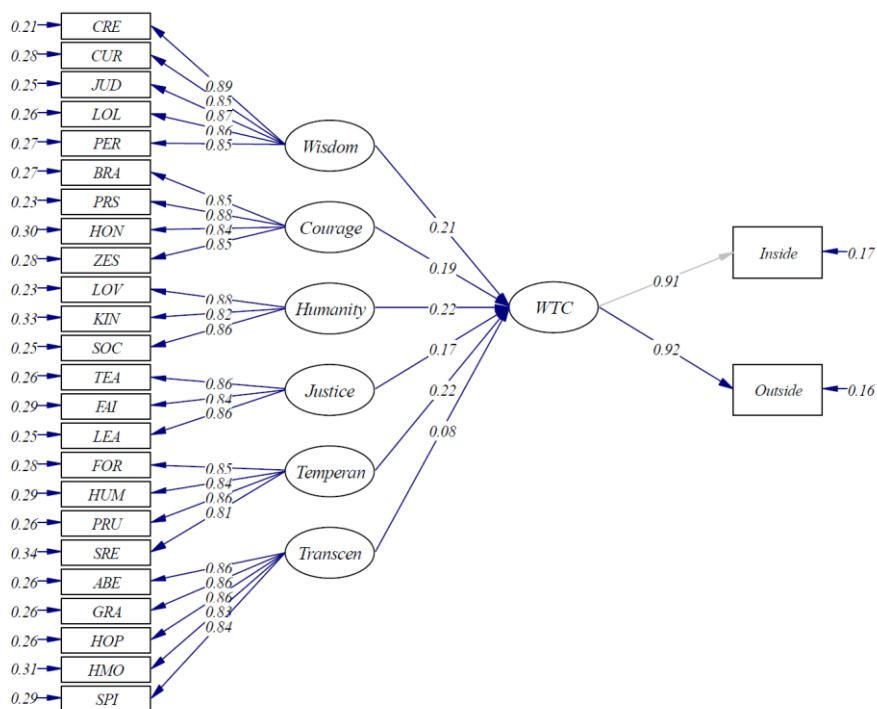
Figure 1: The significant values of SEM



Chi-Square=297.83, df=278, P-value=0.19773, RMSEA=0.014

Figure 2 further shows the standard estimation coefficients of the structural model and shows the extent to which the variables affect each other.

Figure 2: The standardized estimate coefficients of SEM



Chi-Square=297.83, df=278, P-value=0.19773, RMSEA=0.014

The summary of structural model results is reported in Table 7.

Table 7. The Results of the SEM

	Squared Multiple Regressions (R ²)	Significant Value (t-value)	Path Coefficient (β)	Path	
				from	to
	0.81	4.65	0.21	Wisdom	WTC
		5.35	0.19	Courage	WTC
		4.86	0.22	Humanity	WTC
		4.29	0.17	Justice	WTC
		5.84	0.22	Temperance	WTC
		2.10	0.08	Transcendence	WTC

First, the significant value of the path between the variables Wisdom and WTC is 4.65, which is greater than the value 1.96, so the relationship between these two variables is confirmed at a 95% confidence level. The path coefficient between these two variables is estimated to be equal to 0.21, and this value indicates that for a single unit change in the Wisdom variable, WTC (0.21) will change in parallel with the Wisdom variable. Second, the squared multiple regression of the WTC variable is estimated to be 0.81, which proves that the six variables are influential.

Qualitative Phase

The purpose of this phase was to assure external validity, and the content analysis was done by employing the Manifest analysis method and the inductive approach.

Trustworthiness can be considered a necessary part of any kind of qualitative research. It includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is concerned with whether the research findings are acceptable to the participants. Transferability deals with whether a clear description of the context is provided by the researcher to make it possible for other researchers to replicate the study. Dependability addresses the consistency and reliability of the findings. Confirmability addresses the issue of whether the findings could be confirmable.

These four elements were followed by the researchers in this study. To achieve credibility, the researcher reviewed transcripts with peers, collected data so that anticipated results could be avoided and submitted the findings for peer review. Transferability is utilized as the feasibility of the application of the results to other similar contexts. An accurate description of the participants and research context can make other researchers interested in determining the possibility of transferability to other contexts. By documenting the research process and asking peers to review the qualitative data, the researcher attempted to achieve dependability and confirmability.

All recorded interviews were transcribed the day after the interview immediately and then typed with office version 2007 software. To fully understand the content of the interview, first, the recorded file was listened to several times by the researchers, and the transcription completed, and then the entire text of the interview was read many times. Analyzing qualitative studies, the research questions determine what is being analyzed [39]. Therefore, by considering the research questions in the open coding stage, the keywords and phrases related to the research questions were extracted as units of meaning and initial codes. Then the similarities and differences of the codes were compared by the researchers and subclasses, and classes were formed. The same basic codes were further classified into more comprehensive classes, and finally, the main theme of the classes was determined. The data collection process continued until saturation was achieved for each of the subclass concepts. Through the content analysis, components in the relationship between VIA characters and WTC among EFL learners were identified (Table 8).

