

Vocational Interests and Academic Achievement of Gifted Students in Performing Arts

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Abstract : *Gifted students' psychological characteristics have been the subject of many studies. Much work has been done on intellectually or academically gifted students but search for non-academic giftedness is in its infancy and as such very rare. Study in hand concentrates mainly on gifted students in performing arts. This study provides descriptive information about the vocational interests and academic achievement of gifted students in performing arts. A sample of 200 students who participated in youth festivals and had achieved I, II, III and IV position, chosen from different colleges affiliated to Punjabi University, Patiala comprised the sample of the study. Vocational Interest Record (VIR) by Kulshrestha (2003) and Marks obtained in previous class for Academic Achievement were used. The results revealed that gifted students in performing arts have varied interests. They have high interests in artistic, literary and executive areas. Constructive, commercial, agriculture and scientific area are given least preferences. The gifted males and females have identical interests. No significant differences have been found in the case of literary, scientific, commercial, constructive and agriculture area. Females have high interests in every vocational area than males. But both males and females have highest interest in artistic area. Gifted students in performing arts got 60% marks in the examination. As per rules of examination they are considered to be first divisioners. Female gifted students in performing arts are more academically superior to males.*

Keywords: *Vocational Interests, Academic Achievement, Gifted Students in Performing Arts, College Students.*

Introduction

Human being must earn for a living in order to meet the basic needs for food, shelter and many other physical as well as psychological needs. Although everyone has to work to earn a living it does not mean that one is happy with what one does. Career is viewed by Sears (1982) as totality of work done in his/her lifetime. Vocational choice is not just one choice made at a particular point in life but rather a series of decisions made over several years. Career interests are patterns of likes, dislikes, and indifference regarding career relevant activities and occupations and career interest predict career choices and performance (Lent et al., 1984).

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Academic achievement has been considered as an important factor in the educational life of the students. It encourages the students to work hard and learn more. It is the status or level of a person's learning and his ability to apply what he has learned. High academic achievement in school builds self-esteem and self-confidence which leads to better adjustment with the group. Achievement encompasses enhancement, self-actualization, self-improvement and some form of competitiveness (Maslow, 1954). Ladson (1999) states that at its best, academic achievement represents intellectual growth and the ability to participate in production of knowledge. At its worst, academic achievement represents inculcation and mindless introduction of the young into the cannons and orthodoxy of the old. There are few researchers who made serious efforts to study vocational interests and academic achievement of gifted students. However, the results of these studies are not steady and decisive. Students who participated in school sponsored curricular activities had higher cumulative grade point than students who did not participate in any school sponsored extracurricular activities. (Branch, 2003). There were significant gender differences in achievement among gifted students (Theresa, 2004). Female undergraduate students were found to outperform male undergraduates in their GPAs (Khwaileh, 2011). But Preckel et al. (2008) and Oludipe (2012) reported that there were no gender differences in grades.

Further, studies showed that gifted students have varied vocational interests (Meenakshi, 1997; Singla, 2008; Setia, 2008; Bala, 2009). Johnson (1997) reported no significant difference between gifted males and gifted females with respect to either occupational aspiration. Women students who were gifted in performing arts as dance, music, painting, drawing etc. had a variety of vocational interests but only artistic interest had shown a score higher than the mean interest value (Meenakshi, 1997). Kaushal (2007) and Setia (2008) revealed gender differences in vocational interest (Vok et al., 2012). Gifted students have varied interests. They have high interest in artistic area, executive area and literary area, constructive area, persuasive and agriculture areas are given least preferences. There are not significant differences in the vocational interests of academically gifted boys and girls (Singla, 2008). The level of intelligence influences the vocational preferences to a great extent (Yadav, 2000). The talented group showing a higher level of career maturity in particular; and that there were significant relationship between career variables and academic attributes (Wu, 2000). Another study revealed that vocational interests among the undergraduate females are changing with passage of time. Nowadays, girls would like to select their vocational streams themselves without parental or peer interference. Majority of the respondents had a great liking for the vocations they selected and viewed it as an intellectual, financial, functional and job oriented element (Manzoor, and Ashai, 2013).

