

# NATURAL TALENT: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ASPIRING ACTORS IN DRAMATIC ARTS

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## Abstract

Natural talent makes the art industry richer with actors and performances. Most of the celebrities we have come from natural talent. The study explored the significance of creating opportunities for aspiring actors in the field of dramatic arts, emphasising the role of natural talent and structured training. The performing arts serve as a crucial medium for self-expression and personal growth, particularly for individuals from marginalised backgrounds. The study adopts Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences as its theoretical framework. Employing a qualitative case study approach twelve purposively selected actors were analysed to explore how dramatic innate abilities influence performance. Data were collected through structured interview questions, which facilitated the identification of key themes through coding and thematic analysis. The findings reveal that despite the significant challenges associated with pursuing an acting career, intense competition and limited resources—various initiatives emerged to support aspiring actors. Programs emphasising local theatre participation, acting workshops, and community-based training provide essential skills and networking opportunities. The study recommends programs prioritising raw talent and ensuring accessibility for marginalised communities. Additionally, in a supportive environment, participants hone artistic skills and develop critical life competencies such as communication and resilience in artists. The findings advocate for the expansion of similar initiatives that recognise and nurture natural talent in aspiring actors. Ultimately, the study highlights the necessity of integrating performing arts education into community frameworks to cultivate future generations of artists, enriching the cultural acting sphere and providing pathways to successful careers in dramatic arts.

**Keywords:** *Aspiring, creativity, dramatic arts, natural talent, opportunities.*

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## 1. Introduction

The development of talent in the dramatic arts has been a subject of considerable debate, with various models proposed to explain the emergence of successful actors, directors, and playwrights. Natural talent in the dramatic arts can be a powerful catalyst for aspiring actors, but it is often insufficient (Sparling, 2021). The journey toward a successful acting career requires not only innate ability but also the creation of opportunities that allow talent to flourish (Connell, Brown, & Baker, 2020). In today's competitive entertainment landscape, aspiring actors must navigate various pathways to gain experience and exposure. It may include engaging with local theatre groups, enrolling in acting classes, and participating in auditions for multiple productions (Sparling, 2021).

Moreover, the rise of digital platforms has revolutionised how actors may showcase their skills (Connell et al., 2020). Many are now encouraged to create content through short films, web series, or social media performances. The proactive approach enhances their visibility and allows them to define their artistic voice (Malafrente, 2021). As actors like Issa Rae and Emma Stone have demonstrated, leveraging technology and creativity can lead to significant career breakthroughs (Lawal, Ibrahim, Ojodu, & Salvador, 2023). Ultimately, while natural talent is invaluable, the ability to seize opportunities and innovate within the industry truly empowers aspiring actors to succeed in the dramatic arts (Sparling, 2021).

These research questions guided the study:

1. How do aspiring actors perceive the role of natural talent in their journey towards success in the dramatic arts?
2. What opportunities do aspiring actors identify as crucial for developing their craft and advancing their careers in the dramatic arts?

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## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. The role of natural talent in acting

Natural talent is often viewed as a foundational element in the acting profession (Connell et al., 2020). While some individuals possess an innate ability to perform, this talent alone does not guarantee success (Malafronte, 2021). Research indicates that natural talent must be complemented by rigorous training and practice to develop the necessary skills for effective performance (Lawal et al., 2023). Actors like Jennifer Lawrence have demonstrated that while raw talent can provide an initial advantage, continuous learning and adaptation are critical for long-term success in the industry (Malafronte, 2021).

### 2.2. Creating opportunities through education and networking

Education is pivotal in transforming natural talent into professional opportunities (Piirto, 2021). Aspiring actors benefit from formal training programs that teach essential skills such as text analysis, character development, and emotional expression (Plucker & Peters, 2020). Additionally, networking within the industry may be crucial; relationships with casting directors and fellow actors could lead to auditions and roles that might otherwise remain inaccessible (Mohamed Hashim, Tlemsani, & Matthews, 2022). Community theatre or workshops could enhance visibility and provide practical experience (Lawal et al., 2023).

### 2.3. The importance of continuous development

Continuous personal and professional development is vital for aspiring actors (Jensen & Kim, 2020). The acting industry constantly evolves, and staying informed about industry trends, audition techniques, and performance styles is essential (Hagen, 2023). Actors could embrace lifelong learning through classes, workshops, and self-directed study to refine their craft and adapt to changing demands (Malafronte, 2021). The commitment enhances actors' skills and increases their chances of being noticed by casting directors, ultimately paving the way for successful careers in the dramatic arts (Piirto, 2021).

