**THE TITLE**

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**Abstract.** Skilled human capital is essential in achieving a high income country. Despite the importance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in providing skilled workforce that is essential for economic growth of a country, students with vocational talent are difficult to be identified in schools due to the lack of a precise instrument to measure specific vocational traits. This conceptual paper aims to identify the “hidden treasure”, i.e., the vocational talented students, by determining their attributes. There are numerous studies on vocational interests and personality but few studies on the identification of vocational talent. As such, this paper deliberates on theoretical domains and related vocational literature to encapsulate the concept of vocational talent. Further, this study also attempts to decipher the factors influencing vocational choice of students. Based on relevant theories and previous studies, several important attributes that can be identified to determine the traits of vocational talented students. In the future, it is hoped that a rigorous instrument could be constructed to measure vocational talent.

Keywords—component; formatting; style; styling; insert (key words)

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# INTRODUCTION (first level heading) (Use The Microsoft Word Template Style: Heading 1)

Skilled human capital is essential in achieving a high income nation. Skilled workers are the key for country’s economic growth and human capital development. Countries with more skilled and educated human capitals grow more rapidly (Becker, Murphy & Tamura, 1994). Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system was designed to produce skilled workers based on labour demands. To be competitive, a country should not overlook the TVET system based on market demand (Pillai & Ridzwan, 1994). As such, the development of quality skilled human capital in a country is critical and this can be achieved through technical and vocational education and training. TVET could bring great benefits to a country. In line with that, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and many countries in the world are focusing and promoting TVET. Apart from offering the opportunities to raise the educational attainment level, TVET also has the potential to bridge the gap between the poor and the rich (Lamb, 2011). In the world of rapid economy and technological changes today, TVET also becomes the drive for innovation (Attwell, Bremer, Deitmer, Grollmann, Haasler, Herrmann, Rauner & Spottl, 2008). Innovation is essential to fullfil the evolving needs of the labour market. Hence, the need to fortify TVET by recruiting a new generation of talented vocational students has never been more critical.

# LITERATURE REVIEW (FIRST LEVEL HEADING)

There are many definitions of talent based on current literature. Talent is associated with how well an individual performs in relation to a specific job (Nilsson & Ellstrom, 2012), or something exemplary possessed by individuals (Garavan, Carbery & Rock, 2012), or a natural ability that someone is born with (Eysenck & Keane, 2005). Talented individuals show evidence of better-than-average potential or show potential for development but need support or need to be nurtured to achieve that potential (Clark, 2013). According to Renzulli (2010), individuals who show above average ability are considered as gifted and proposed the “three ring” conception model of giftedness as shown in Figure 1. The three components in the model are ability (above average ability), task commitment, and creativity. Gifted individual behaviors reflect interaction between the three components (Renzulli & Renzulli, 2010). Hence, talented individuals may also refer to as gifted individuals. Vocational talented students may also be referred to as vocationally gifted students and considered as the treasure of a country.

Times New Roman (size 10)



**Figure 1**: The three ring conception of giftedness (Renzulli & Renzulli, 2010)

In the famous multiple intelligences (MI) theory, intelligence is viewed incorporation of range of talents or the behavioral representations of talents (Gardner, 1983). According to Gardner (1983; 1999), there are at least nine intelligences; linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and existential. Therefore, there are at least nine different representation of talents. Gardner (1983) asserts that a person may have high level of several types of intelligences but may be weak in some of them. Depending on the different intelligent profile and education of a person, that individual may suit to different positions in the various working field and conditions. As no single job relies on a single intelligence, an individual may have a combination of several intelligences; high in one type of intelligence and low in others or multi-faceted levels in their intelligence profile. Table 1 shows the details description of each type of intelligence.

**Table 1:** The multiple intelligences theory (Gardner, 1983; 1999)

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| --- | --- |
| **Type of intelligence** | **Description** |
| Linguistic intelligence | Talented in using words efficiently; in writing or verbal |
| Musical intelligence | Talented in recognizing and composing musical pitches, tones and rhythms |
| Logical-mathematical intelligence | Talented in reasoning deductively; think logically and problem solving |
| Spatial intelligence | Talented in identifying and visualizing shape, space, color and lines including representing ideas visually and graphically, creative, highly imaginative |
| Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence | Talented in carrying out physical activities, controlling own body movements and hands involving the fine and gross motor skills |
| Interpersonal intelligence | Talented in the communication with others in terms of understanding their intentions, motivations and desires |
| Intrapersonal intelligence | Talented to be self-aware, to understand and appreciate own feeling |

# CONCLUSION

The paper is solely theoretical in nature. It raised several important questions that should be considered by vocational educational institutions in selecting the vocational students. TVET administrators and teachers should also consider the vocational attributes highlighted in this paper when selecting the students for vocational stream. The attributes can be used to determine students who are likely to be enrolled in TVET. Indirectly, we can assumed that students who possessed vocational attributes are also those with vocational talent. Proper selection of vocationally talented students could reduce dropout rates in technical and vocational training institutions due to the filtering and screening of the students’ entry by using reliable instrument. However, a good instrument to identify vocational attributes and talent is still scarce. Future research should focus on developing a reliable instrument to measure vocational attributes and talent. As a conclusion, the hidden treasure, i.e., the vocationally talented students with appropriate attributes should be identified and nurtured in TVET to produce better quality of future skilled workforce. When this better quality of skilled workforce contribute to the economic growth of the country, the negative perception of TVET may also be eliminated.

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