A COMPARISON OF VOCATION INTERESTS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES IN LATIN AMERICA

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The difficulties associated with verbal tests have been plaguing those concerned with vocational guidance in the United States and Latin America for some time. A trend in current testing is to get away from verbal testing and to employ the pictorial method of assessing traits. The earliest attempt to measure interests by means of pictures was madeb y Giles in Australia, in 1936. Other people in other countries have followed this lead in the United States and other parts of the world, and the author, while pursuing his doctoral studies at Stanford University in the United States, devised a pictorial interest inventory.

The original North American edition of the Geist Picture Interest Inventory (GPII) (6) consists of 129 pictures of vocations and three of hobbies. The pictures are presented in triad form with a forced choice selection of one of these pictures. Scoring categories are in the following areas: *Male edition*—persuasive, clerical, mechanical, scientific, musical, outdoor, literary, computational, artistic, social service, and dramatic. The *female edition* has the same scales with the addition of a personal service area. There are many editions in many languages. One of the first editions to be published was a Spanish one for Puerto Rico (3) where the verbal directions were in Spanish, the pictures the same as the American Mainland, but all the brief questions under the pictures in Spanish and English (bilingual). This edition is currently being used in Puerto Rico and the Southwestern part of the United States. However, it was found that the pictures in the Puerto Rican edition were not suitable for the rest of the Central and South American cultures, and thus a new Latin edition (8) was formulated with many pictures changed to suit the Latin culture and the verbal portion completely Spanish.

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As part of the standardization of this new edition, the test was given to samples of male youngsters in Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Peru, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. The numbers in each country are as follows:

TABLE 1

Country	*N*
Chile	300
Argentina	297
Mexico	425
Peru	660
Nicaragua	286
Guatemala	292
Total	2250

A more comprehensive description of each sample will be discussed in evaluating the results for each counrty.

The mean raw score for each scale was computed for each sample in each country. This was divided by the total possible number of items and transformed into a percentage which gave the percentage of items in each scale chosen by each sample. The three highest and the three lowest scales were then tabulated indicating the highest and lowst areas for each counrty.

RESULTS

CHILE

The sample from Chile consisted of students in tercer año de humanidades, cuarto año de humanidades, quinto año de humanidades, sexto año de humanidades and primer año, instituto pedagógico Universidad de Chile with a breakdown as follows:

TABLE 2

Grade	*N*
1. Tercer año de Humanidades	67
2. Cuarto año de Humanidades	58
3. Quinto año de Humanidades	68
4. Sexto año de Humanidades	43
5. Universidad de Chile	64
Total	300

Results (High Schools only)

Highest Areas of Interest*
1. Computational
2. Scientific
3. Literary

Lowest Areas of Interest**	1. Dramatic
	2. Musical
	3. Outdoor

*In descending order. The highest area is first.
**In ascending order. The lowest area is first.

ARGENTINA

The sample in Argentina was drawn from the schools in Buenos Aires. They were from the segundo año colegio nacional, tercer año colegio nacional, cuarto año colegio nacional, and quinto año colegio nacional as follows:

TABLE 3

Grade	*N*
Segundo año colegio nacional	87
Tercer año colegio nacional	82
Cuarto año colegio nacional	67
Quinto año colegio nacional	61
	297

Results

Highest Areas of Interest	*Lowest Areas of Interest*
1. Scientific	1. Dramatic
2. Computational	2. Musical
3. Literary	3. Mechanical

GUATEMALA

The sample in Guatemala was from the high schools in Guatemala City. They were from the segundo año de secundaria to quinto año de secundaria with a distribution as follows:

TABLE 4

Grade	*N*
Primer año de secundaria	50
Segundo año de secundaria	50
Tercer año de secundaria	49
Cuarto año de secundaria	50
Quinto año de secundaria	50
Sexto año de secundaria	43
	292

Results

Highest Areas of Interest	*Lowest Areas of Interest*
1. Computational	1. Musical
2. Scientific	2. Dramatic
3. Literary	3. Mechanical

NICARAGUA

The sample in Nicaragua was from the high schools in Managua and the University of Nicaragua. They were from tercer año de secundaria to quinto año de secundaria in the high schools.

TABLE 5

Grade	*N*
Tercer año de secundaria	66
Cuarto año de secundaria	44
Quinto año de secundaria	85
Universidad de Nicaragua	91
	286

Results

(High Schools Only)

Highest Areas of Interest	*Lowest Areas of Interest*
1. Literary	1. Musical
2. Scientific	2. Dramatic
3. Computational	3. Mechanical

MEXICO

The complete Mexican sample was from the same grade in several schools in Mexico City. This sample consisted of 425 male students.

TABLE 6

Results

Highest Areas of Interest	*Lowest Areas of Interest*
1. Scientific	1. Musical
2. Computational	2. Dramatic
3. Literary	3. Mechanical

PERU

The sample in Peru consisted of students in the high schools in Lima from primer año de secundaria to Universidad de San Marcos in Lima.

