



Genetic Variability and Character Association Studies in Foxtail Millet (*Setaria italica* L.) for Grain Yield Characters

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

In this experiment, 20 different genotypes of foxtail millet were examined using correlation and path analysis in the rainy season of 2021, at the crop research farm (CRF, SHUATS) in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh and the entire experiment was set up using a completely randomized block design (RBD) with three replications. All the genotypes have shown considerable variation in their mean performance with respect to all the studied traits. The ANOVA table has demonstrated significant differences for all 12 examined variables. The observed variation is probably due to both favourable environmental factors and genotypes because PCV is just a little greater than GCV. A significant positive correlation between the examined attributes (days to 50% flowering, days to maturity, plant height, flag leaf length, flag leaf width, flag leaf area, peduncle length, panicle length, number of tillers, number of productive tillers) and the grain yield was found. A positive direct effect at the phenotypic level, research using path analysis demonstrated that the traits of panicle length, number of tillers per plant, test weight, and flag leaf length had a real relationship with grain yield per plant. It can be concluded that panicle length, number of tillers per plant, test weight, and flag leaf length serve as important traits for further breeding programs in developing high-yielding foxtail millet genotypes based on the nature and magnitude of character associations and their direct and indirect effects.

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the earliest crops used for food grain, hay, and pasture is foxtail millet (*Setaria italica* (L.) Beauv). It has been farmed in China from around the sixth millennium BC, giving it the longest history of cultivation among the millets. Small millets are one of the ancient cereals that farmers still plant today, mostly in regions of the world that are prone to drought. Even in the harshest climates, they may thrive in dry and semi-arid regions with weak soils, where no other crop can grow and provide great yields (Howarth et al. 2002).

However, because of the effects of the green revolution, their cultivation is neglected and further relegated to "Orphan cereals" (Pavankumar et al. 2019) [1-3], which caused a gap in the research. Very less research has taken place on the foxtail millet crop. Foxtail millet cannot tolerate water logging and is also susceptible to lodging at maturity. To mitigate the gap in this research has to be done in foxtail millet.

The Foxtail millet ranks second in terms of global production [4] after finger millet among tiny millets, although this has changed recently due to high demand from health-conscious customers and its adaptability to climate-resilient cultivation. In India, foxtail millet is cultivated on 98,489 ha of land, yielding an estimated 56,327 tons of grain per hectare on average (Anonymous, 2017). It has good nutritional value; 100grams of foxtail millet grains have 9.9 grams of protein, 72 grams of carbohydrates, 2.5 grams of fat, 3.5 grams of ash, 10 grams of crude fibre, 0.27 milligrams of potassium, 0.01 milligrams of thiamine, 0.099 milligrams of riboflavin, 0.82 milligrams of pantothenic acid, 3.70 milligrams of niacin, and 0.02 milligrams.

It has been revealed that millets, which are considered "smart foods," can enhance growth in children and adolescents by 26 to 39 percent where they replace rice in typical meals. Malnutrition is one of the key issues that is most common in underdeveloped countries worldwide [5-8]. The findings imply that millets can greatly contribute to conquering hunger and that there is definitely a need for the genetic development of the rice crop because rice is one of the main food sources in all developing and impoverished countries. Being a complex character, a crop's

grain yield is affected by many of its dependent traits and is regulated by polygenes as well as environmental factors [9-11]. Planning a successful selection method for evolving high-yielding genotypes requires knowledge of the heredity of yield and its related qualities, heritability, estimated genetic advance, and associations between important economic factors. The presence of variability is necessary for these qualities to improve. The fundamental requirement for any crop development is variability for traits of economic significance. Breeding high-yielding varieties, either through heterosis breeding or pure line selection, is crucial for increasing grain yields [12-16]. The probability of selecting a desired genotype will increase with the presence of a wider spectrum of diversity. In addition to genetic variability, understanding heritability and genetic advance evaluate the proportion of a character that is passed down to offspring, assisting the breeder in using an appropriate breeding strategy to attain the goal [17-21].

