

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLES AND THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

A descriptive study on students' assumption about the relationship between learning styles and academic achievement. The aim of this study was to find out whether there is a relationship between learning styles and academic achievement. The writer used total sampling technique in collecting the data and questionnaire as the instrument of the study. The questionnaire was distributed to the sample that is all of the college of languages students of a Private University Semarang that are 62 students divided into two majors; education and literature programs. The writer tabulated the data using Microsoft excel and SPSS v.23.0 in order to know the results statistically. The results showed that the learning styles aspects had a relationship on the students' academic achievement. It is proven by the statistical data of questionnaire's Likert scale that most of the respondents give the response in scale of "4" which means the respondents agree with the statements on the questionnaire about the relationship between learning styles and academic achievement.

Keywords: learning styles, academic achievement, students

Introduction

Learning is the process by which an activity originates or is changed through training procedures (whether in the laboratory or in the natural environment) that brings changes in performance, behavior and new skills because of experience or practice in a deliberate attempt (Hilgard, 1981; Suryabrata, 2004; Bugelski, 1986; Witherington & Cronbach, 1982). From the definitions by experts above, it can be concluded that learning is the process of change of the individuals' behavior, performance, knowledge by experiencing some situation that are affecting them to be better or good. One of activities that will need learning in various ways to be successful on it is ASEAN Economic Community (AEC); which means, we as Indonesian involve and enjoy the global market. As the experts state that learning style is the ways that students do to learn. Learning styles as the educational conditions under those students are most likely to learn (Cornett, 1983; Stewart & Felicetti, 1992). In the international journal of ICTL 2009, it refers to a student choose the way of studying (Warn, 2009). Another expert states that learning styles as the students' preferences to think, to relate others, and the certain types of experiences and classroom environment (Grasha, 1990). The definition by the experts above can be concluded that learning style is the way or style that students choose, their preferences of thinking, relating others, experiencing a certain situation of learning in a classroom or educational condition. This means what Indonesian especially students do to prepare involving and enjoying the global market in AEC era.

Academic achievement is the result of somebody knowledge, success, the extent or ability, the progress in learning educational experiences that an individual

has learned from some educational learning or proficiency in certain skills (Jha, 2014; Isnian, 2009; Tinambunan, 1988). From the definition by the experts above, the writer's conclusion is that academic achievement is the result of students' comprehension, progress of knowledge, successfulness, learning experiences, and ability, in majors after doing an educational learning process in a certain program. Academic achievement as the goal of doing learning in various ways, the good academic achievement or satisfactory of academic achievement is a student's level of success on reaching the goal in a teaching and learning process of a certain program (Syah, 2008). Others experts state that satisfactory of academic achievement is a result from the teachers that students achieve in the end of school year after the students learn during certain period or semester (Suryabrata, 2006; Adiningsih, 2012). The conclusion from the definitions above that satisfactory of academic achievement is a final result, students' level of successfulness that the students get in the end of school year after doing teaching and learning process in a certain program and period.

Kadir (2013) finds the four dimensions that are emotional, sociological, physiological and psychological have the relationship on the academic performance. Learning styles have relationship on the students' learning achievement (Wulandari, 2011). In contrast, Hassan, et al. (2012) found the seven factors affecting students' learning styles in terms of students' behavior of before-after joining the class, strategies that is used to understand the teaching and learning process, the importance of teaching and learning process.

Akhtar (2011), studied that Socio-economic Status (SES) affects the students' learning styles (based on geographical location). Gokalp (2013), found the various learning styles depending on the students major, using Kolb Learning Style Inventory. While Valshnav (2013), found that three different learning styles have significant effects on the academic achievement.

The review of literatures above arise other questions about the students' learning styles and their academic achievement. The categorizations of learning styles which make them affect the students' academic achievement. They are the perceptual that how a learner perceives, cognitive as the learner interact with, and the last affective the learner responds to the learning environment (Keefe, 1987, cited in Reid, 2005; Blank & James, 1993). Then, we can take a conclusion of those experts' categorization of learning styles that have possibilities giving benefit to the learners. The words perceive, perceptual, learner perceives we can call it as perception. Process, cognitive, learner interact with, we can call it as willingness to learn. The word store, which is included in cognitive category, we can call it as understanding to the lesson. The last, recall and affective means recall or responds to the previous lesson.

The process of finding out the relationship between learning styles and academic achievement, there will be elements or aspects researched inside. It means that the complex relationship of first variable and others. First is the relationship between perception aspect of learning styles and the students' academic achievement. Second is the relationship between willingness to learn aspect of learning styles and the students' academic achievement. Third is the relationship between understanding the lesson aspect of learning styles and the students' academic achievement. Fourth as the last statement is the relationship between recalling to the previous lesson aspect of learning styles and the students' academic achievement. The writer used this categorization as the conceptual framework of the relationship of learning styles and academic achievement, which is conducted by Keefe (1987, as cited in Reid, 2005).