TABLE 7

Grade	*N*
Primer año de secundaria	70
Segundo año de secundaria	80
Tercer año de secundaria	125
Cuarto año de secundaria	70
Universidad de San Marcos	315
	660

Results

(High Schools Only)

Highest Areas of Interest	*Lowest Areas of Interest*
1. Computaional	1. Musical
2. Literary	2. Mechanical
3. Scientific	3. Outdoor

DISCUSSION

What is striking about the results in all the countries is the similarities in broad area of interest. This is true of Central as well as South America. In Chile, Peru, and Guatemala, computational interests are the strongest while in Mexico and Argentina scientific interests are the strongest; in Nicaragua literary interests are the highest. In all the countries, the same three broad areas of interest were strongest, viz., computational, scientific, and literary, although in each country they may not be in the exact same order as in the other countries. Insofar as the least or lowest areas of interest are concerned, musical interest is the least in Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru, and the second weakest in Chile and Argentina. Dramatic interest is least in Chile and Argentina. While there is not as much uniformity in the assessment of "least interests," it appears that in the countries sampled, musical, dramatic, and mechanical interests appear to have the least appeal to the high school boys in these countries; in Peru, outdoor interests replaced mechanical in "lack of interest."

It appears that in the countries sampled in Latin America, those areas of interest which represented the professions, particularly in the engineering, medical, chemical, physical and other scientific endeavors, and literary occupations have more appeal and interest to youngsters than those occupations representing the arts such as either musicians in bands or orchestras, the dramatic arts, or the semi-skilled and skilled mechanical occupations. This is not too different from the results found in other parts of the world (4), and it may be that the results of the atomic age have indeed spread to the youth of Latin America and despite the great need for people in the technical trades, there is more interest in the profssions. It may also be that prestige factors play an important part in interest in Latin America, since the musical and dramatic occupations have not as yet reached the status of such professions as medical, engineering, chemistry, physics, and the occupations of writer and poet.

RESULTS IN THE UNIVERSITIES

In order to assess whether there was a change of interest in time, an assessment was also made of university students in some of

the countries, viz., Chile, Nicaragua, and Peru. The results are as follows:

TABLE 8

CHILE (Universidade de Chile N — 64)

Highest Areas of Interest	*Lowest Areas of Interest*
1. Literary	1. Musical
2. Computational	2. Dramatic
3. Scientific	3. Outdoor

NICARAGUA (Universidade de Nicaragua N — 91)

Highest Areas of Interest	*Lowest Areas of Interest*
1. Literary	1. Musical
2. Scientific	2. Dramatic
3. Computational	3. Outdoor

PERU (Universidade de San Marcos N — 315)

Highest Areas of Interest	*Lowest Areas of Interest*
1. Computational	1. Musical
2. Scientific	2. Dramatic
3. Literary	3. Outdoor

It will be noted that the results in the "most interest" are very similar to the high school students in each country. In "least interests" outdoor seems to have replaced mechanical. Just why is not clear, but it may be that University students think they should study more and not be permitted the indulgence of being interested in outdoor sports.

A further breakdown was made of the students at the University of San Marcos in Lima, Peru, into liberal arts majors (Letras) and Science majors (Ciencias). The results were as follows:

TABLE 9

LIBERAL ARTS MAJORS (Letras N — 135)

Highest Areas of Interest	*Lowest Areas of Interest*
1. Literary	1. Mechanical
2. Computational	2. Dramatic
3. Scientific	3. Musical

SCIENCE MAJORS (Ciencias N — 188)

Highest Areas of Interest	*Lowest Areas of Interest*
1. Computational	1. Musical
2. Literary	2. Dramatic
3. Scientific	3. Outdoor and mechanical (tied)

Thus it appears no matter what the major the results are pretty

much the same. The results in all the universities sampled pretty much corroborated the results in the high schools.

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ABSTRACT

2250 students in six Latin American countries—Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Peru, Nicaragua, and Guatemala—were given the Spanish edition of the Geist Picture Interest Inventory. The three strongest and three weakest areas of vocational interest were computed for each sample. A comparison was made of the vocational interests at both the high school level in all countries, and in Chile, Peru, and Nicaragua at the university level. It was found that there were great similarities of interest in all countries. Reasons were given for the results obtained.

RESUMEN

Dos mil doscientos cincuenta estudiantes en seis países de la América Latina—Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, México, Nicaragua y Perú—recibieron la edición española del "Geist Picture Interest Inventory". Las tres áreas de intereses vocacionales con mayor, así como las tres con menor, frecuencia fueron calculadas para cada muestra. Se hizo una comparación de los intereses vocacionales tanto al nivel superior en todos los países como al nivel de la escuela secundaria y universitaria en Chile, Perú y Nicaragua. Se encontró que existían grandes semejanzas de intereses en todos los países. Se sugieren razones para los resultados obtenidos.

RESUMO

2250 estudantes em seis paises da América Latina—Chile, Ar-

gentina, México, Perú, Nicaragua, e Guatemala—receberam a edição espanhola do Geist Picture Interest Inventory. As três áreas de interêsse vocacional com maior, bem como as três com menor frequência foram calculadas para cada amostra. Uma comparação dos interêsses vocacionais foi feita no nível secundário em todos os paises, e nos níveis de escola secundária e universitário no Chile, Perú e Nicarágua. Grandes semelhanças de interêsse foram encontradas em todos os paises. Razões para os resultados obtidos são sugeridas.