### 2.4. Empirical literature

**2.4.1. Genetic and interactional perspectives.** The study by Kogan (2002) and (Simonton, 1999) provides a foundational understanding of the genetic and interactional perspectives in the development of performing arts careers. Kogan's developmental model considers both intrinsic and environmental determinants, while Simonton's emergence model, based on Lykken's behavior-genetic research, emphasises genetic factors. The suggestion that genetic factors may play a role, environmental influences and individual decisions are also critical in acting (Kogan, 2002).

**2.4.2. Environmental influences and opportunities.** Environmental factors, such as access to quality training and mentorship, play a significant role in the development of aspiring actors (Cherian & Francis, 2021). The heterogeneity in students' prior school and undergraduate experiences highlights the importance of providing diverse and inclusive opportunities for training in the dramatic arts (Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius, Khalid, & Finster, 2021). Programs that offer a range of experiences and support can help nurture talent from various backgrounds, ensuring that natural talent is not the sole determinant of success (Malafronte, 2021).

## 3. Theoretical framework

Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences serves as a foundational framework for studying natural talent in the dramatic arts (McClellan & Conti, 2008). The comprehensive approach emphasises that intelligence is not a singular entity but rather a collection of distinct types, including interpersonal and bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, which are essential for acting (Visser, Ashton, & Vernon, 2006). Interpersonal intelligence enables actors to connect with others and portray characters authentically, while bodily-kinesthetic intelligence allows them to express themselves physically in performance (Lawal et al., 2023). The framework suggests that individuals possess varying degrees of these intelligences, indicating that aspiring actors can cultivate their natural talents through targeted training and practice.

## 4. Methodology

A qualitative research approach was adopted for the study, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the complexities surrounding acting talent and the various opportunities available to aspiring actors (Creswell, 1999). The method emphasises understanding the subjective experiences of individuals, making it particularly suited for capturing the nuanced realities of actors' lives.

#### 4.1. Data collection and analysis

Open-ended interviews were used to collect data, which was subsequently coded to identify themes. The qualitative approach facilitated rich narratives from participants about their personal experiences and motivations in pursuing acting careers, providing deeper insights into how actors perceive their training and emotional journeys (Zarestky, 2023). Analysing these narratives helped uncover recurring themes that highlight the emotional and psychological aspects of acting.

#### 4.2. Research design

A case study as a research design was utilised for the study. An in-depth exploration of individual experiences and practices within the acting community based on the case study for the research (Poth, 2023). The qualitative approach allowed researchers to focus on specific actors or acting schools, providing rich, contextual insights into how natural talent interacts with various opportunities in the dramatic arts (Wa-Mbaleka & Rosario, 2022).

#### 4.3. Population and sampling

A purposive sampling of twelve actors was utilised. The method was beneficial as the researcher aimed to gather in-depth insights from a targeted group, making it an ideal choice for studying actors in the dramatic arts (Poth, 2023). The approach also facilitates the exploration of nuanced perspectives regarding the role of natural talent in shaping career trajectories (Connell et al., 2020). The method enhanced the credibility and relevance of the findings by focusing on individuals best suited to address the research questions (Poth, 2023).

#### 4.4. Data collection

Data collection for the study was conducted using a structured interview. The method was chosen for its efficiency in gathering comprehensive data and also its analysis of trends and patterns related to talent perception and opportunity identification among aspiring actors (Poth, 2023). The interview questions consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions provided quantifiable data, enabling researchers to assess the prevalence of certain beliefs about natural talent and the types of opportunities actors consider most beneficial (Creswell, 1999). The interview tool was distributed online to reach a diverse group of aspiring actors across different backgrounds and locations.

#### 4.5. Data treatment and analysis

The qualitative data derived from open-ended questions was subjected to thematic analysis. Initial coding focused on identifying recurring ideas and concepts related to talent development and opportunity creation (Creswell, 1999). Thematic maps were developed to visualise the interrelationships among the themes, facilitating a clearer understanding of how aspiring actors navigate their careers (McClellan & Conti, 2008). The analytical approach highlights the multifaceted nature of acting as a profession and the interplay between individual talent and external opportunities (Poth, 2023).

### 5. Findings and discussion

#### 5.1. Table 1: Research question and themes

The table shows themes created that are aligned with the research question.

Table 1.

