ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Education

Students Learning Style and Family Environment

Dr.G. Vinitha	Professor, PPG College of Education, Coimbatore-108
Dr. H. Indu	Associate Professor &Head, Department of Education, Avinashilingam Institute of Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore-108.

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to find out the difference in the learning style of higher secondary school students based on the type of family and monthly income of the family of Coimbatore district. The questionnaire consists of 50 item used to collect data regarding learning style. The sample of the study comprised of 1005 students selected randomly. The analysis of data showed that there is significant association between students with active-reflective and sequential-global learning style preference and no significant association for students with visual-verbal and sensing-intuitive learning style preference. It was also found that monthly income of the family had statistically significant association with visual and verbal learning style and was not associated with the students preferring the active-reflective, sensing–intuitive and sequential–global learning styles

Introduction

Education is an essential human virtue. Without it, man is splendid slave, reasoning savage. It is to humanize him. Man becomes "man" through education. Education implies experience, insight and adjustment on the part of man as he is stimulated towards growth and development. So growth and development helps for better learning.

Learning is a complex lifelong educational process of how human absorbs information and experiences; memorizes and processes them to be further transformed into knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitudes. Nevertheless, with much emphasis given to the importance for an individual to gain education, the issue on whether students are learning in the way they prefer is still debatable. Extensive research has documented that the way people learn differ in how they see, interpret, understand, and conceptualize information (Teele, 2006;Zacharis, 2011;Kang, 1999).The learning environment has changed to become more interconnected and learner-centred. The 21st century learners would have diverse requirements and references from their learning environment. They would have a particular learning preference and style due to their upbringing background (Bennett, Maton, &Kervin, 2007).

The term "learning style" as used in the literature during the last thirty years or so, has labelled a very broad and relatively diffuse concept (Bedford, 2006). Keeffe (1979:4) defines learning styles as "the composite of characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment. Thelen (1954) was the first to use the term 'learning style' in describing how people learn and interact in a certain environment. In the this study, the four dimensions of Learning Style considered are   Active – Reflective, Sensing – Intuitive, Visual – Verbal, Sequential - global.

Significance of the Study

This study might also prove useful to the curriculum developers and material producers. Because teachers need to have enough time in the curriculum dedicated to both the identification of learners' learning styles. Curriculum developers will be able to allocate sufficient time for the training sessions.

Research Questions

- Whether   learning style preference is associated to type of family?
- Whether   learning style preference is associated to monthly income of the family?

Methodology

The current study was conducted in Coimbatore district. Survey method was used for the study. A personal data sheet and a self constructed and validated tool on Learning Style Preference was used for data collection. Data were collected from 1005 higher

secondary school students (420 males, 585 females) selected from Government, Private and Corporation schools in Coimbatore city.

Results and Discussion

Chi-square analysis was applied to find out the association between learning style and type of family.

Table. 1   Learning Style Preference and Type of Family

Learning Style Preference	Type of Family				
	Nuclear (N=848)	%	Joint (N=157)	%	2
Active	597	70	96	61.1	5.30*
Reflective	251	30	61	38.9	
Visual	327	38.6	64	40.8	0.27
Verbal	521	61.4	93	59.2	
Sensing	402	47.4	68	43.3	0.89
Intuitive	446	52.6	89	56.7	
Sequential	493	58.1	77	49	4.46*
Global	355	41.9	80	51	

Note: df=1, N=Number of students,   * p< .05

Results from Table.1 reveal that there is a significant association between type of family and the Learning style preferences namely active- reflective and sequential- global whereas the type of family is not associated to the learning style preference namely visual-verbal and sensing- intuitive. Hence the null hypothesis that "there is no statistically significant association between learning style preference and type of family" is accepted for visual-verbal and sensing-intuitive learning style preference and rejected for active-reflective and sequential-global learning style preference.

Association between Learning style Preference and Monthly Income of the Family

Table 2 represents the Chi square value for the association between different learning style preferences and monthly income of the family.

Table . 2 Learning style Preference and Monthly Income of the Family

Learning Style Preference	Monthly Income of the family								
	(EWS) N=304	%	(LIG) N=406	%	(MIG) N=162	%	(HIG) N=133	%	2
Active	205	67.4	287	70.7	114	70.4	87	65.4	1.82
Reflective	99	32.6	119	29.3	48	29.6	46	34.6	

Visual	113	37.2	143	35.2	68	42.0	67	50.4	10.55*
Verbal	191	62.8	263	64.8	94	58.0	66	49.6	
Sensing	136	44.7	183	45.1	83	51.2	68	51.1	3.29
Intuitive	168	55.3	223	54.9	79	48.8	65	48.9	
Sequential	162	53.3	236	58.1	89	54.9	83	62.4	3.75
Global	142	46.7	170	41.9	73	45.1	50	37.6	

Note: df=3, N=Number of students, (EWS)=Economically Weaker Section, (LIG)=Lower Income Group, (MIG)=Middle Income Group, (HIG)=Higher Income Group, * p< 0.05,

From Table 2 it evident that the chi square value obtained for visual-verbal (10.545) is greater than the table value at 0.05 level (7.815). which shows that there is a significant association between monthly income of the family and the learning style preferences namely Visual and Verbal.

It is also seen that the chi square values obtained for active-reflective (1.819), sensing– intuitive (3.286) and for sequential–global (3.746) were less than the table value (7.815), which indicates that there is no significant association between monthly income and these learning style preferences. Hence the null hypothesis stated that "there is no statistically significant association between monthly income of the family and learning style preferences" is rejected for visual and verbal learning style and accepted for the active-reflective, sensing–intuitive and sequential–global learning style preferences.

Conclusion
The results of the study shows that learning style preference and type of family is associated for active-reflective and sequential-global learning style preference and monthly income of the family is associated with visual and verbal learning style. It would be better if the teachers, parents know the learning style preference of the children to plan and make better use of their study time and learning strategies which can improve the academic performance and lead academic success.

References
1. Bennett, M., & Kervin. (2007). The digitial natives databate: A critical review of evidence, British Journal of Educational Technology, 39 (5),775-786.
2. Caspo N. and R. Hayen. (2006) The role of learning styles in the Teaching/Learning process. Information System. 7 (1)129-133.
3. Keefe, J. W. (1979). Student Learning Styles: Diagnosing and prescribing programs. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.
4. Thelen, H. (1954). Dynamics of groups at work. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.