Table 8. Components identified in the relationship between VIA and WTC

theme	subtheme	example		
wisdom	creativity	Ideation for talking	Finding new ways to communicate	Having more ideas
	curiosity	Searching for new topics	The desire to learn new things	The desire to know new things
	judgment	Not paying attention to the judgments of others	Fear of being judged	Humiliation for mistakes
	level of learning	Talking to people of the same level	Tendency to talk in groups with advanced level	Advanced learning level
courage	bravery	Courage to speak in public	Speaking with confidence	Not being afraid of possible judgements
	perseverance	Perseverance in learning	Finding solutions to learning challenges	Continuous learning
	zest	Interest in learning	Eagerness to learn new things	Eagerness to overcome barriers to learning
humanity	kindness	Kindness to others	Feeling loved in a relationship	Willingness to talk to kind people
	social intelligence	The desire to be a member of the community	Feeling like a member of the community	Awareness of your feelings
justice	teamwork	Teamwork for language learners	Team work in the classroom	Justice in teamwork
	fairness	Composition of team members	Fairness in the group	Willingness to communicate in the team
	leadership	Leading a group conversation	Leading class teams	Leading groups by the teacher
temperance	forgiveness	Being cautious in relationships	Accepting possible mistakes	Forgiveness for learners' mistakes
	humility	Humility in communication	Communication regardless of social status	Being modest when speaking
	self-regulation	Controlling behavior	Evaluating the conditions for speaking	Goal-based self-regulation
transcendence	hope	Having a hope		
	humor	Being sociable	Having positive energy	Being affable

Wisdom. One of the components of VIA character is wisdom. Curiosity and the desire to learn new things motivate the learners to communicate. Participants in this study believe that wisdom increases people's desire to talk about ideas and thus leads to their greater desire to communicate.

Student 1: "I think there is a strong relationship between wisdom and our willingness to communicate. The more curious I feel about a specific topic I ask more questions and I am looking for more answers ..."

Student 2: "I think WTC is affected by wisdom because a person who is more curious or tries to connect with other people and talk to them, this shows more willingness to communicate..."

Student 3: "The positive relationship between wisdom as the major category of VIA with students and language learners' willingness to communicate inside and outside the classroom is positive..."

Courage. Courage is another component of VIA characters. Based on the participants' experience in this study, people who are learning a second language are more likely than others to overcome their judgments, fears, and embarrassment in communicating and have the courage to talk to others and express their feelings in the classroom.

Student 2: "...I think people who are more brave can communicate with each other more and better but I think it's not about courage. It's because some people don't communicate because they are shy..."

Student 4: Surely a brave individual has more willingness to communicate. This person is not afraid of any challenge. A person who is perseverance likes to overcome barriers and any kind of hindrance, hence he shows more willingness to communicate with others."

Humanity. From the perspective of language learners, human social intelligence makes them interested in communication. People with high social intelligence are looking for new ways to communicate and talk. Based on the experience of the participants, these people participate in the conversations with more confidence.

Student 1: "I think language is something that is about the society, that gets its meaning from society let's say, and will definitely humanity is the most important part of society and the more we feel like human beings I think it shows that we would like to have relationships with other people and that's why we will communicate with them"

Student 4: "I think a person who is socially intelligent has awareness of his own and others' feelings. In fact, he knows all individuals well and knows how to communicate with others. These individuals are strongly willing to communicate with others"

Justice. From the EFL learners' point of view, the establishment of justice in teamwork makes sense. Team composition and how to guide group members fairly are important components of justice that have been considered by EFL learners in this study.

Student 2: "I think about teamwork yes people who work in teams they might be more willingness to communicate but in general I'm not sure"

Student 3: "the category of justice with teamwork particularly if students are in the class. This one I don't know how it might be helpful outside the classroom, what kind of relationship there would be between justice and you know learners' willingness to communicate outside the classroom except that you know they feel the need to express something that has to be said. So you know they have this urge within them that they always wanna be fair..."

Temperance. One of the subcategories of temperance is self-regulation. From the EFL learners' point of view, self-regulation leads to people interested in communicating with their peers, regardless of their social status. The experience of the participants in this study shows that self-regulation leads to controlling a person's behavior and emotions in the face of speaking challenges, and people were more

inclined to talk to humble people because fear of humiliation reduces the tendency to speak, and humble people accept the mistakes of others.

