

Yetenek Hiyerarşisi: Üstün Yetenek Türlerinin Toplumsal Değerleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma

Talent Hierarchy: A Research Study on the Social Value of Talent Types

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Öz

Bazı üstün zeka kuramcılarına göre üstün zeka veya üstün yetenek toplumsal icatlardır. Bu düşünce sistemi ile paralel fikirleri olan Tannenbaum (1983), toplumsal değerlerini göz önünde bulundurarak üstün yetenek türlerini ender yetenek, artık yetenek, hisseli yetenek ve tuhaf yetenek olmak üzere dört kategoride sınıflamıştır. Bu çalışmada Tannenbaum'un üstün yetenek sınıflandırması temel alınarak örnek yetenek türleri belirlenmiş ve bu türlerin toplumsal değerleri araştırılmıştır. Araştırmada çeşitli yetenek türlerini yansıtan altmış maddeden oluşan bir ölçek 601 kişiye uygulanmıştır. Katılımcılar ölçekte yer alan yetenek türlerinin önemlerini puanlamışlardır. Araştırmada şu sonuçlara varılmıştır: Katılımcılar ender yeteneklere diğer yeteneklerin tamamından daha fazla değer vermişler, artık yeteneklere hisseli yeteneklerden ve tuhaf yeteneklerden daha fazla değer vermişler, hisseli yeteneklere ise tuhaf yeteneklerden daha fazla değer vermişlerdir. Sonuçlar, yetenek türlerinin psikososyolojik bir hiyerarşi içinde sınıflandırılabilirliğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: üstün zekâ, üstün yetenek sınıflandırması, toplumsal değer

Abstract

According to some theorists, giftedness is a social construction. This research study was grounded on the psychosocial classification of talents proposed by Tannenbaum (1983), according to whom talents can be classified as scarcity, surplus, quota and anomalous talents based on their societal values. According to this classification, the social value of a talent determines its place in a talent hierarchy. In this study, the importance of talent types and the validity of the classification were investigated among Turkish lay people. A scale consisting of 60 different types of talents was administered to 601 people. Paired samples t-test analysis showed that scarcity talents had more value than the others, surplus talents had more value than quota and anomalous talents and quota talents had more value than anomalous talents. Furthermore, females attached more value to scarcity and surplus talents than did males. Findings clearly show that people attach different levels of importance to different talent types and talents can be classified in a hierarchy based on their social values.

Key Words: giftedness, talent classification, social value

Summary

Purpose and significance: The purpose of this research study was to investigate social values of talent types that were identified based on the psychosocial classification of talents proposed by Tannenbaum (1983). According to this model talents can be classified based on their social values into scarcity talents that preserve and

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prolong life, surplus talents that elevate sensibilities and sensitivities, quota talents that provide goods and services and anomalous talents that provide enjoyment. The societal value of a talent contributes to the degree to which parents in particular and governments and educational institutions in general make investment in the nurturance of this talent.

Method: A likert-type questionnaire consisting of 60 different types of talents was developed based on the Tannenbaum Model. Talents were identified through reviewing inventions books, expert opinions and the Guinness Records. The questionnaire included 15 talent types for each class of the Tannenbaum Model. Each talent type was scored from 1 to 4 (1 = above-average; 2 = high; 3 = very high; 4 = extraordinarily high) based on its value as perceived by the participants. The questionnaire was administered to 601 people (female = %36.4; male = 63.6) in a major city in the middle part of Turkey. Two criteria were used for participation in the study: Volunteer participation and being over 18-years old. Their age ranged from 18 to 72 with a mean of 27.14 and standard deviation of 10.83. Their educational status also ranged from elementary school and high school graduates (%38) to university students and university graduates (%62). The scale was given to all participants face to face, taking 15 minutes for each participant. Paired-samples t-test was used to compare mean scores of the talent categories and independent-samples t-test was used to test gender differences.

Results: Results showed that scarcity talents were rated as the highest ($M = 3.06$; $SD = .57$) followed by surplus talents ($M = 2.69$; $SD = .61$), quota talents ($M = 1.96$; $SD = .62$), and anomalous talents ($M = 1.90$; $SD = .59$). The differences between the means were found to be significant ($p < .00$ for all). The highest rating was given to the item “the person who leads the independence war of a country” ($M = 3.49$; $SD = .77$); followed by “the person who discovers electricity” and “the person who finds the cure for cancer.” The lowest rating was given to the item the person who makes the best saddles” ($M = 1.68$; $SD = .97$). Furthermore, female participants scored the scarcity talents and the surplus talents higher than male participants did. The differences were statistically significant ($p < .00$). Effect sizes were found to be low to medium ($d = .39$ and $.48$ respectively). Similar gender differences were not observed in quota and anomalous talents.

Discussion and Conclusions: Research findings imply a hierarchy among talent types with scarcity talents being at the top followed by surplus talents, quota talents and then anomalous talents. Findings also show that talent types related to scientific explorations and inventions, such as “the founder of cure for cancer” and

“inventor of genetic cloning,” are attached much more societal value than all other types of talents. What is more interesting is the finding that the item “the leader of the independence war of a country” in the scarcity talents was rated by the participants as the highest talent among sixty talent types, and the item “a commander who successfully overcomes terrorism” was rated the highest among the quota talents. These findings apparently show that talents have societal roots, because Turkey had an independence war in the last century and has experienced terrorism for the last thirty years. Why females attach more value to scarcity and surplus talents than males also is an intriguing finding that needs further explorations.