The Pattern of Learning Styles among Second Year Students in Business Management and Hospitality Programs at One of The Vocational College in Northern Zone

Tee, T. K. [a]*, Md Yunos, J. [b], Kuppusamy, B. [c], Yee, M. H. [d], Mimi Mohaffyza Mohamad. [e], Othman, W. [f]

Che Rus, R. [g], Hanapi, Z. [h]

[a, c, g, h]*Sultan Idris Education University*
[b, d, e]*Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia*
[f]*Open University Malaysia*

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explore the learning styles of second year students in the Business Management and Hospitality programs at one of the Vocational College in Northern Zone, Malaysia. The sample consisted of 30 students from each program, a total of 60 students. The method of measurement used was questionnaires based on the Index of Learning Styles (ILS) developed by Felder and Silverman (1988) that adduce of 44 items. The items verifying 4 dimensions and 4 sub-scales, namely procession (active / reflective learners), perception (sensing / intuitive learners), input (visual / verbal learners) and comprehension (sequential / global learners). Each of the dimensions contains 11 items. Data were analyzed descriptively using the SPSS 20.0 for Windows. Results from the analysis revealed that overall, the second year students of this college are more dominant in visual (90%) than verbal style for input dimension; active (71.7%) then reflective style for procession dimension; sequential (71.7%) than global style for comprehension dimension and sensing (55%) than intuitive style for perception dimension. Based on the findings, the researchers suggest that the college lecturers should align their teaching approaches, strategies, methods and techniques with the dominant learning styles for each dimension among the students.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +60196623328
  E-mail address: tktee@fptv.upsi.edu.my / vic5555@gmail.com

1. Statement Of The Problem

Learning style is the way of individual receives, maintain and facilitate the understanding of obtained information [1] [2]. Each individual has various ways to learn. Some like to learn by seeing, hear, respond, give logical reason, remember and learn by using graphics [3]. Learning styles is a way to learn [4] and each student has different learning styles [5]. In addition, learning styles can vary greatly based personal experiences. Learning styles affect academic achievements [6]. Due to the low achievements on academic subjects among the Business Management and Hospitality programs students, the researchers are interested to investigate the students' learning styles.

1.1. Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- Identify the pattern of learning styles among the Business Management and Hospitality programs second year students at one of the Vocational College in Northern Zone, Malaysia.
- Identify the differences between Business Management and Hospitality programs second year students' learning styles at one of the Vocational College in Northern Zone, Malaysia

1.2. Importance of the Study

The researchers hope that the findings will be beneficial to all teachers and students. It is also hoped that this study will contribute in:

- Helping teachers to select and execute appropriate learning activities in order to create conducive learning environment for the students based on their preferences in study. Guidance from the teachers is needed to ensure that all students are able to develop their potential to the optimum.
- Identifying the learning styles preferred and dominant by the students for Business Management and Hospitality programs.

2. Literature Review

Students who have learning styles that are align with the instructor's teaching styles tend to retain information longer [7], able to apply knowledge effectively, and have more positive post-course attitudes toward the subject compare to their counterparts who experience mismatch between the learning and teaching styles [8] [9]. Many researchers have tried to study and understand the basic question in this care – what are the students' learning styles?

Many studies were conducted on learning styles evaluation [10] including the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Kolb's Learning Styles Inventory, Canfield's Learning Styles Inventory, Gregorc's Type Indicator and others. In this study, the researchers selected the Felder and Silverman model as the basis for this study because it has been successfully implemented [11] [12] in previous studies [13] [14] [15]. The instrument is user friendly and the results are easy to interpret. The number of dimensions is controlled and can be implemented in the teaching and learning process [14].

2.1. Felder-Silverman Learning Style Instrument

The first version of the Index of Learning Styles (ILS) involves 28 items, which was carried out on 100 students. From the analysis, the items which did not show a high coefficient value were removed and replaced with more