



# Preferred Learning Styles of Management Students of Pakistan

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The preferred learning styles of management students are of interest among the educators of the relevant field. The various studies explored how learning styles are the best predictors of academic performance. However, this study aims to explore the learning styles of management students in Pakistan. Henceforth, the research study focuses on the descriptive quantitative research design applied as the instrument for such a task. The outcomes of the research study highlighted that the participants are: reflective; introverted; visual; closure-oriented, random-intuitive; sharpener; synthesising; particular; field-independent; and deductive. The respondents themselves recognised as both literal and metaphoric due to their preferred learning style. As a result, the students are classified concerning their preferred styles. Furthermore, the study's findings would be fruitful to enhance preferences and learning capabilities among the students. Also, the outcomes would be favourable for teachers to develop their teaching plans connected with the learning styles. Thus, it requires a dire need for the revision of the curriculum at the university level. The students resort to learning preferences and potentials among the students, which should be relevant, adaptive and useful in a real sense for management students.

**Key words:** *Management students, Learning styles, Educators, Preferences.*

## Introduction and background

The teachers and educators can tentatively improve education quality by applying the different strategies and plans. Moreover, such an approach and instructions assist in enhancing the quality of classroom instruction. However, the various techniques, models, and classroom strategies have been tested and developed for the research task. Hence, Pakistan's government focuses on innovation and improvement of the quality of education in the country.

However, the various variables relating to academic performance are consistent with the learning styles of the students. Meanwhile, the curiosity to understand the students' learning styles

developed a great interest among researchers and educators over the many decades (Hall & Moseley, 2005; Pashler et al., 2009). Further, many more studies carried out with this perspective that learning styles of learners are in a real sense the predictors of academic performance (Cassidy & Eachus, 2000; Koch et al., 2011; Diseth & Martinsen, 2003; Komarraju et al., 2011; Rosander & Bäckström, 2012; Yip, 2012; Cox, 2013). Such studies discussed the positive effect on the academic success of the learners. Further, another study by Yip (2012) illuminated that there remain differences in learners' learning styles both for low academic and high academic achievers. Thus, diverges performed well in academics, as viewed by Cox (2013). In this way, learning styles work as mediating factors and show a significant association with the learners' performance (Komarraju et al., 2011). Thus, this study results from a positive relationship between learning styles with learners' academic achievement essential for implementers and planners of the curriculum. Irrespective contradicted the study's findings that learning styles do not expose the academic students' academic performance subject (Garner-O'Neale & Harrison, 2013). Besides this, further explaining the in-depth strategy of learning styles does not display the significant predictor of academic success (Diseth & Martinsen, 2003). Despite such rebuttal of these studies, it is still claimed that understanding learning styles is considered as an essential factor for the students' academic achievement. According to Esia-Donkoh & Bentil (2017), learning style preferences are affected by instructional factors rather than environmental and personal factors.

Nevertheless, learning styles stands for "natural, habitual, and preferred ways of absorbing, processing, retaining new information and skills" (Reid, 2002). Learning styles referred to as preferences and tendencies (Dunn, 1983). Hence, learners can boost their capabilities and potentials by advancing knowledge and fair well in the classroom if these learners become familiar with their preferred learning styles. For instance, learners' English learning outcomes are attached to a degree affected by their learning style preference (Li & Bi, 2006). Meanwhile, learning style focuses on "description of the attitudes and behaviours which determines an individual's preferred way of learning" (Mumford & Honey, 1992; Chan & Mak, 2010). Thus, this explains how individual preferences impact the study and how they learn through such preferences. Knowledge for learning is considered necessary through educational outcomes. Among Tabriz University of Medical Sciences nurses, the preferred learning styles have a significant and positive correlation with income level, nursing position, and employment status (Safaeifard et al., 2019).

The various researchers constructed the different notions and ideas and developed the many tools and methods within their respective fields. Thus, these are grounded on the specific model or theory (Wang et al., 2001; Ross et al., 2001; Sabry & Baldwin, 2003; Zualkernan et al., 2006; Graf et al., 2008). Further, the different classifications of models were discussed by researchers to address gaps in the research task (Hall & Moseley, 2005; Felder & Brent, 2005; Sternberg et al., 2008). Thus, learning styles mark out how these learners learn and study in this perspective, as Coffield et al. (2004) discussed. According to Andres & Akan (2015), the demonstrator teaching style may better manage the different learning styles, such as verbal and visual,



instantaneously compared to the classic authoritarian teaching style. In the perception of Yousef (2018), undergraduate students at the American University of Ras Al Khaimah (AURAK) have preferences for the reflector, theorist, pragmatist and activist learning styles. Further, there are only significant differences between Emirati and non-Emirati students across the four learning styles and between single and married students in the theorist learning style.

