

LANGUAGE LEARNING STYLE IN MANAGEMENT STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT GENDER GROUP

Daniatussalma¹, Yudhi Arifani², Candra Hadi Asmara³

University of Muhammadiyah Gresik¹

sdaniatussalma@gmail.com

University of Muhammadiyah Gresik²

yudhiarif_76@yahoo.co.id

University of Muhammadiyah Gresik³

candrafkip@umg.ac.id

Abstract

Learning style is one factor which can determine students in the way how they obtained the learning or information. Between male and female students were different in choosing their learning styles. This study tried to investigate the perceptual learning styles preference in Management students and to know the differences between male and female Management students in learning styles in the first semester at University of Muhammadiyah Gresik. Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) developed by Reid 1987 was used and administered to 230 students. An observation check-list also used to support the data with questionnaire. Descriptive Statistic was used to analyze the data. The result indicated that students preferred in Group style when they learned English as Academic Purpose (EAP). In gender, between female and male students showed there were some differences in their learning styles. The result revealed that female students preferred in Group style, meanwhile male students preferred in auditory style. The least preference of learning style both female and male students was Individual style.

Keywords: *Learning Style Preference, PLSPQ, English as Academic Purpose (EAP)*

INTRODUCTION

Every student has his own characteristic in learning. To make the learning environment comfort with the students, there were some factors to support it. Learning style of students is one of those factors. Learning style is one of what students like to make them focused on the way how they learn (Yosraveevorakul & Hatfield, 2017).

Teacher must know the learning style to make students get more focused and maximized toward the content of the material given by the teacher (Alrabah, Wu, & Alotaibi, 2018).

In the other side (Yosraveevorakul & Hatfield, 2017) claimed that students learning style can be changed all the time if they are in different learning environment. Here it was better for teacher

to make students more confident with the different in learning environment. Based on (Hilyatun, 2017) stated that learning style is about how students understand and receive the information from the teacher. This makes learning style is the important thing in the learning process.

According to Francis 2016 as cited by (Bayu & Sari, 2019) that students who enjoyed with their visual learning style prefer to read and get obtain the information visually. They will be hard to think if they only obtain the information orally and any other conversation from the lectures without any visual stimulation. Meanwhile, the students who enjoyed with their auditory learning style tend to be comfort to obtain the information orally without any visual input.

There were some studies learned about learning styles. There were also studied about the aspects which effect students' preferences in learning styles. For the example the study from (Naserieh, Reza, & Sarab, 2013) investigated about learning style preferences toward gender, age, discipline and self-rated. The result revealed that students at Shahid Behesthi University, Iran preferred in kinesthetic and tactile style when they learned English. The other study from (Isemonger & Sheppard, 2003) which administered

PLSPQ to 710 Waseda University, Japan determined by age and major revealed that the students preferred in kinesthetic style when they learned English. Study from (Cheng, 2017) who identified the predominant learning styles preferences of Chinese as Foreign Language determined by gender factors revealed that there was a significantly different between male and female students. It revealed that male students preferred in visual style, while female students preferred in individual style.

This study tries to identify the learning preferences of Management students in studying English as Academic Purpose in different gender group. Based on (Zaidi, 2014) stated that men appear to have more gray matter which made up of active neurons and absolutely would make men more active (kinesthetic) than women. Meanwhile women are more have white matter which made them more responsible for communication among different areas of the brain. It can be stated that male students are more capable or easy to obtain the information while they are learning is using kinesthetic style.

As stated before that actually there were some aspects that effect students' learning styles, such as age, gender, major field and etc. In this study only focuses

and limits the students; learning styles in gender group. This study also limits to students who took English as Academic Purpose in Management major to be the respondents of this study. This may be the contribution of the study which made different with the other previous studies.

Objectives of the Study

This study is to investigate Management students' preferences in learning styles in different gender group. These are the research questions of this study:

1. What is the perceptual learning styles preference in Management students?
2. What are the differences between male and female Management students in learning styles?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on (Vaseghi Reza, 2004) about learning style is the way when individual start to think concentrate, how to process information and retain new information that is difficult to think in different perceptual.