This study was started in order to get exact data on the level of natural variability in relation to several yield parameters of foxtail germplasm, and estimate the relationship between the yield and yield contributing characters using correlation coefficient analysis and path coefficient analysis.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The experiment was conducted on the Crop research fields at the field experiment centre of the Department of Genetics and Plant breeding, Naini Agricultural Institute, Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, technology and sciences, Prayagraj, U.P. at 25.57° North Latitude, 81.56" North, and 98 metres above sea level. The region receives roughly 1013.4 mm of rain on average per year, with the majority falling from July to September. The 20 foxtail millet genotypes which include a check variety (Table 1) were laid out in a Randomized Block Design replicated thrice. Each genotype was sown in three rows of three meters length with a spacing of 30cm between the rows and 10cm between the plants. Data was recorded on various morphological characters such as days to 50% flowering, days to maturity, plant height, flag leaf length, flag leaf width, flag leaf area, panicle length, peduncle length, number of tillers, number of productive tillers, test weight, grain yield per plant. These observations were

Table 1. List of genotypes

Sl. No.	Genotype	Sl. No.	Genotype
1	TNSi 380	11	TNPSi-382
2	IIMR FxM-6	12	TNSi 385
3	IIMR FxM-7	13	DHFt 20-3
4	CRS FxM-3	14	DHFt 20-153
5	CRS FxM-4	15	SiA 4201
6	IIMR FxM-8	16	SiA 4213
7	IIMR FxM-9	17	BUFTM 82
8	IIMR FxM-10	18	BUFTM 98
9	IIMR FxM-11	19	SiA 3156
10	GPUF 16	20	DHFt 109-3 (check)

recorded on randomly selected five competitive plants per plot in each replication except for days to 50 percent flowering and days to maturity where observations were recorded on whole plot basis. In the present investigation, the foxtail millet genotypes were examined to characterize the germplasm for yield and yield contributing characters, to estimate the genetic variability among the yield and its contributing characters, and also examined the correlation and path analysis for grain yield and its contributing characters. "The estimation of mean, variance and standard error were worked out by adopting the standard methods" Panse and Sukhatme, (1964). "Phenotypic variance and genotypic variance estimated" according to the procedure given by Burton 1952. "Heritability (h^2) in the broad sense was calculated" according to Burton and Devane, (1953). "Genetic advance was expressed as percentage of mean by using the formula suggested" by Johnson et al. (1955). "The genotypic correlation between yield and its component traits and among themselves was worked out as per the methods suggested" by Al Jibouri et al. (1958). "The correlation coefficient was partitioned into direct and indirect causes" according to Dewey and Lu (1959).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Studies on Variability among the Germplasm

Genetic variability studies provide information about the genetic properties of the population. Based on the result of the genetic variability the breeding methods are formulated for further crop breeding. This study helps to know about the nature and extent of variability in the population, the effect of the environment on the characters, heritability, and the genetic advance.

In the present investigation 12 quantitative characters were observed for variability and

character association among themselves. The results of quantitative characters are summarized in Table 2. The estimates of genotypic coefficient of variation, phenotypic coefficient of variation, heritability, and genetic advance as percent of mean are given in Table 2. Days to 50 percent flowering ranged from 41 to 63 days with CV of 8.51 percent. Days to maturity ranged 64 to 86 with CV of 8.18. Plant height varied from 75.85 to 152.37 with CV of 7.81. Flag leaf length varied from 23.53 to 67.79 with CV of 8.83. Flag leaf width varied from 1.31 to 2.61 with CV of 6.95. Flag leaf area ranged from 55.90 to 124.07 with a CV of 6.66. Number of tillers varied from 0.70 to 2.35 with CV of 7.11. Number of productive tillers varied from 0.75 to 2.21 with CV of 7.95. Peduncle length ranged from 5.56 to 14.37 with CV of 6.59. Panicle length ranged from 11.48 to 22.88 with CV of 7.67. Test weight ranged from 0.54 to 2.39 with CV of 7.90. Grain yield per plant varied from 2.41 to 6.07 with CV 6.92 evaluated.

