



INVESTIGATION OF LEARNING STYLE OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS

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Abstract.

It is widely believed that understanding learners' learning is important it can benefit both learners and teachers because every learner has different learning styles in learning. This study is designed to investigate how learners learn and why they have different learning styles. Qualitative approach was chosen to get in-depth explanation about the issues. Semi structure interview was conducted to 2 tenth graders and the data obtained were analyzed descriptively. The finding showed that learning style can be formed by sense experience, environment and learners' behavior. Further research on investigating of different learning style with more representative sample is recommended.

Keywords: *investigation, learning style*

INTRODUCTION

Every human born with his/her own uniqueness. Even though they are twin, no one has the same characteristic. Similarly, learners also have different styles in gaining the information. It depends on learning styles of the learners. This is confirmed by Nel (2008) and Pashler et.al., (2008) who emphasized that learners learn in different ways, so that what works well for one learner may not be useful for another and means that every learner has different style in learn the materials. From the reason above, it seems reasonable that learners' learning styles are different.

Learners differ from one another in the ways in which they process information from the environment (Nel, 2008). It means every learner responds variously when they get new information. Some learners are visual who learn best by watching, pictures, diagrams, movie and so on, while some of them are auditory learners who learn best by hearing the explanation and some other learn best by engaging their bodies in real activities, what so called as kinesthetic learners.

Similarly, the research was conducted by Özbaş (2013) investigating learning styles of university learners. The result of the study showed it was seen that approximately half

of the learners learned visually. By observing the influence of the gender on the learning styles of the learners, it was found out that, in visual learning, statistically girls had obvious higher averages rather than boys. It was also noted that, neither the departments of the learners nor the common effect of the gender of the department do not affect the learning styles.

Based on previous research, the finding showed that every learner has different learning styles. Since by knowing learning styles will give great influence to guide learners' learning, accordingly, this study deals with the same theme but in different level and different issues. This study seeks the following research questions which are formulated as:

1. How do learners learn?
2. Why do learners have different learning styles?

LITERATURE REVIEW

All learners have different learning style in gaining the information. Learning styles of learners depend on the learners' personalities and characteristics. All learners respond to various stimuli (such as pictures, sounds, music, movement, etc.), some things stimulate them into learning more than other things do (Harmer, 2007, p. 16). According to rationalism perspective, rationalism is a contrasting view in which knowledge comes from reasoning (Chapman & Routledge, 2009, p. 87). Meanwhile, empiricism views all knowledge derives from experiences Routledge and Chapman (2009, p. 87). A long with educational research a number of experts specified types of learning styles, those are:

1. Kolb's Learning Styles

According to Kolb (1984) cited in Platsidou and Metallidou (2008, p. 324) described as a four-stage of learning styles:

- 1) Accommodative (Active Experimentation /Concrete Experience),
- 2) Divergent (Concrete Experience /Reflective Observation),
- 3) Assimilative (Reflective Observation /Abstract Conceptualization), and
- 4) Convergent (Abstract Conceptualization / Active Experimentation).

2. Reid's Learning Styles

According to Reid (1987, p. 96) in his research identified five perceptual style preferences: Visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, added group versus individual.

Visual learners learn best by watching movie, diagram, chart and so on. Visual learners also like to write note using colorful pens to help them in learning the materials. Auditory learners learn best by hearing teacher's explanation. Kinesthetic learners learn best when their physically engaged in real activities. Tactile learners learn by hands-on; they prefer to do laboratory experiments. Group learners, they prefer to do the task in pair or group while individual learners prefer to work alone by themselves.

3. Dunn and Dunn's Learning Styles

Five dimensions that mark various preferences have been identified by Dunn and Dunn (1992, 1993) in Griffith (2008, p. 50). These are environmental, emotional, sociological, physiological, and psychology.

The first dimension is environmental. This dimension means how do learners prefer the situation in learning. Some of them like to learn in warm environment or cooler environment such as noisy or quiet situation. Some of them prefer formal situation (using desks and chairs) while some other prefer informal (using pillows) situation to learn.

The second dimension is emotional. Every learner has different need, and some of them need emotional support such as guidance from adult while some other don't need it.