Student 1: "When I see somebody who has a very high status I can say just puts himself or herself in my level and tries to speak with me I show more willingness to talk to him or her, I like this kind of people and it actually makes me talk to them more and sometimes when I make mistakes sometimes I forget their level in the society and I just think about them as my classmates they kind of forget about them they don't care about them..."

Student 3: "If someone for example has enough self-regulation so they know where they are and then you know if here there might be a negative relationship as well. So if they feel humiliated in the class, they don't wanna talk too much if they find themselves not as good as the others, they won't talk..."

Transcendence. From the participants' point of view, the spirit of humor, hope, and sociability increase the students' desire to speak.

Student 1: "When I see that somebody has a good sense of humor, I will try to talk to them..."

Student 2: "...when you are hopeful yes for example people who are sad, depressed or hopeless they usually don't like to talk to other people but people who are hopeful they are usually happier and they like to communicate with people"

From the EFL learners' point of view, people on the path to excellence are more inclined to be creative in communicating. Creative people always have a new topic to present, and based on the learners' experience in this study, creative people were more inclined to communicate.

Student 1: "sometimes I feel very creative I feel I have a lot of ideas about the topics. So I speak more. I think it is quiet natural that the more creative we are; we actually try to communicate more. We will be more willing to communicate"

Student 4: "I think if an individual is more creative, he or she enjoys more willingness to communicate since this kind of person has more ideas to convey. A curious person is also more willing to communicate since he likes to do more and add to his knowledge. This person is open to new experiences".

Discussion

The current mixed-methods study looked at the relationship between VIA character strengths and WTC among Iranian EFL learners. VIA character strengths can be defined as the personality traits, which moral value is placed on [8]. According to [9], character strengths are psychological mechanisms that form positive characteristics that are mirrored in thoughts and behaviors.

Generally speaking, the pyramid model of WTC suggests that the decision to talk is influenced by many factors [12]. As the results of the current study showed, it is blatantly obvious that VIA character strengths and WTC are interrelated. Therefore, VIA could be included in the layers of the pyramid model. Specifically, the findings of the current research are in line with previous studies. For example, curiosity, which is one of the subcategories of wisdom, is generally seen as a desire for understanding new things. [40] associated curiosity with a desire for new experience and knowledge acquired through exploratory behavior. Language learning curiosity (LLC) generates WTC and leads students to use a foreign language. [41] developed a curiosity scale (LLCS), and they proposed that LLC is positively related to WTC. They also believe that LLC is a strong predictor of WTC. Regarding transcendence, [42] believes that communication is as transcendence defined as the experience of self and others at the same time. Therefore, it is evident that transcendence and WTC are strongly correlated. On humor, the subcategory of transcendence, [43] reported that students in the U.S. could use humor to cope with stressful situations, and they also show WTC more than students in New Zealand. The researchers believe that this difference may come from the students' culture. To sum up their findings, human and WTC among American students were strongly correlated.

Social intelligence (SI), is defined as an individual's ability to achieve goals in a social setting [44]. [45] investigated the relationship between SI and WTC among Iranian EFL learners. The findings of

this study showed a positive and significant relationship between the variables. [46] suggested that teamwork, as a subcategory of justice, can lead to group cohesiveness, and it also results in greater WTC.

It can be concluded that there is a correlation between the VIA character strengths and WTC. The different factors and layers underlying WTC and VIA components can together lead to a fruit class environment. When the learners' VIA is high, they are willing to communicate and talk. Consequently, more talks, positive emotions, engagement, and accomplishment could be the results of a VIA-based class.

Contribution and Implication

Addressing the gap mentioned earlier can help different educational practitioners, such as school counselors, language instructors, educational policymakers, and researchers.

School counselors are responsible for improving students' well-being. Based on previous studies, it was found that learners' low sense of well-being causes an obstacle to learning [47] and is also related to behavioral difficulties [48]. Therefore, school counselors need to concentrate on positive psychology to enhance behavior and academic performances [49].

Moreover, the present researchers expect that the relationship between VIA character strengths and WTC will help language teachers. The researcher intends through this study to increase the teachers' awareness about the significant role of VIA character strengths in learning.

Besides, the findings of the current study have the potential to bring significant benefits for educational policymakers. They become aware that, in addition to improving students' knowledge and skills for achievement, education should instruct learners' well-being by embracing the outcomes of positive psychology [4]. The main objective of education is to assist learners to not only act well but feel happy.

Furthermore, researchers in education may be interested in a survey that addresses the gap mentioned before. The present study could provide a new correlational model between VIA character strengths and WTC focusing on positive psychology. They may also be interested in exploring if the claims of positive psychology and VIA character strengths apply to another country, Iran.

The results of the present study are also helpful to language learners. When a learner recognizes positive strengths, he/she can experience more positive feelings, discovers meaning in his/her life, associates with others in meaningful ways, which finally leads to higher performance in his/her life.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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