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EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS OF CHAMPHAI DISTRICT, MIZORAM

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Abstract: The present study aims to find out the educational interest of secondary school students of Champhai, which is one of the districts in Mizoram. The study focuses in finding out the educational interest of these students in seven areas namely agriculture, commerce, fine arts, home science, humanities, science and technology. The study also aims to compare each of the educational interests areas of these students with reference to their gender. The study found that the highest interest area of these secondary school students was in fine arts and their least interest area is in technology. The present study also found that female students have higher interest in the area of fine arts and home science compared to the male students, Male students were also found to be more interested in the area of technology compared to that of female students.

Keywords: Educational interest, Champhai district, Secondary school students, Mizoram

I INTRODUCTION

Interest is a great motivating force that energizes learning and it has the potential to guide academic and career path of students. Interest is very much essential for academic success. Researchers have found that interest can help us think more clearly, understand more deeply, and remember more accurately.

If we are interested in what we are learning, we will not only pay closer attention, but will also process the information more efficiently. Interest helps us employ more effective learning strategies, like engaging in critical thinking, building connections between previous and new knowledge, and paying attention to deep structure rather than surface features. When we are interested in any kind of task, we tend to work harder and persist for longer period of time, thereby bringing more of our self-regulatory skills into play

One of the primary objectives of secondary education is to help students discover their true interest and chart a life course based on interest developed during their growing years. Students in general learn better when they have an interest in the subject, therefore teachers should help their students to develop interest in different subject areas.

At the same time it is very much essential that students choose subject carefully from the various subjects according to their interest. Choosing the right subject is one of the most crucial decision a student is often faced with. It is seen that students are mostly in a dilemma when deciding their careers. While there are wide options in subjects, students are confused as to which subject they should choose for their future. Selecting the right subject for their future career is a difficult task for the students. Therefore students are in dire need of proper guidance at this stage. The Secondary and Higher Secondary Education are important terminal stages in the system of general education because it is at this stage that the youth decides whether to pursue higher education or opt for technical training or join the workforce. Therefore, it is important to investigate at an early stage of life one's educational interests so as to render appropriate advice to him or her.

Our nation is industrially and technically developing, this brings about an assortment of new educational streams. Choosing a career in a specific stream or profession at the outset has a long lasting impact on a student's future. Consequently, choosing a subject carefully from various subjects according to their interest is important for a student. As soon as the student reaches the 10th standard, some sort of anxiety in choosing a career path frequently lingers in their

mind. At this time, there is a need to provide appropriate guidance to the students in the selection of course based on their subject interest.

Objectives of the present study

1. To find out the educational interests of secondary school students of Champhai district of Mizoram
2. To compare the different educational interests of secondary school students of Champhai district with reference to their gender

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school students of Champhai district with respect to their interest in Agriculture, Commerce, Fine Arts, Home Science, Humanities, Science and Technology.

Population and Sample

The population of the present study consist of all Secondary School students of Champhai district. The samples for the present study however consist of 400 class X students with 220 males and 180 females selected at random from the schools in Champhai district

Tools employed for data collection

Educational Interest Record (EIR), developed by Kulshrestha (2009) was used for the present study. This test measures the educational interest in seven different areas. They are:

1. Agriculture
2. Commerce
3. Fine Arts
4. Home Science
5. Humanities
6. Science
7. Technology

Analysis of findings

The findings of the study were presented in the following tables in accordance with the objective of the study *Objective No. 1: To find out the educational interests of secondary school students of Champhai district*

Table No.1

Mean score in the Educational Interest of Secondary School students of Champhai District, Mizoram

Interest areas	Agriculture	Commerce	Fine Arts	Home science	Humanities	Science	Technology
Total	3.36	3.26	4.99	4.42	3.56	3.50	3.11

As can be seen in Table No 1, Fine Arts has the highest mean score of 4.99, while Technology has the lowest mean score of 3.11. This shows that the secondary school students in Champhai district were most interested in the area

of fine arts, while they were least interested in the area of Technology. Home science with a mean score of 4.42 occupies the second most interest area among the secondary school students of Champhai district.