In the present study, all the traits showed a narrow difference between the Phenotypic Coefficient of Variance (PCV) and Genotypic Coefficient of Variance (GCV) except days to 50 percent, indicating the effect of environment on the expression of the traits. The genetic parameters were summarized in Table 3. The highest GCV and PCV values were recorded in test weight (37.52 percent and 38.35 percent), followed by flag leaf length (29.83 percent and 31.11 percent), and no. of productive tillers (27.65 percent and 28.78 percent), respectively. The lowest GCV and PCV values were seen in days to maturity (5.59 percent and 9.91 percent), followed by days to 50% flowering (9.62 percent and 12.84 percent). Heritability estimates for all the features ranged from 31.83 to 95.76 percent. The test weight (95.75), No. of tillers (93.89) and Grain yield per plant (92.75) had the highest heritability, whereas the Days to 50%

Table 2. Mean performances of 20 genotypes foxtail millet for 12 quantitative traits

Sl. No.	Genotypes	DF 50%	DM	PH	FLL	FLW	FLA	NTT	NPT	PeL	PL	Tw	GYP
1	GPUF 16	53	80	124.46	67.79	1.63	80.75	1.49	1.36	10.84	17.79	1.14	4.09
2	IIMR FxM-9	48	72	152.37	32.82	1.42	78.81	1.23	1.09	10.81	15.72	2.38	2.41
3	SiA 4201	41	64	75.85	23.53	1.80	73.33	0.7	0.75	13.15	13.88	1.14	2.46
4	CRS FxM 3	52	81	91.14	30.52	1.30	74.29	2.27	1.97	6.90	16.38	0.77	3.03
5	BUFTM 82	63	81	128.77	29.59	1.59	75.38	2.17	2.16	11.43	16.25	1.60	3.97
6	CRS FXM 4	53	86	118.84	28.67	1.41	74.70	2.34	2.21	8.93	16.16	0.82	3.27
7	DHFt 20-3	53	67	141.98	34.80	1.74	87.89	1.95	1.80	11.83	19.24	1.35	3.45
8	IIMR FxM-8	54	71	101.28	25.69	2.27	55.90	2.12	2.11	5.56	11.48	1.17	2.48
9	IIMR FxM-11	50	83	133.99	30.15	2.11	98.77	1.46	1.01	12.57	18.76	1.60	5.64
10	BUFTM 98	49	76	129.01	37.37	1.56	86.97	1.76	1.27	12.77	16.38	2.15	4.48
11	TNSi 380	52	82	144.31	31.89	1.53	83.63	1.09	1.09	8.53	19.48	1.84	4.64

Df50 %- Days to 50% Flowering, *DM*- Days to Maturity, *PH*- Plant Height, *FLL*-Flag Leaf Length, *FLW*- Flag Leaf Width, *FLA*- Flag Leaf Area, *PeL*- Peduncle Length, *PL*-Panicle Length, *NTT*- Number of Total Tillers, *NPT*- No. of Productive Tillers, *TW*- Test Weight, *GYP*- Grain Yield Per Plant

Table 2 (continued)