Need and Importance

Students participate in co-curricular activities. They enjoy their participation and also get rewards for them. This is how the hidden talent of the individual gets recognition. This talent in the individual is termed as the giftedness of an individual. One of the major problem of these students is the problem of vocational choices. These students spent time and energy in nurturing their gifts and institutions also spent time, money and energy in conducting programmes for developing the talents in the individuals. These students have high potential and variety of interests that they could succeed almost equally well in a wide range of occupations and professions (Barbe, 1963). In their later age, they usually select the professions which are suiting their interests and if the vocational choices are known to the individual in the early years then students can gladly enter the vocation relating to their vocational choice and can live satisfied life. Hence, there is need to see whether these students choose these interests as their career or they just participate in these activities as hobby or they participate only for

academic purposes or benefits in jobs etc. Most of people think that due to participation in these activities, these children are unable to give full attention to their academic work. So there is need to study academic achievement of those students who participate in these activities. The present study is an effort in this area and is directed to acquire acquaintance with academic achievement and vocational interests of students gifted in performing arts, so that once their capacities and needs are understood, steps could be taken to help them grow and develop to their maximum.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the investigation are as follows:

- i. To study vocational interests and academic achievement of students gifted in performing arts.
- ii. To compare vocational interests and academic achievement of male and female students gifted in performing arts.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study are as follows:

- H₀₁ Gifted students in performing arts have varied vocational interests.
- H₀₂ There exists no significant difference between the vocational interests of male and female students gifted in performing arts.
- H₀₃ There is no significant difference between the academic achievement of male and female students gifted in performing arts.

Delimitations

The delimitations of the study are as follows:

- i. The study was delimited to those students who were studying in different colleges affiliated to Punjabi University, Patiala.
- ii. The study was further delimited to those students gifted in performing arts and achieved Ist, 2nd, 3rd or 4th position at Inter-zonal or University level.

Methodology of the Study

The study was conducted through descriptive method of research. The descriptive method has undoubtedly been the most popular and most widely used research method in education.

Sample

For the present study purposive sampling technique was used. A sample of 200 students gifted in performing arts was selected from the colleges affiliated to Punjabi University, Patiala. 200 students who participated in youth festivals and had achieved Ist, 2nd, 3rd or 4th position comprised the sample of the study. One hundred males and 100 females were included in the sample.

Tools used

1. Vocational Interest Record (VIR) by Kulshrestha (2003)
2. Marks obtained in previous class for Academic Achievement

Results**Table 1: Vocational Interests of Gifted Students in Performing Arts**

Areas	N	Mean	S.D.	Ranking	Classification
Literary (L)	200	10.58	4.752	II	Average
Scientific (Sc)	200	6.68	4.890	VII	Average
Executive (E)	200	10.28	4.655	III	Average
Commercial (C)	200	5.76	3.866	IX	Below Average
Constructive (Co)	200	5.27	4.353	X	Below Average
Artistic (A)	200	13.26	4.202	I	Above Average
Agriculture (Ag)	200	5.82	4.152	VIII	Below Average
Persuasive (P)	200	8.09	4.490	VI	Average
Social (S)	200	8.98	4.858	V	Average
Household (H)	200	9.08	5.140	IV	Average

Table-1 shows that gifted students in performing arts have varied interests. They have high interests in artistic, literary and executive, areas. Constructive, Commercial, Agriculture and Scientific areas are given least preferences. Table-1 further shows that sixth area Artistic has the highest score i.e. 13.26 which shows that the total group of gifted students in performing arts have above average interest in that area. It is an obvious finding indeed. It will be of great utility if some of the excelling students take to artistic profession may be theatre, photography, dance, acting or painting, music or composition. The second preference is given to literary area with score 10.58 and the third preference is given to executive area with mean score of 10.28. Meenakshi (1997), Setia (2008) also found that gifted students in performing arts have varied vocational interest.

Table 2: Comparison of Vocational Interests of Male and Female Students Gifted in Performing Arts

Area	Gender	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Significance
Literary (L)	Male	10.87	4.685	0.847	Not significant
	Female	10.3	4.825		
Scientific (Sc)	Male	6.17	5.122	1.49	Not significant
	Female	7.20	4.614		
Executive (E)	Male	9.37	4.815	2.82**	Significant
	Female	11.20	4.323		
Commercial (C)	Male	5.43	3.830	1.21	Not significant
	Female	6.09	3.892		
Constructive (Co)	Male	5.28	4.722	0.324	Not significant
	Female	5.26	3.973		
Artistic (A)	Male	13.93	3.854	3.18**	Significant
	Female	12.06	4.445		

Agriculture (Ag)	Male	5.54	4.418	0.970	Not significant
	Female	6.11	3.868		
Persuasive (P)	Male	7.16	4.918	3.00**	Significant
	Female	9.03	3.817		
Social (S)	Male	8.31	5.112	1.96*	Significant
	Female	9.65	9.65		
Household (H)	Male	7.71	5.006	4.66**	Significant
	Female	10.46	3.115		