Similarly, the study of Magulod (2019) found a positive and significant correlation between study habits, academic performance, and learning styles among applied social sciences students. On the other hand, there was adequate evidence to determine the use of different learning approaches in distance programs through the deep surface and strategic approaches (Hussain, 2018). Alkooheji & Al-Hattami (2018) supported the same conclusions and claimed statistically significant differences between students learning styles based on age and gender; however, it is a moderate difference. The most preferred learning style of secondary school students is visual tracked by auditory, tactile and kinaesthetic. Further, the study concludes a non-significant effect of the demographic variables such as gender, place of living, religion, and educational level of the father on secondary school students' learning style preferences. Nevertheless, there is a significant effect of a mother's academic level on the students' learning style preferences (Singh et al., 2015).

In this way, the various instrumental and models, as well as the questionnaire, developed to measure out the learning styles of the students viewed by Gregorc (1979), Kolb (1984), Entwistle & Tait (1995) and Duff (2004). A study by Hawk & Sha (2007) explained that there are similarities, differences and evolution. In addition to discussing the typology of learning styles including: Visual, Aural, Read/write and Kinaesthetic (VARK) Inventory; Index of Learning Styles (ILS); Greroc Style Delineator (GSD); Learning Style Inventory (LSI); Revised Approaches to Studying Inventory (RASI); and Productivity Environmental Preference Survey (PEPS). Hence, models, tools, questionnaires and other instrumental techniques developed to measure the learners' learning styles in academic achievement. The universities offer a four-year program (Bachelor of Science in Management) to the students. This program is intended to highlight the nature of the ordinary course and its aims and aims to develop knowledge and skills among the students to compete in the advanced world. According to Cousins (2018), design thinking learning structures raise absorptive capacity and organisational learning speed and efficacy. According to Delić (2019), there is no significant association between learning styles and gender among Bosnia and Herzegovina students. Likewise, more recently, Olagbaju (2020) strongly recommended that cognitive style and gender predict the students' achievement in summary writing.

Likewise, Al-Rahbi et al. (2017) found correlations between the leadership styles with team motivation and employee performance. In the perception of Yahaya & Ebrahim (2016), there is a strong relationship between laissez-faire leadership, transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Likewise, general engineering students regard a valuable source of learning as visual learning. The environmental factors have a more significant impact on



learning styles than physical factors (Abante et al., 2014). Bhagat et al. (2015) strongly recommend awareness of learning styles (LSs) as a good source of motivation to the students to adapt other learning strategies and the practice of mixed learning methods.

Similarly, the study is concerned with investigating the problem of learning styles that are sought among the students of management of Pakistan, bringing into consideration how learning styles affect the outcomes of education (Wilson, 2012). The study was designed to understand the learning styles and improve the students' academic performance. In further studies, the results embodied the instructional strategies and other interference programs.

### **Aim and objectives of the study**

This research aimed to investigate the learning styles of the students of the management of Pakistan.

- To examine the demographic profile of the management students.
- To investigate the different learning styles and learning situations of management students.
- To investigate how the students of management handle the possibility of learning.
- To study how the students of a management deal with language rules.
- To examine how the students of a management deal with multiple inputs, time and reality.

### **Methodology**

#### ***Research design and survey tool***

The research study is based on a descriptive research design. The study employed cross-sectional data. The respondents of the study included the students of management from the different universities of Pakistan. The survey questionnaire was developed and utilised for the collection and analysis of data. To confirm the validity and reliability of the survey instrument, we conducted a pilot study. In this way, we launched the valid and reliable survey tool for gaining the response from students.

#### ***Instrumental mode of distribution***

We adopted a random technique to trace the required respondents. We correctly followed the ethical considerations and norms of a good study. Before distributing the surveys, the respondents were made aware of the aim and objectives of the study. We also informed them any time could withdraw them from the study at any stage. We ensured them about the privacy of their gained responses. We properly kept their demographic information secret.



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## ***Measures***

We adapted the items of the study from the study of Tudy & Tudy (2014). We employed an optioned based scale to get the response from the study participants. Before this, we took consent from the respondents to reflect on the survey questionnaire.