Sls.No.	Genotypes	DF 50%	DM	PH	FLL	FLW	FLA	NTT	NPT	PeL	PL	Tw	GYP
12	DHFt-20-153	56	80	120.17	25.96	1.59	68.98	1.13	1.28	8.71	20.53	0.53	3.10
13	TNPSi 382	56	77	104.53	54.63	1.54	56.71	1.11	1.42	9.46	13.82	1.62	3.45
14	SiA 3156	63	75	123.83	38.95	1.88	124.07	2.01	1.80	10.43	22.87	1.01	6.07
15	TNSi 385	62	83	121.11	32.58	2.60	96.39	1.48	1.46	9.42	16.28	1.37	3.99
16	IIMR FxM-7	46	76	126.72	27.38	1.49	86.30	1.80	1.56	12.25	17.16	1.39	3.91
17	SiA 4213	49	75	121.51	36.10	1.62	79.75	1.96	1.80	14.37	19.27	1.24	4.60
18	IIMR FxM-6	52	78	113.35	30.07	1.52	71.62	2.23	2.15	9.54	15.47	2.08	3.89
19	IIMR FxM-10	52	76	128.48	28.59	1.71	83.00	1.49	1.37	8.71	14.65	2.38	4.11
20	DHFt 109-3(check)	63	83	140.18	35.04	1.66	90.18	1.42	1.22	11.31	15.51	0.79	3.77
	Mean	53	77	122.10	34.11	1.70	81.36	1.66	1.55	10.38	16.86	1.42	3.84
Range	Minimum	41	64	75.85	23.53	1.31	55.90	0.70	0.75	5.56	11.48	0.54	2.41
	Maximum	63	86	152.37	67.79	2.61	124.07	2.35	2.21	14.37	22.88	2.39	6.07
	CV	8.51	8.18	7.81	8.83	6.95	6.66	7.11	7.95	6.59	7.67	7.90	6.92

Sls.No.	Genotypes	DF 50%	DM	PH	FLL	FLW	FLA	NTT	NPT	PeL	PL	Tw	GYP
	Sem	2.63	3.66	5.50	1.74	0.07	3.13	0.07	0.07	0.39	0.75	0.06	0.15
	CD	7.54	10.48	15.75	4.98	0.20	8.96	0.20	0.20	1.13	2.14	0.19	0.44

Df50 %- Days to 50% Flowering, DM- Days to Maturity, PH- Plant Height, FLL-Flag Leaf Length, FLW- Flag Leaf Width, FLA- Flag Leaf Area, PeL- Peduncle Length, PL-Panicle Length, NTT- Number of Total Tillers, NPT- No. of Productive Tillers, TW- Test Weight, GYP- Grain Yield Per Plant

Table 3. Genetic parameters for 12 quantitative characters in 20 Foxtail genotypes evaluated during kharif-2021

Sl. No.	Traits	GCV	PCV	h ² (Broad Sense)	GA	GAM
1	Days to fifty percent flowering	9.62	12.84	56.09	7.96	14.84
2	Days to maturity	5.59	9.91	31.83	5.04	6.50
3	Plant height	14.30	16.29	77.05	31.57	25.86
4	Flag leaf length	29.83	31.11	91.94	20.09	58.91
5	Flag leaf width	17.91	19.21	86.92	0.59	34.39
6	Flag leaf Area	17.96	19.16	87.90	28.23	34.69
7	Number of tillers	27.90	28.79	93.89	0.93	55.69
8	Number of productive tillers	27.65	28.78	92.36	0.85	54.75
9	Peduncle length	20.74	21.77	90.83	4.23	40.73
10	Panicle length	14.95	16.80	79.18	4.62	27.40
11	Test weight	37.52	38.35	95.76	1.08	75.64
12	Grain yield per plant	24.74	25.69	92.75	1.89	49.08

GCV = Genotypic Coefficient of Variation, PCV = Phenotypic Coefficient of Variation, h² = Heritability, GA = Genetic Advance, GAM = Genetic Advance as Mean %

Table 4. Phenotypic correlation of 20 foxtail genotypes for 12-grain yield traits

Characters	DF50%	DM	PH	FLL	FLW	FLA	NTT	NPT	PeL	PL	TW	GYP
DF50%	1.000	0.393*	0.264*	0.145	0.217	0.210	0.237	0.278*	-0.267*	0.124	-0.217	0.225
DM		1.000	0.225	0.103	-0.051	0.104	0.094	0.083	-0.203	0.158	-0.131	0.240
PH			1.000	0.089	-0.082	0.379*	-0.006	-0.160	0.178	0.351*	0.355*	0.319*
FLL				1.000	-0.095	0.042	-0.115	-0.097	0.103	0.103	0.002	0.207
FLW					1.000	0.242	-0.109	-0.080	-0.077	-0.098	-0.055	0.151
FLA						1.000	0.048	-0.180	0.334*	0.592**	-0.014	0.720**
NTT							1.000	0.878**	-0.198	0.044	-0.138	0.132
NPT								1.000	-0.320*	-0.068	-0.192	-0.042
PeL									1.000	0.264*	0.128	0.317*

