

Profiles of Overexcitabilities

A Comparative Study of High-Ability, High-Achieving, and Non-Identified Students

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Introduction

Overexcitabilities (OEs) describe heightened responsiveness across five domains: psychomotor, sensual, intellectual, imaginal, and emotional (Dabrowski, 1972).

Although OEs are frequently associated with giftedness, their specificity as markers of giftedness remains debated. Recent evidence suggests that the relationship between giftedness and OEs is positive but modest, with intellectual OE showing the most consistent association (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2025).

Methodology

Aim: To compare OE profiles among high-ability, high-achieving, and non-identified students.

Participants: N = 157 students aged 8–13 years, divided into three groups.

Design: Quantitative, comparative, cross-sectional study.

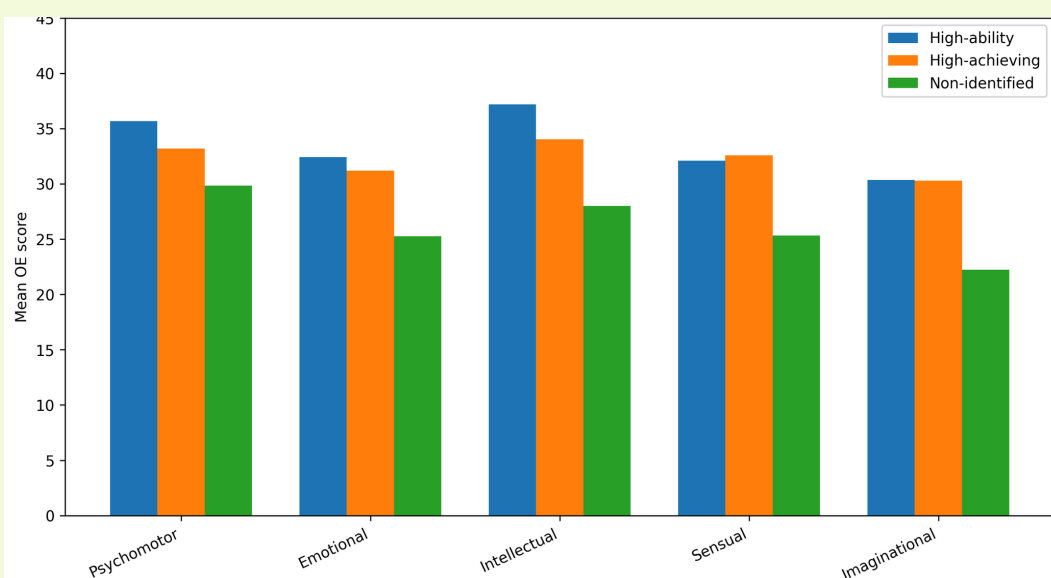
Instrument: Overexcitability Questionnaire-II (OEQ-II), assessing five dimensions: psychomotor, emotional, intellectual, sensual, and imaginal OE.

Data analysis: MANOVA, follow-up ANOVAs with Bonferroni post hoc comparisons, and multinomial logistic regression.



Results

Significant group differences were found:
Pillai's $V = .359$, $F(10, 302) = 6.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2p = .180$



Post hoc comparisons showed that intellectual OE significantly differentiated high-ability students from both high-achieving and non-identified peers. Only intellectual OE significantly predicted group membership in the logistic regression.

Conclusion

Most OE dimensions may reflect broader psychological responsiveness rather than giftedness-specific markers, supporting critiques of their use as sufficient indicators of giftedness (Vuyk et al., 2016).

In contrast, intellectual OE showed the most distinctive pattern, aligning with evidence that it has the strongest and most consistent association with giftedness (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2025).

The similarity between high-ability and high-achieving students across several OE domains suggests that psychological intensity is not exclusive to formally identified gifted students. OE profiles can inform educational understanding, but their role in identification should remain complementary and cautious.

References

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