* Significant at 0.05 level; ** Significant at 0.01 level

Table-2 shows comparison of vocational interests of male and female gifted students in performing arts. There are significant gender differences in vocational interests of gifted students in performing arts in executive, artistic, persuasive, social and household areas. Females have high interests in every vocational area than males. But both males and females have highest interest in artistic area. The mean score of both the groups indicates that the gifted males and females have almost identical interests in literary, scientific, commercial, constructive and agriculture areas. The results of this study are similar with the findings of Kaushal (2007) and Setia (2008). Now a days, girls and boys are reared up in the same way and girls are also equally conscious about their careers. TV serials and mass media also help girls to move to take up different careers that may be the reason that identical interests of girls have been seen.

Table 3: Academic Achievement of Gifted Students in Performing Arts

Academic Achievement	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
	200	60.76	60	60	8.324

Table-3 shows the mean score on academic achievement of 200 gifted students in performing arts. It is 60.76 with SD 8.324. This shows that these students have average and above level of academic achievement. It means the students who spent their time in these activities do not have very high level of academic achievements. Mostly students score between 55% to 65% marks in their respective classes. The reason may be that these students excess involvement in performing art activities decline their interest in academic field.

Table 4: Comparison of Academic Achievement of Male and Female Students Gifted in Performing Arts

Academic Achievement	Gender	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Significance
	Male	59.07	7.938	2.94**	Significant
	Female	62.46	8.394		

** Significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 shows the mean score of males and females in academic achievement is 59.07 and 62.46 respectively. Mean difference is significant at 0.01 level of confidence as t is 2.94. The difference is in favour of female gifted students in performing arts. This shows that female gifted students in

performing arts are academically superior to males. The reason may be that females give equal importance to curricular and co-curricular activities. These results corroborate with the findings of Theresa (2004) that there were significant gender differences in academic achievement among gifted students.

Major Findings of the Study

Vocational Interests

- a) Gifted students in performing arts have varied interests
- b) They have high interests in artistic, literary and executive, area.
- c) Constructive, Commercial, Agriculture and Scientific area are given least preferences.
- d) There is significant gender difference in vocational interests of gifted students in performing arts in areas such as executive, artistic, persuasive, social and household.
- e) The gifted males and females have identical interests. No significant differences have been found in the case of literary, scientific, commercial, constructive and agriculture area.
- f) Females have high interests in every vocational area than males. But both males and females have highest interest in artistic area.

Academic Achievement

- a) Gifted students in performing arts are getting 60% marks in the examination. As per rules of examination they are considered to be first divisioners. Hence they are found to be good in studies.
- b) Female gifted students in performing arts are more academically superior to males.

Educational Implications

- i. Since the performing artists have shown a sufficiently developed interest in Artistic area, it will be of a great profit-emotional and financial if some of the artists are persuaded to take up professions in theatre, photography, dance, acting, painting, music, composition, and so on. The vocational guidance bureaus must arrange career conferences, information and placement service and counselling sessions for such artists.
- ii. Next to artistic interests, in the list of vocational inclination of the performing artists are interests like (a) Literary (b) Executive (d) Household (e) Social (f) Persuasive which though not very pronounced have a great professional potential. The vocational faculties of universities and deemed universities must take stock of these interests and initiate such vocational courses as would utilize profitably these interests of the performing artists. If the girls are given more exposure in these activities, there is every possibility of concentration of some vocational interests which can be pursued as professions. At the college, zonal and inter-zonal level more competitions in visual and performing arts are arranged and more awards be instituted to encourage greater participation.
- iii. The importance of talent other than academic must be recognized by the education world and the society in general and like academic scholarships art-scholarships be introduced and other incentives of recognizing, encouraging and honouring gifted artists be liberally provided.

- iv. A very large number of research studies on academic giftedness are underway and handsome financial doles are also available for them. But search for non-academic giftedness is in its infancy and such very rare. Comprehensive and collective type of research in the area of non-intellectual giftedness seems to be the end of the hour for obvious reasons. The UGC and other youth organizations have very definite role to play in this regard.
- v. Young girls and boys should be made more careful in academics along with non-academic activities in the institutions. Those students who participate in co-curricular activities etc. should be given extra coaching and learning material. Colleges should arrange extra teaching periods for students.
- vi. Only a small number of students participate in co-curricular activities. Teachers can play a very important role in nurturing giftedness either academic giftedness or non-academic giftedness. An interested teacher can redesign the instructional environment into a totally responsive atmosphere for almost every student. Hence the teacher must guide the children to pursue in performing arts activities and higher studies in accordance with their potentialities.

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