Characters	DF50%	DM	PH	FLL	FLW	FLA	NTT	NPT	PeL	PL	TW	GYP
PL										1.000	-0.233	0.616**
TW											1.000	0.111
GYP												1.000

, ** indicates significance at 5% and 1% at the level of significance, respectively

Df50 %- Days To 50% Flowering, DM- Days to Maturity, PH- Plant Height, FLL-Flag Leaf Length, FLW- Flag Leaf Width, FLA- Flag Leaf Area, PeL- Peduncle length, PL-Panicle Length, NTT- Number of Total Tillers, NPT- No. of Productive Tillers, TW- Test Weight, GYP- Grain Yield Per Plant

Table 5. Genotypical correlation coefficient of 20 foxtail millet genotypes for yield and its related traits

Characters	DF50%	DM	PH	FLL	FLW	FLA	NTT	NPT	PeL	PL	TW	GYP
DF50%	1.000	0.634**	0.230	0.208	0.369*	0.332*	0.279*	0.421**	-0.328*	0.252	-0.313*	0.344*
DM		1.000	0.337*	0.132	-0.084	0.164	0.302*	0.239	-0.311*	0.250	-0.260*	0.451**
PH			1.000	0.122	-0.082	0.464**	-0.030	-0.147	0.264*	0.469**	0.400*	0.403*
FLL				1.000	-0.122	0.030	-0.129	-0.093	0.128	0.130	0.006	0.234
FLW					1.000	0.287*	-0.098	-0.101	-0.094	-0.098	-0.077	0.197
FLA						1.000	0.061	-0.171	0.394*	0.717**	-0.004	0.775**
NTT							1.000	0.940**	-0.198	0.043	-0.126	0.141
NPT								1.000	-0.380*	-0.049	-0.203	-0.037
PeL									1.000	0.319*	0.142	0.351*
PL										1.000	-0.253	0.672**
TW											1.000	0.124
GYP												1.000

, ** indicates significance at 5% and 1% at the level of significance, respectively

Df50 %- Days To 50% Flowering, DM- Days to Maturity, PH- Plant Height, FLL-Flag Leaf Length, FLW- Flag Leaf Width, FLA- Flag Leaf Area, PeL- Peduncle Length, PL- Panicle Length, NTT- Number of Total Tillers, NPT- No. of Productive Tillers, TW- Test Weight, GYP- Grain Yield Per Plant

Table 6. Genotypical path coefficient analysis of 20 foxtail millet genotypes for yield and its related traits

Characters	DF50%	DM	PH	FLL	FLW	FLA	NTT	NPT	PeL	PL	TW	GYP
DF50%	0.239	0.152	0.055	0.050	0.088	0.079	0.067	0.101	-0.078	0.060	-0.075	0.344*
DM	0.397	0.626	0.211	0.083	-0.052	0.103	0.189	0.150	-0.195	0.156	-0.163	0.451**
PH	-0.165	-0.242	-0.720	-0.088	0.059	-0.334	0.022	0.106	-0.190	-0.337	-0.287	0.403*
FLL	0.018	0.011	0.011	0.086	-0.011	0.003	-0.011	-0.008	0.011	0.011	0.001	0.234
FLW	0.128	-0.029	-0.028	-0.042	0.347	0.100	-0.034	-0.035	-0.033	-0.034	-0.027	0.197
FLA	-0.051	-0.025	-0.072	-0.005	-0.044	-0.154	-0.009	0.026	-0.061	-0.111	0.001	0.775**
NTT	0.186	0.201	-0.020	-0.086	-0.065	0.041	0.665	0.625	-0.132	0.029	-0.084	0.141
NPT	-0.275	-0.156	0.096	0.061	0.066	0.112	-0.614	-0.653	0.248	0.032	0.132	-0.037
PeL	-0.118	-0.112	0.095	0.046	-0.034	0.141	-0.071	-0.136	0.359	0.114	0.051	0.351*
PL	0.241	0.239	0.449	0.124	-0.094	0.687	0.041	-0.047	0.306	0.959	-0.242	0.672**
TW	-0.256	-0.213	0.327	0.005	-0.063	-0.003	-0.103	-0.166	0.116	-0.207	0.818	0.124
GYP	0.344*	0.451**	0.403*	0.234	0.197	0.775**	0.141	-0.037	0.351*	0.672**	0.124	1.000