Theories of Learning Styles

Learning styles model by R. Dunn 1983 and Reinert 1976 demonstrated four basic perceptual learning styles of the learners. The first is Visual learning which learners who like learning through reading and studying charts. The second is Auditory learning which makes students enjoy learning through lecturing or listening the teachers. The third is Kinesthetic learning which makes students more active in moving their physical body in the way how they learned.

Learning styles model by Dunn and Dunn determined learning styles based on 21 elements that can be organized into five stimuli groups. They are Environmental, Emotional, Sociological, Physical and Psychological stimuli.

The other learning style from expert is learning style model by Neil Fleming. Fleming divided learning styles into four models and it named VARK which stands for Visual, Aural, Read/Write and Kinesthetic. Fleming define Visual style as learning style which includes some information represents what could have been presented in words. Such as reading maps, diagrams, charts, graphs and the other. Aural style is kind of learning style which describes information that the students heard or spoken through group discussion, radio, email, speaking

and talking things through. Read/Write is the third kind of learning style by Neil Fleming which students prefer studying through reading or writing. Students feel enjoy and have a more power when they give assignment such essay and report. Meanwhile, kinesthetic is learning style which students are very interested and easily get the information through something natural or reality. It can be simulation of making something in procedure manner which always related with reality.

Even though there were some experts defined and divided learning styles model, here the writer focused on learning styles model by Reid 1987. She divided learning styles into six models. They are Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, Tactile, Group and Individual. Visual style is one of learning style model which represents students who prefer in learning through reading some books in a digital or even the board. They are also able to take some notes while teacher explains the information. Auditory style defines to students who prefer learning through listening the teacher and listening audiotapes. Kinesthetic style is style which represents students who are easily understand while they are active in moving their body or physically involved. It just

like participating in role play classroom or even field trips. Tactile major is kind of learning style which makes students to do hands-on experience with the materials such as working on experiments, handling and building models and touching and working with material. The next is Group major which stands to students who prefer learning with at least one student or more. They like learning in group discussion. The last is individual style which defines students who prefer learning with her/him self. They feel understand if they do the task alone.

In spite of that, Reid developed questionnaire which related with her six learning style models. It named with Perceptual Learning Styles Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ). This study investigated learning style preference of students using PLSPQ because there were some studies already used PLSPQ to know the learning style preference of students (Isemonger & Sheppard, 2003)(Naserieh et al., 2013)(Cheng, 2017) and the other. (Peacock, 2001) stated that PLSPQ is valid and reliable to be used in research. In addition of this, Brown (1994) as cited in (Cheng, 2017) stated that it is something prominent or salient in a formal classroom setting.

METHOD

This study may be described as mix method research design. Mix method used to conduct the research question through questionnaire (quantitative) and observation check-list (qualitative) to support the data from questionnaire. Based on (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010) stated that the goal of mix methods is to combine between two approaches to utilize the strengthen of each approach.

Subject of the Study

The subject of this study is Management students who took English as Academic Purpose in academic year 2019/2020. It is totally 255 students. The writer conducts the subject of this study at Muhammadiyah Gresik University which is located in Gresik, East Java. The number of Management students taken is balanced between the number of female and male students. The subject will be taken purposively in Management students that the students in the first semester in academic year 2019/2020. Male 87 female 143

Research Instruments

This study used Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) adapted from Reid 1987. There

are 30 items included in that questionnaire which five rating scale from one to five. Due to the purpose of this study, the items of questionnaire will be translated in *Indonesia*. It will be checked by the lecturer as the advisor to ensure their clarity. From 30 items of questionnaire, there are some items which have ambiguity meaning and need some detail to make them clear. In this study, the writer modifies some items and will calculate the reliability and validity after the adaptation questionnaire distributed.