Discussion: It was found that in Champhai district students were most interested in the area of fine arts, while they were least interested in the area of Technology. Fine arts can be in the form of music, dancing, painting etc. Perhaps the reason why fine arts happen to be the highest interest area among the high school students of Champhai district could be because these students were taught paintings and drawings in the schools and the people of Champhai district were generally interest in music and traditional dance. Since Champhai district is located in the Eastern part of Mizoram which is rather far from the capital Aizawl, perhaps students are not very much acquainted with modern technology as compared to Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram. Perhaps there are fewer engineers to whom the students can look up to, this may be the reason why technology occupies the lowest position among their interest areas.

Objective No.2: To compare the educational interests of secondary school students of Champhai district with reference to their gender.

The Educational Interest of the students were compared on the basis of their gender. For this, the Mean and Standard Deviation of the scores of both the males and females were calculated. The mean differences were tested by applying ‘t’ test and the details are presented in the following table.

Table no. 2 shows the comparison of Male and Female secondary school students of Champhai District with respect to their interest in seven different areas

The table -2 shows there is no significant difference between Male and Female secondary school students with respect to their interest in Agriculture, Commerce, Humanities, and Science. However, significant difference between Male and Female secondary school students with respect to their interest in Fine arts, Home science and technology was found at .01 level.

When the mean score of the male and female were compared with respect to the interest areas in fine arts and home science, it was found that females scored higher than the males, indicating that female secondary school students of Champhai district possessed a higher interest in the area of fine arts and Home science compared to the male secondary school students.

The mean score of male and female secondary school students were also compared in the interest area of Technology and here it was found that male students scored better compared to the female students. This means that male secondary school students of Champhai district had higher interest in technology than female secondary school students.

Table No.2
Comparison of Male and Female secondary school students with respect to their interest in seven different areas

Interest areas	Gender	Number	Mean	SD	MD	t-value	Sig. level
Agriculture	M	219	3.42	2.563	.148	.562	NS
	F	181	3.28	2.679			
Commerce	M	219	3.35	2.566	.195	.791	NS
	F	181	3.15	2.428			
Fine Arts	M	219	4.55	2.971	.971	3.256	**
	F	181	5.52	2.969			
Home science	M	219	3.89	2.712	1.165	4.013	**
	F	181	5.06	3.029			
Humanities	M	219	3.55	2.490	.022	.091	NS
	F	181	3.57	2.336			
Science	M	219	3.53	2.472	.081	.310	NS
	F	181	3.45	2.715			
Technology	M	219	3.94	2.860	1.831	7.372	**
	F	181	2.10	2.099			

** means significant at .01 level; NS means not significant

Discussion: When different areas of interest were compared gender wise, it was found that female secondary school students possessed a higher interest in fine arts and home science as compared to the male secondary school students. It was also found that male students were more interested in technology as compared to female students. Females usually devote more of their time in drawing, painting, home management, cooking, hygiene, sewing, and childcare compared to males while males devote more time in computer and use more technological equipments than females. This could be the reason why female students are more interested in fine arts and home science while male students are more interested in technology.

Suggestions:

1. Guidance service should be an integral part of every school system and should cater to all categories of students
2. There should be a full time guidance worker appointed in each and every school
3. Proper educational and vocational guidance service should be provided to the students on the basis of their interest for a particular vocation
4. Adequate information regarding occupational and educational requirements and opportunities should be collected and stored in the schools

5. The guidance service should co-operate with all the agencies of education.
6. Adequate provision should be made in guidance services for testing tools to be used by the students.
7. The interest and effort of every member of the staff should be given top most priority in the organisation of guidance services.
8. As far as possible, counsellors, psychologist and career masters should work together while giving guidance to the students.
9. Every school should have infrastructure facilities like suitable accommodation, equipment, sitting arrangement etc. as these are essential for carrying out guidance programme in the schools.
10. Government policy relating to organization of guidance services in secondary schools should be specific, favourable and definite.
11. All school teachers should be trained in guidance and counseling
12. Government should give financial support to schools for organising guidance services in the schools.

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