*, ** indicates significance at 5% and 1% at the level of significance, respectively

Df50 %- Days To 50% Flowering, DM- Days to Maturity, PH- Plant Height, FLL-Flag Leaf Length, FLW- Flag Leaf Width, FLA- Flag Leaf Area, PeL- Peduncle Length, PL- Panicle Length, NTT- Number of Total Tillers, NPT- No. of Productive Tillers, TW- Test Weight, GYP- Grain Yield Per Plant

Table 7. Phenotypical path coefficient analysis of 20 foxtail millet genotypes for yield and its related traits

Characters	DF50%	DM	PH	FLL	FLW	FLA	NTT	NPT	PeL	PL	TW	GYP
DF50%	0.106	0.042	0.028	0.015	0.023	0.022	0.025	0.030	-0.028	0.013	-0.023	0.225
DM	0.074	0.189	0.042	0.019	-0.010	0.020	0.018	0.016	-0.038	0.030	-0.025	0.240
PH	-0.058	-0.049	-0.220	-0.020	0.018	-0.083	0.001	0.035	-0.039	-0.077	-0.078	0.319*
FLL	0.021	0.015	0.013	0.146	-0.014	0.006	-0.017	-0.014	0.015	0.015	0.000	0.207
FLW	0.029	-0.007	-0.011	-0.013	0.132	0.032	-0.014	-0.011	-0.010	-0.013	-0.007	0.151
FLA	0.082	0.040	0.147	0.016	0.094	0.387	0.019	-0.070	0.129	0.229	-0.006	0.720**
NTT	0.058	0.023	-0.001	-0.028	-0.027	0.012	0.245	0.215	-0.049	0.011	-0.034	0.132
NPT	-0.028	-0.008	0.016	0.010	0.008	0.018	-0.088	-0.100	0.032	0.007	0.019	-0.042
PeL	-0.038	-0.029	0.025	0.015	-0.011	0.048	-0.028	-0.046	0.143	0.038	0.018	0.317*
PL	0.055	0.070	0.156	0.046	-0.044	0.263	0.020	-0.030	0.117	0.445	-0.104	0.616**
TW	-0.076	-0.046	0.124	0.001	-0.019	-0.005	-0.048	-0.067	0.044	-0.081	0.349	0.111
GYP	0.225	0.240	0.319*	0.207	0.151	0.720**	0.132	-0.042	0.317*	0.616**	0.111	1.000

*, ** indicates significance at 5% and 1% at the level of significance, respectively

Df50 %- Days To 50% Flowering, DM- Days to Maturity, PH- Plant Height, FLL-Flag Leaf Length, FLW- Flag Leaf Width, FLA- Flag Leaf Area, PeL- Peduncle Length, PL- Panicle Length, NTT- Number of Total Tillers, NPT- No. of Productive Tillers, TW- Test Weight, GYP- Grain Yield Per Plant

flowering (56.09) and days to maturity (31.83) had the lowest heritability. The highest GA was found in the plant height (31.57) and flag leaf area (28.23), while the lowest GA was discovered in the width of the flag leaf (0.59%) and the number of productive tillers (0.85 percent). High estimates of heritability in broad sense in conjugation with high genetic advance as percent of mean were observed for test weight, flag leaf length, number of tillers, number of productive tillers, grain yield per plant, plant height, flag leaf width, flag leaf area, panicle length, and peduncle length, these are in agreement with the findings of Brunda et al. [1-3].