## **Results**

The research study was carried out to explore the learning styles of the students from the Management Departments. Further, the study was not designed to predict any specific behaviour. This preferred learning style is regarded as the proper documentation and sound material for the learners in gaining academic achievement. Hence, the result considered essential guidance for counsellors and teachers and assisting the learners individually and collectively. Besides this, the study comprised three parts: demographic structure, learning styles preference and learning styles preference based on the categorisation of gender as per the study's infrastructure. We selected the department of management who are pursuing their major courses in management and public administration. In total, 122 students have taken part by giving an adequate response. Both male and female students have participated.

Consequently, the study illustrated the students' preference of management of the first five sets of learning styles (Table 1). The learners favour visual more than kinaesthetic and auditory. Further, they depend on visual more and more and make use of the sense of prospect. Thus, the respondents had a high intention for visualising much more in this manner, as discussed by D'cruz & Rajaratnam (2013) and Contreras, Velez & Golembiewski (2013). The study of Al-Khasawneh (2013) explaining the findings being not consistent with nursing students who instead preferred the kinaesthetic learning style. Learners expose themselves as introverted rather than extroverted. In another sense, they intend to be those who know how to work well independently. Hence, the study's findings do not support the conclusions of Aliakbari & Abol-Nejadian (2013). In this way, they handle possibilities and prefer random-intuitive rather than concrete-sequential, which indicates future-oriented. As the findings of Psaltou-Joycey & Kantaridou (2011) study, estimating the probabilities in the abstract notion and avoiding liking rigorous instruction. In this regard, the conclusion is also consistent with Wilkins (1996) research work, which revealed that the sensing-thinking style is prevalent among criminal justice learners. Further, we applied Pearson's correlation to notice the relationship between the items and found them to be in the acceptable ranges (Table 2).

**Table 1: Preferred learning styles of management students of Pakistan**

Item information and category	N	%	Status/Rank
▪ <i>How they use their physical senses.</i>			
Visual	56	45.90	1
Auditory	34	27.87	2
Kinaesthetic	10	8.20	4
Combination	22	18.03	3
Total	122	100.0	
▪ <i>How they expose themselves to learning.</i>			
Extroverted	45	36.89	2
Introverted	66	54.10	1
Both	11	9.01	3
Total	122	100.0	
▪ <i>How they handle possibilities.</i>			
Random-intuitive	68	55.74	1
Concrete-sequential	40	32.79	2
Both	14	11.47	3
Total	122	100.0	
▪ <i>How they deal with ambiguities.</i>			
Closure-oriented	82	67.21	1
Open	16	13.11	3
Both	24	19.68	2
Total	122	100.0	
▪ <i>How they receive information</i>			
Global	42	34.42	2
Particular	60	49.18	1
Both	20	16.40	3
Total	122	100.0	

**Table 2: Pearson's correlation (N=122)**

Items	How they use their physical senses	How they expose themselves to learning	How they handle Possibilities	How they deal with ambiguities	How they receive information
How they use their physical senses	---				
How they expose themselves to learning	0.345**	---			
How they handle possibilities	0.378**	0.311**	---		
How they deal with ambiguities	0.422**	0.455**	0.466*	---	
How they receive Information	0.367**	0.327**	0.333*	0.382**	---

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

However, it indicates how the respondents deal with complexities and limits and prefer closure-oriented than being open. The entire attention is paid to the assigned work by the respondents.

These students plan to move ahead through the given task. They require directions explicitly. Thus, they gain information, and they prefer a specific pattern rather than a global one. Such students are accurate as per the details and helpful for eliciting certain information. Table 3 illuminates the preference of the management students of the next set of learning styles. All the items have appeared with correlations through Pearson's correlation in acceptable scores (Table 4).