The third dimension is sociological. Every learner has different way in learning. Some learners enjoy working in group while some other enjoy to work individually in learning the material.

The fourth dimension is physiological. The most important element here is probably learning modality some of learners are visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile. Another important element in this dimension is time. This dimension may be one of the hardest things for teachers to accommodate. The last dimension is psychological, some learners attack the problem globally or analytically such as jump into problems or pause to reflect before starting.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to figure out why every learner has different learning styles. The participants are 10 graders. They were selected purposively based on their willingness and interest to participate in the study. The interview format was semi-structured. The participants have individual interview consists of 5 questions mainly asking about how they learn the materials. The interview was conducted outside of teaching and learning process. The first respondent's interview was written down while the second respondent's interview was recorded and transcribed in order to get clear explanation. The data from the interview were analyzed descriptively so that the required information can be drawn. The results were compared with the relevant theories for justification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In order to answer the question on how learners learn, the result from interview showed that the two respondents have different ways in learning the material. First respondent preferred to learn by watching movie and she also liked to have snack during watching and learning. She preferred to learn in informal and relax situation rather than in formal situation. She said the way she learned gave her good impact in learning. While the second respondent preferred to learn by summarizing the material. So, she made mind maps and hang them on the wall that she often passes by. She believed the more she looked at them the more she memorizes those materials. She

used colorful pens to make mind maps and organized them well. Both of them agreed that their own way of learning is useful for them.

The first respondent realized that her learning style gave her good impact since she was in junior high school. While the second respondent said that the way she learned really helped her in learning the material since she was a child. Meanwhile, she started making her own mind maps when she was in junior high school.

The two respondents showed different responses gaining their learning style. The first respondent said that in the classroom activities she preferred to learn in informal situation rather than in formal situation. Her beliefs relax situation make her easy to learn the material, while formal situation make her bored to learn. In the classroom activities she also preferred to learn by listening to teacher's explanation and she likes the teacher who gave story telling during explaining the material. Meanwhile second respondent said in the classroom activities she preferred to listen little bit teacher's explanation continued by experiment because she liked to engage herself in activities.

The last question is concerning on why learners have different learning styles. Both respondents have different reason why they prefer that learning style to learn and feel it help them in learn the material. The first respondent said her learning style comes naturally while the second respondent has unique reason because her learning style formed by her parents. She chose this style because it was taught by her parents. Her parents taught how to learn this style. Her parents also treated this style to another children. She said this style was successfully used by her parents then her parents applied it to their children.

First respondent preferred to learn by watching movie and she also liked to have snack during watching and learning. She preferred informal and relax situation rather than in formal situation. It is in line with learning style proposed by experts concerning on environment dimension. On the other hand, in Reid's learning style (1987) it belongs to visual learning styles. In the classroom, she preferred to listen teacher explanation, it is in line with auditory learning style proposed by Reid's learning style (1987).

The second respondents indicated as visual learning style in gaining the way she learns by hung the mind maps of summarizing material on the wall that she often passes by. It is in line with visual learning style proposed by Reid (1987)) and it is also similar with divergent and assimilative in Kolb's learning style (1984) in Metallidou & Platsidou (2008) which the learner likes to learn through watching, thinking, and feeling. Learners are interested in learning material such as picture, movie, diagram and so on.

In the classroom activities the second respondent likes to listen little bit teacher's explanation then engage in the activities, it means the second respondents has double learning styles. It is in line with Kinesthetic (Physiological) in Dunn and Dunn's learning style and kinesthetic in Reid's learning style (1987) have similarities with assimilative and convergent in Kolb's learning style which the learners prefer to have real activities, like to learn concrete material, tend to be practical in learning and like to engage physically in activities.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to figure out how learners learn and why learners have different learning styles. The findings indicated every learner has different learning styles and it is possible for learners to have double style in their learning. Learning style were influenced by several factors. Those are learner's behavior, learner's sense experience and learner's environment. Therefore, based on those findings. It can be concluded that learning style can be formed by learner's behavior, learner's sense experience and learner's environment.

In addition, this study offers recommendation to consider. First, for teachers are expected to give information about students' learning styles, understanding and facilitate learners learning. Second, this recommendation goes to those who will conduct further research the same study for obtaining better results.

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