To obtain the validity of the data, the writer observed the students in a class when they learned English as Academic Purpose. This would make the data match with the students' answer toward the questionnaire items. In addition of this, observation checklist would make the data in questionnaire be stronger with the real situation in learning process. So that, the writer made an observation check list which includes some characteristic of students who reflect in learning styles model by Reid in PLSPQ.

Data Analysis

In displaying the result from questionnaire data (quantitative), the writer used SPSS16 with Descriptive Statistic. A repeated Descriptive Statistic used to

measure the perceptual preferences of management students, and also to measure the perceptual preferences of management students from different gender group. The writer calculated described the result from the Output of Descriptive Statistic. From Descriptive Statistic, the writer knew the mean score, standard deviation, minimum and maximum score in each category of learning style.

In addition of this, Microsoft Excel 2007 also used by the writer to get the data from questionnaire. Mean and sum function was used to know the score in each item of questionnaire. Even the writer knew the managements students mostly preferred in from the result of Descriptive Statistic, but this study need to know the score in every item of questionnaire.

About observation (qualitative), the writer will describe it together with interpreting the data questionnaire. Observation check-list listed some characteristics in every category of learning style. When the writer found the activities of students which presented the same thing with the characteristics in list, the writer gave the check to those item

Style Preference	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Type
Group	7.66	1.14	5	10	Negative
Tactile	7.54	1.034	5	10	Negative
Kinesthetic	7.52	0.937	5	10	Negative
Visual	7.46	0.999	5	10	Negative
Auditory	7.43	0.996	5	10	Negative
Individual	6.94	1.329	3	10	Negative

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FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Style Preference	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Type
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Continuing the research questions of this study, this point will show the findings followed by discussion. To answer the first research focus about the perceptual learning styles preference in Management students, the data of the questionnaire analyzed by Descriptive Statistic through SPSS16 showed that mostly students preferred in Group style with the mean score is 7.66. It followed with Tactile (7.54), Kinesthetic (7.52), Visual (7.46), Auditory (7.43) and the least was Individual (6.94).

Style Preference	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Type
Group	7.66	1.14	5	10	Negative
Tactile	7.54	1.014	5	10	Negative
Kinesthetic	7.32	0.937	5	10	Negative
Visual	7.46	0.999	5	10	Negative
Auditory	7.43	0.996	5	10	Negative
Individual	6.94	1.319	3	10	Negative

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As showed in the table above, the writer also used observation check-list to support it. When the writer did her observation in every class, it showed that

Style Preference	Male (n=87)		Female (n=143)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Visual	7.52	1.10	7.42	0.97
Tactile	7.49	0.96	7.57	1.05
Auditory	7.64	0.99	7.49	1.02
Group	7.61	1.13	7.69	1.15
Kinesthetic	7.48	0.96	7.42	0.91
Individual	7.01	1.41	6.9	1.26

students enjoyed learning with at least one other student. They seemed more active when they learn in a group. This also

supported with the lecturer statement that mostly he used group discussion to make the learning process more effective due to the number of students in every class was quiet big number.

In the second research focus, the writer got the data from questionnaire also supported with observation check-list. It was about the differences between male and female Management students in learning styles.

The data from questionnaire showed that there were significantly different in learning style preferences between male and female in Management students. The result showed that female students preferred in Group style (7.69) meanwhile male students preferred in Auditory style (7.64). About the least preferences between female and male students was Individual style.

When the writer did the observation in the class, it showed that mostly female in the class learned with their friends. Even it was not in a group discussion, but mostly female students showed that they directly discussed their task with their friends next to their seat.

Also, there were some of them who move their seats to their friends to make them close and then they discussed the task together.

For male students, they also showed the characteristic of auditory style as stated in PLSPQ by Reid. Students with Auditory style tend to learn by hearing some words spoken, hearing from lecturer, reading aloud, conversing with the lecturer and benefit in class discussion. . It can be shown when the writer did the observation in the class that male students were more enjoying reading aloud and conversing with lecturers than female students. For instance, mostly male students in a class would easier to get the information by hearing from what the lecturer said. They could do their task after the lecturer gave the information. When they need to have more detail about the task, they had a conversation or asked the lecturer.