The writer does a quantitative research design. It measures the indicators of the variables in this study statistically in order to prove the general assumption of the

students' learning styles and their academic achievement. It means that if the students have the criteria mentioned on indicators of learning styles in this study then their academic achievement will be good. There are two variables of this research; the first variable is students' learning styles and the second is their academic achievement. Therefore, using this research design, the writer would like to know the relationship between students' learning styles and their academic achievement. The writer does the research overall classes of the two majors these are English Education major and English Literature major in three classes as the total sample of the 62 total population of the third semester of college students in a Private University of Central Java in the academic year 2016/2017. The writer used questionnaire as the instrument, which is a means of eliciting the feelings, beliefs, experiences, perceptions, or attitudes of some sample of individuals. As a data-collecting instrument, it could be structured or unstructured (Key, 1997). The questionnaire of this study is a list of ten statements related to students' learning styles. Each question has five options of strongly disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree, and strongly agree. It is measured in ordinal 5 point Likert scale, strongly disagree = 1, so on until 5 = strongly agree (Airasian, 2012). The questionnaire was given after the students joining the morning class. The time estimation for filling the questionnaire was around 20 minutes. The writer used content validity, construct validity, and face validity for this research. The writer measured the reliability of the questionnaire by noticing the internal consistency of the respondents and using SPSS.

Finding and Discussion

In the analysis of result, the writer measured the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire result. The questionnaire was valid and reliable. Then the writer did describing the variables of this study that are students' learning styles and their academic achievement in order to expose the result of the questionnaire explicitly. Since there are ten statements and five Likert scale on the questionnaire, the writer described it and noted it using bar chart for describing the whole result generally.

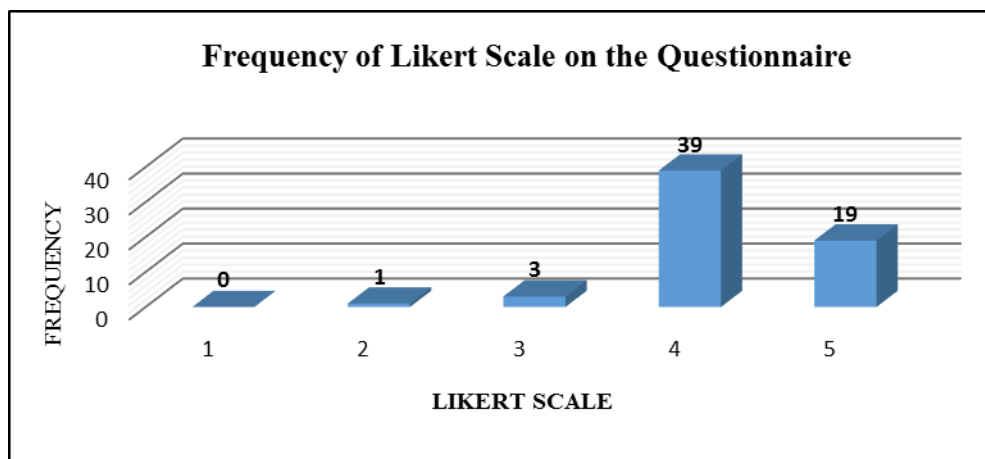


Figure 1. Bar Chart of Likert Scale Frequency

Based on the bar chart above, most of respondents have responded on scale "4" in all the statements of the questionnaire that are 39 of the total 62 respondents. Therefore, the scale of "4" is the highest score or the first. The second one is scale of "5", which has 19 of 62 respondents using it to respond the statements. The third is scale of "3", which has 3 of 62 respondents using it to respond the statements. The fourth is scale of "2", which has only one of 62 respondents using the scale. The last is

the lowest one that is scale of “1”, which has no respondent using it to respond the statements. It means that the respondents agree with these items of the questionnaire because more than a half of 62 chose the scale of “4” and “5” in responding the statements. The bar chart above proved the general result of this research. Those result supported the theory of Keefe (1987), as cited in Reid (2005) about how the learner perceives, interact with and respond to the learning environment.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the discussion on the previous parts, it can be concluded that the four aspects of learning styles have the good impact on satisfactory academic achievement. The first aspect of learning styles that is *Perception* combined with *Satisfactory Academic Achievement* has the high percentage based on the respondents’ agreement about the general assumption; therefore, the general assumption of the first aspect (perception giving a good impact on satisfactory academic achievement) has been proved that it is accepted. The second aspect that is *Willingness to Learn* combined with *Satisfactory Academic Achievement* has the high percentage based on the respondents’ agreement about the general assumption; therefore, the general assumption of the second aspect (willingness to learn has a good impact on satisfactory academic achievement) has been proved that it is accepted. The third aspect that is *Understanding to the Lesson* combined with *Satisfactory Academic Achievement* has the high percentage based on the respondents’ agreement about the general assumption; therefore, the general assumption of the third aspect (understanding to the lesson giving a good impact on satisfactory academic achievement) has been proved that it is accepted. The fourth as the last aspect of learning styles that is *Recalling to the Previous Lesson* combined with *Satisfactory Academic Achievement* has the high percentage based on the respondents’ agreement about the general assumption. Therefore, the general assumption of the third aspect (recalling to the previous lesson has a good impact on satisfactory academic achievement) has been proved that it is accepted.

In other words, based on the high percentage of the students’ agreement of the indicators’ general assumption it has been proved that there is a relationship between students’ learning styles and their academic achievement.

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