	<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Research Theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>
1	How do aspiring actors perceive the role of natural talent in their journey towards success in the dramatic arts?	The Dual Nature of Talent and Training	1. Innate vs. Developed Skills 2. Impact of Training on Performance
2	What opportunities do aspire actors identify as crucial for developing their craft and advancing their careers in the dramatic arts?	Pathways to Professional Development	1. Networking and Industry Connections 2. Educational Opportunities and Skill Development

Figure 1. Perceptions of Natural Talent in Aspiring Actors.

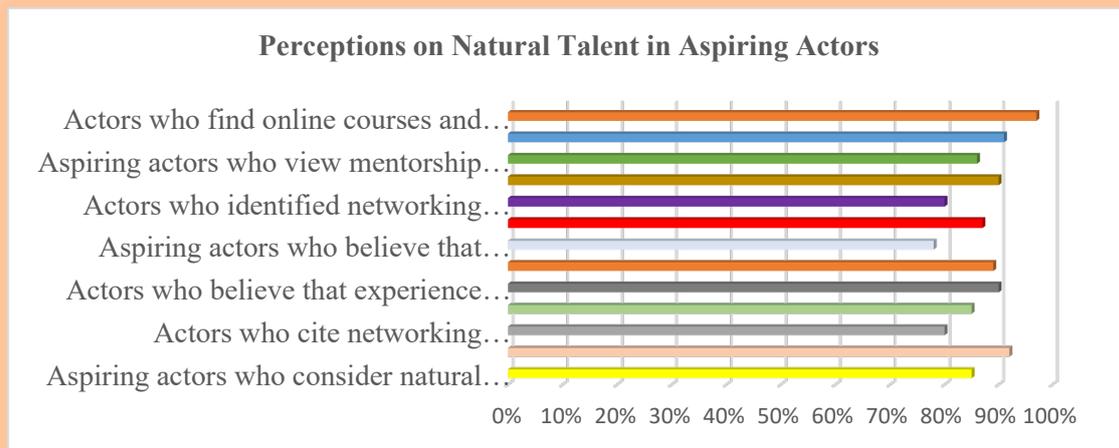


Figure 1: Aspiring actors who consider natural talent as a crucial factor in achieving success 85%, actors who believe that training and skill development outweigh natural talent in their journey 92%, actors who cite networking opportunities as more effective strategy for growth on the industry 80%, actors who feel that hard work and dedication are more significant than innate talent 85%, actors who believe that experience gained through auditions and performances is more valuable than natural talent 90%, actors who think that emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills are more important than raw talent in acting success 89%, aspiring actors who believe that obtaining a degree in drama or performing arts is essential for their career advancement 78%, actors who consider participation in acting workshops and masterclasses as vital for skill enhancement 87%, actors who identify networking events, such as industry meet-and-greets, as crucial for career development 80%, actors who believe that gaining audition experience is critical for improving their chances of landing roles 90%, actors who view mentorship from established professionals as an essential opportunity for growth 86%, actors who consider involvement in community or amateur theatre productions vital in honing their craft 91%, actors who find online courses and resources helpful for developing their acting skills and knowledge about the industry 97%. The research findings provide insights into aspiring actors' perceptions of natural talent and career advancement strategies (Lawal et al., 2023). While participants view natural talent as crucial, they believe training and skill development are even more critical for professional success (Plucker & Peters, 2020). Networking is emphasized as an effective growth strategy, aligning with literature that highlights the importance of relationships in the entertainment industry (Cherian & Francis, 2021; Connell et al., 2020). Additionally, participants recognise the value of experiential learning, particularly audition experience, and highlight emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills as essential for success.

## 6. Conclusion

The research findings suggest that talent in dramatic arts should be supported by academic education for long-term career sustainability. Education must be encouraged at all levels, from foundational training to advanced courses. While natural talent is important, success relies on a combination of training, experience, and emotional intelligence. Networking and mentorship are also crucial for accessing opportunities. Aspiring actors should actively pursue workshops, community theater, and industry events to enhance skills and expand networks. A holistic approach integrating talent development with rigorous training and strategic networking will cultivate skilled performers ready to thrive in the evolving dramatic arts industry.

## 7. Recommendations

To enhance talent development in the dramatic arts, integrating ongoing academic education at all levels is essential. Short courses, workshops, and peer feedback can provide structured learning beyond public performance. Establishing certification programs will increase actors' academic credibility and employability in the industry. Future research should explore talent development dynamics to create effective support systems, fostering inclusivity for aspiring actors, directors, and playwrights. Promoting mentorship programs and community engagement through amateur theater will refine actors' skills in supportive settings. Ultimately, a comprehensive strategy emphasizing education, mentorship, and community involvement will cultivate a thriving ecosystem for talent development in the dramatic arts.

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