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# THE RELATIONSHIP OF LEARNING STYLE AND STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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## ABSTRACT

Learning English has become the primary need for students since Indonesia has prepared for the coming of Asia Economic Society. It affects to the process of learning English that should achieve the certain objectives and achievements. The extent of students' achievement may be influenced by some factors, which one of them is learning style. This article aims to determine whether this factor has significant correlation toward students' achievement. The population of this research was students of Senior High School in Bekasi. It is specified into sample that the 53 tenth grade students. The research method that accommodates this research is correlational study which explores the relationship between two variables. Based on the research, the result revealed that there is no significant correlation of learning style toward students' achievement in SMAN 7 Bekasi.

**Keywords:** *Learning style; relationship; students' achievement; correlational study*

## INTRODUCTION

Learning process requires an appropriate way or style in learning the lesson. The students will learn in the flow of their learning style consciously or subconsciously. Learning style will facilitate the students to learn language in their best. According to Peirce (2000), learning style is the method that the people prefer it over those other methods in learning such as learning in school. So, learning style can be determined based on students' preference in learning language. The information of students' learning style will much help the faculty or school to design the learning process which can accommodate the student's learning well.

Some research showed that by figuring out students' learning style the school will improve their quality of learning and increase their students' achievement (Safe, 2008; Tella&Adeniyi, 2009). The theories of learning style trigger the teachers to identify their students' individual difference, such as: their cognition, emotion, psychology, and sociology that influence the learning. Other research also supports that the matching teaching methods toward students' learning style is able to improve their academic performance significantly (Giordano & Rochford, 2005).

The information about students' learning styles can be used for providing teachers with more information about their students, showing them that their students have different preferences and ways in which they learn. Furthermore, the information about students' learning styles can help teachers in understanding why and when students may have difficulties in learning. In addition, the information can be used for making students themselves aware of their own learning styles, helping them to better understand their strengths and weaknesses in the learning process.

In real practice of teaching at school, it is captured that the teacher usually uses the same teaching method to the whole students in class without noticing their learning style. It becomes an interesting topic for researchers to investigate more this issue. Based this background, the formulation of problem:

Is there any significant correlation of students' learning style and students' achievement?

## **LEARNING STYLE**

Learning style is a student's preference in accommodating the way of their learning. There are many theories and research of learning style. One of them is proposed by Fleming (2006). He explains three types of learning style. They are visual, aural and kinesthetic. Initially, there were four type which is VARK (Visual, Aural, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic but he omitted the Read/Write as the preferential learning. This model acknowledges that students have different approach to how they process information, referred to as "preferred learning modes".

Each style has its own characteristic. Here is the brief discussion of each learning style:

### **1. Visual Learning Style**

According to Fleming (2006), visual learning is the way of learning which the learners have preference in seeing material in order to learn it. Roell (2016) adds that the visual learners need to see information in many forms, such as: photographic memory, color/tone, brightness/contrast and other visual information. As an example, it can be seen around the classroom. The teacher can use the whiteboard, pictures, maps, projector, and other aids that can catch the attention of visual learners.

Roell (2016) also assumes that the strengths of this style are the learners follow the directions instinctively, visualize the objects easily, notice minute similarities and differences between objects. Besides, the visual learners are able to see the passage from a page in a book in his/her mind. The visual learners and have a great sense of alignment and balance and a strong sense of color. In addition, the visual learners are excellent organizers and very color-oriented.

### **2. Aural/Auditory Learning Style**

Aural or Auditory Learning Style is the learning style that relies on auditory or the things that they hear. Fleming (2006) states that the auditory learners will typically memorize their teacher's word. The type of these learners will easily be disturbed by the noise around them.

Roell (2016) writes that the auditory learners will be superior in writing responses to lectures, understanding the tone change in other's sound and understanding the story telling.

Besides, the auditory learners are also excellent in oral exam, solving problem and working in groups.

### 3. Kinaesthetic Learning Style

This learning style prefers the move in the activity of students' learning. According to Kharb (2013), the kinaesthetic learners like to acquire information through experience and practice. The strengths of kinaesthetic learners are great hand-eye coordination, quick reception and excellent experimenters. The kinesthetic learners are mostly good at sport, art and drama (Roell, 2016)

In the other hands, there are some learners who are using more than one style in learning (Kharb, 2013). The learners might use more than one style. In this case, the students combine their style of learning. The learners who only apply a single style in learning, they may be difficult to be an ideal learner (Capret, 2006).

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

According to 2013 curriculum, students' achievement in learning English is divided into the assessments of students' knowledge, skill, and attitude. In this study, it is focused on students' achievement in knowledge of English. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) divided the knowledge into four dimensions. The four dimensions are factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive. The information of students' knowledge achievement is seen from the achievement test that the teacher administers. Achievement test, as Brown (2004) stated that the achievement tests are often summative because they are administered at the end of unit or term of study.

## RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

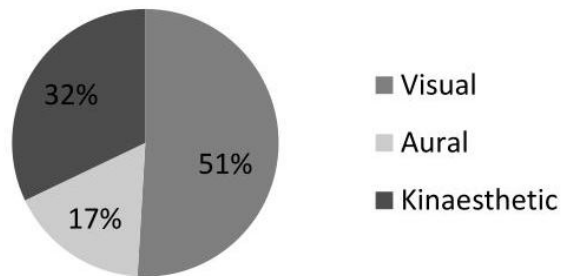
This research employs correlational study to figure out the correlation of learning style related to the students' achievement. According to Creswell (2002), correlation is a statistical test to establish patterns for two variables. It means that the correlational study is appropriate because it is in line with the purpose of this study to reveal the relationship of two variables.

The research instrument is questionnaire and the documentation of students' score. The researchers have not conducted any treatment to students. The questionnaire to measure students' learning style is VAK (Visual, Aural and Kinaesthetic) Questionnaire developed by Neil Fleming. The students choose the options in the questionnaire that most represent how the students generally behave. The questionnaire offers three options. Each option represents the qualification of learning style. The option A is for visual learning style. B is for aural learning style. Then, the option C is for kinaesthetic learning style.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the distributed and filled questionnaire, the researchers organize and classify the result.

## Learning Style of tenth grade students of SMAN 7 Bekasi



**Figure 1.** The Result of Students' Learning Style

The sample of this study is 53 students of SMAN 7 Bekasi. All of sample has responded to the questionnaire. 51% of the students preferred to answer A as the most represent themselves. So, based on the responses, the students are included to the visual learners. 51% means that 27 of 53 students are using their vision in learning. The visual students dominantly visualize what they have already learned. Next, 17% of 53 students responded that they prefer to choose B as their assumption of their selves. It means that 9 students are included to aural learners. Then, 32% of students preferred to choose C as the answer. It means that 17 students are kinaesthetic learners.

The data analysis is continued to the deeper analysis which requires case processing summary. The researchers use the 22<sup>nd</sup> version of SPSS. Here is the summary:

**Table 1. Case Processing Summary**  
**Case Processing Summary**

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Learning Style * Learning Achievement	53	100.0%	0	.0%	53	100.0%

From the first table, it can be drawn that all of 53 data has been included and processed. No one has been missed and lost. Therefore, the validity of this processing summary is 100%.

**Table 2. Cross-tabulation of Student's Learning Style and Learning Achievement.**

**Learning Style \* Learning Achievement Crosstabulation**

Count		Learning Achievement						Total
		75	76	77	80	85	90	
Learning Style	Visual	12	2	6	0	4	3	27
	Auditory	4	0	1	3	0	1	9
	Kinaesthetic	4	0	2	5	5	1	17
Total		20	2	9	8	9	5	53

The second table shows the cross-tabulation of students' learning style and learning achievement. It can be interpreted that in the first row and first column tells the visual learners who got 75 in their English subject achievement are 12 students. Then, 2 students of visual learners got 76 in their English. 6 students had 77 of their English but no one scored 80. In addition, 4 students got 85 and the rest which is 3 students had 90 in English. For Aural/Auditory earners, 4 students scored 75 in their English. No students got 76 and 85. While, there is one student got 77 and other one is 90. Last, for kinaesthetic learners, 4 of students had 75 in their English subject. No one scored 76. Two students got 77. Besides, 5 student had 80 and 5 others had 85 but only a student who scored 90 in English.

In conclusion, the visual learning style is widely used by the students. 27 students are visual learners. It can be seen that visual learning style is the dominant learning style in this school. It means that dominantly the students visualize their understanding in learning. Then, for kinaesthetic learning style is also mainly used by the students. The data shows that 17 students are using kinaesthetic learning style in learning English. It means that these 17 students prefer to make a movement in their learning. Meanwhile, the auditory learning style is also used by other 9 students. It means that the students study more with listening to what they heard and what the teacher saying.

**Table 3. Chi Square Tests of Students' Learning Style and Learning Achievement.**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.008 <sup>a</sup>	10	.099
Likelihood Ratio	21.256	10	.019
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.324	1	.250
N of Valid Cases	53		

a. 16 cells (88.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .34.

Here are the hypotheses of correlation test using Chi-Square:

$H_0$  = There is no any significant correlation between students' learning style and students' achievement at the tenth grade students of SMAN 7 Bekasi.

$H_1$  = There is any significant correlation between students' learning style and students' achievement at the tenth grade students of SMAN 7 Bekasi.

From the statistical analysis above, it can be seen that the significance is 0.099. While, the alpha is 0.05. It means that the  $0.099 > 0.05$ . The researchers can take conclusion that the  $H_0$  is accepted while  $H_1$  is refuted. It means that there is no any significant correlation between students' learning style and students' achievement at the tenth grade students of SMAN 7 Bekasi.

This result is in line with other research that revealed that the learning styles preferences of the students were not correlated to the academic achievement of students (Gappi, 2013). Almigbal (2015) findings also added that the learning style preference are not related to student's academic achievement, marital status, residency, or study resources such as: teacher's PowerPoint slides, textbooks and journals.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the result and discussion, the conclusions are:

1. Visual learning style is the dominant learning style used by tenth grade students of SMAN 7 Bekasi.
2. There is no any significant correlation of learning style and students' achievement of tenth grade student at SMAN 7 Bekasi.

After conducting this study, the researchers recommend to other researchers to investigate more in the field of learning style. It would be better for further works to include other variable such as: gender, habitual activity and also language exposure in relation to learning style in English Language learning.

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