Similar results were observed with the findings of Nirmalakumari et al. [22], Tyagi et al. [23], Singamsetti et al. [24], Arya et al. [25], Ayesha et al. [26], Venkatesh et al. [27].

3.2 Studies on the Association of the Characters

Several yield-contributing characteristics have an impact on grain yield, a complex trait. Therefore, adopting effective selection strategies involves knowing familiar with the extent of the genetic variability of yield-contributing traits and their connection with yield. The development of new varieties is made efficient and effective through the use of yield-attributing characters in indirect selection, which may yield better results than direct selection for yield alone. Correlation studies provide a measure of association between characters and assist in the identification of the key yield-attributing characters. In general, the correlation between yield and other characters as well as among the component characters will vary with the genotype handled by the breeder. In the present investigation, genotypic and phenotypic correlations between the traits have been studied to identify the traits that are closely related to the grain yield. In the phenotypic correlation (Table 4), the characters such as plant height (0.319), flag leaf area (0.720), peduncle length (0.317), and panicle length (0.616) have shown a high significant positive correlation with the grain yield. Most of the characters had positive inter correlations with each other. In the genotypic correlation (Table 5), characters such as days to 50% flowering (0.344), days to maturity (0.451), plant height (0.403), flag leaf area (0.775), peduncle length (0.351), panicle length (0.672) have shown a high significant positive correlation with the grain yield. Similar results were reported with Brunda et al. [1-3], Ayesha et al. [26], Kumawat et al. [28], Pallavi et al. [4].

The path analysis takes into account the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables by partitioning the association into direct and indirect effects through other independent variables [29,30]. In the present investigation, both genotypic and phenotypic path coefficient analysis have been studied to identify the direct and indirect effects of all the traits on grain yield in both genotypic and phenotypic levels. The results of the genotypic path analysis (Table 6), revealed that the highest positive direct effect on the grain yield was shown by panicle length (0.9585), followed by test weight (0.818), number of tillers (0.6654), and days to maturity (0.6258). The characters such as days to 50% flowering, flag leaf length, flag leaf width, and peduncle length have also shown a positive direct effect on grain yield per plant. Negative direct effects were shown by plant height (-0.7196), flag leaf area (-0.1541), and number of productive tillers (-0.6533). The phenotypic path analysis (Table 7), reveals that all the studied traits have shown positive direct effects on the grain yield per plant except for plant height (-0.2196) and number of productive tillers (-0.0999) which showed negative direct effects. The highest positive direct effect was shown by panicle length (0.444) and the lowest direct effect was shown by number of productive tillers (-0.0999). Similar results were reported with Brunda et al. [1-3], Ayesha et al. [26], Kumawat and Sharma [28], Pallavi et al. [4].

4. CONCLUSION

From the investigation, it is concluded that the analysis of variance showed significant variation in all the characters which give the scope for a further breeding program. Among 20 genotypes SiA 3156 (6.07), IIMR FxM-11 (5.64), TNSi 380 (4.64), and SiA 4213 (4.60) were found to be superior in grain yield when compared to the check DHFt 109-3 (3.77). High GCV, PCV, high heritability, and Genetic advance as percent mean in the present genotypes were recorded for the test weight. Grain yield per plant showed a high positive and significant correlation with flag leaf area and panicle length. The parameters like panicle length, test weight, number of tillers, and flag leaf length had positive direct effects on the grain yield per plant in the path coefficient analysis. It can therefore be concluded that traits such as flag leaf length, number of tillers, test weight and panicle length are the important yield contributing traits and has to be given due

consideration in the selection program for improving grain yield characters.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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