**Table 3: Preferred learning styles of management students of Pakistan**

Item information and category	N	%	Status/Rank
<b>▪ How they further process information.</b>			
Synthesising	64	52.45	1
Analytic	42	34.43	2
Both	16	13.12	3
Total	122	100.0	
<b>▪ How they commit material to memory.</b>			
Sharpener	50	40.99	1
Leveller	44	36.06	2
Both	28	22.95	3
Total	122	100.0	
<b>▪ How they deal with language rules.</b>			
Deductive	60	49.18	1
Inductive	38	31.15	2
Both	24	19.67	3
Total	122	100.0	
<b>▪ How they deal with multiple inputs.</b>			
Field-independent	52	42.63	1
Field-dependent	47	38.52	2
Both	23	18.85	3
Total	122	100.0	
<b>▪ How they deal with response time.</b>			
Impulsive	38	31.15	2
Reflective	56	45.90	1
Both	28	22.95	3
Total	122	100.0	
<b>▪ How they literally take reality.</b>			
Metaphoric	20	16.40	3
Literal	36	29.51	2
Both	66	54.09	1
Total	122	100.0	

**Table 4: Pearson's correlation (N=122)**

Items	How they further process information	How they commit material to memory	How they deal with language rules	How they deal with multiple inputs	How they deal with response time	How they literally take reality
How they further process information	---					
How they commit material to memory	0.456**	---				
How they deal with language rules	0.300**	0.377**	---			
How they deal with multiple inputs	0.409**	0.433**	0.400**	---		
How they deal with response time	0.309**	0.369**	0.398**	0.326**	---	
How they literally take reality	0.388**	0.397**	0.322**	0.439**	0.381**	---

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

In consequence, the students of management prefer synthesising more than analysing. Hence, these students become sound in summarisation and delight in speculating the sense of sight and predicting the findings. Thus, they can mark out the similarities and strategies for memorising the material, and they were found more of a sharpener than a leveller. During learning the content, they sort out the similarities and differences of material and segregate the information based on present and memories. Thus, they quickly determine grammatical forms, speech phonemes and the sensible factors of the language.

Further, it supports how to deal with language rules; they are more deductive than inductive. Thus, they move from specific or generalisations to experience. Besides this, they focus on theories and rules more than specifics. They deal with multiple inputs and depend on field-independent than field-dependent. Thus, they found the sound in segregating or abstracting material from within the assigned task. The students of management identified as action-oriented in connection with the context and the future text. Thus, they are recognised as literal or metaphoric.

Moreover, metaphoric learners can successfully learn so far as they conceptualise the constructions of materials, including grammatical structures in terms of metaphorical constructions. Thus, they become plausible in developing metaphor and design comprehensible



materials. Besides this, literal learners remain satisfied with the literal exposure of the conceptualisation and prefer to work with linguistic material till the surface of such the material.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

In a real sense, a teacher knows the students well through the process of assessment that is considered an integral component of the classroom. In this way, the learning styles can properly be improved for academic success (Canno-Garcia & Hughes, 2000; Wadsworth et al., 2007). The management department learners prefer the visual learning style as they are better off looking into things or materials, including the written directions, charts, videos, diagrams, and expressions of people. The practical teaching strategy is concerned with signs, symbols or any visible material resorts to being introverted and personalised. They use their imagination to discover possibilities and new notions. Besides this, they practice rules and regulations that are the most important for their future career. In other words, they become sharpeners and skilful through strategies of summarization of the information as per requirement.

Meanwhile, the preference leads to deductive and field independent styles that develop their interest in rules and theories. Such styles are fruitful to the students along with multiple inputs. The preferred styles would assist the learners to enhance their potential. Thus, the study is useful for both educators and students. The preferred learning styles remained the same for both genders, male and female because they shared the preferred learning styles. The results of this study are valuable both for teachers and learners. The findings of the survey have provided factual information regarding learners (Evans & Waring, 2006). Thus, according to Fatt (2000), learning styles and teaching strategies smoothly adjusted between learners and educators. A better understanding between teachers and students resulted in a high level of effectiveness and guidance for the instruction to conduct the assessment (Sternberg et al., 2008).

The research study's findings focused on the students' learning styles as the preliminary factor in academic and further in supporting learning and teaching strategies between the students and teachers. Thus, teachers plan and develop teaching design and strategy to keep learning (O'Leary & Stewart, 2013). In this way, educators are strengthened by various teaching techniques and strategies to share varied learning styles (Boström & Hallin, 2013). Thus, teachers apply the different styles using such an approach and improve their academic performance (Prabha et al., 2013). In further studies, the study would positively affect the preferred learning styles and performance of the respondents. This study's recommendation is based on the application of suitable teaching strategies and the preferred learning styles focusing on the subjects that are taught among the students of management. Further, educators and teachers should be familiar with learners, especially their preference of being introverted. Besides this, policymakers should develop activities to work collectively and assist one another in the learning process. The teachers should have awareness and approach despite the differences in gender and correlate learning styles with academic performance.



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