Comparing with some previous studies, there were some different results with this study. The study from (Reid, 1987) and (Afzal Ahmad, 2011) who studied about learning style preference using PLSPQ revealed that kinesthetic was the most preferred learning style of students. Even, the least preference for learning style was Group. Meanwhile, this study revealed that Group was the most

preferred of students learning style. It could be argued why this made difference is because of the level of respondents who took in every study. (Afzal Ahmad, 2011) did for Low English Proficiency students and (Reid, 1987) was for ESL students. Both were focused on students who learned English in general.

In the other research from (Naserieh et al., 2013) investigated the perceptual learning style preferences among Iranian graduate students revealed that the most preferred learning style was Kinesthetic (14.49) followed by Tactile (14.36), Auditory (13.71), Visual (13.04), Individual (12.17) and the least was Group (10.99). That study tried to know the correlation among gender, age, discipline of study and self-rated proficiency level toward the students learning style preference. The number of respondents was 138 students by administered them a PLSPQ for six diverse faculties. From those six diverse faculties, they showed kinesthetically as their preference and Group was the least preference. In contrary, this study revealed that Group was the most preferred.

The correlation study from (Naserieh et al., 2013) stated that for the six diverse faculties as the respondents in that study, they all learned English in

general. Comparing with the purpose of this study that this study wanted to know the learning style preference in Management students, the study from (Naserieh et al., 2013) had the other purpose. In other words, this study wanted to describe and explain the perceptual learning style preference of Management students as EFL learners. It used a mixed-method as the design of the study. The study from (Naserieh et al., 2013) wanted to correlate learning style preferences among gender, age, discipline of study and self-rated proficiency level. The different purposes of the study made the result of the study different.

In other research, (Khmakhien, 2007) revealed that auditory had the highest mean score from the other five learning styles. The respondents of that article were Thai EFL learners, it showed that auditory had a 3.87 mean score, followed by kinesthetic (3.72), group (3.66), tactile (3.50), visual and individual. Each of them was 3.41 and 3.20. The individual had the least preferences in Thai EFL learners. In addition to this, the article showed that the differences in every kind of learning styles were not significant. But it may be concluded for the result that the most favorable style of Thai EFL learners

was auditory. The result also showed differences in this study.

Here can be said that this study has two big contributions. The differences in background students learning could make the results of the study were also different. Students who learned General English preferred learning kinesthetically and auditory. In contrary, this study took some respondents who studied English as Academic Purpose which the result showed that mostly Management students preferred in the group and tactile style.

The other contribution was about a different way of the purpose of the study. Some previous studies investigated the correlation between learning styles toward gender and other aspects. In this study, the writer only focused to describe and explain the differences perceptual preferences of learning style in Management students and between males and females of them.

As we know in the table of preference learning styles between male and female students showed that male students preferred in Auditory style, meanwhile female students preferred in Group style. In this case, the result may be a difference with the study of (Khmakhien, 2007) about the different learning style preference between male and female

students. It stated that there was no significant difference in learning style preference between male and female Thai EFL learners. They both preferred in the Auditory style. PLSPQ was distributed to 102 male students and 160 female students and it showed a quiet different score of the result. It was 3.77 for male students and 3.91 for female students.

It also stated that the least learning style preference was Individual style between male and female students. This might be the same as the result of this study that between male and female students did not enjoy learning individually.

According to (Reid, 1987) revealed that males preferred visual and tactile learning significantly more than females. The respondents of Reid 1987 study was about ESL Learners who learned English in general. It made the result of the study different.

In the other side, Michael Gurian in the book of *Boys and Girls learn differently* stated that in the human brain there were some parts that made individually especially in boys and girls' brains had the parts that the function impact students in learning styles. So, Gurian stated that boys and girls had their

own way of learning differently. This study revealed that female and male students were differences in learning.

There it may be argued that the differences learning styles between female and male students made by some aspects. The need for students in learning whether they took English as Academic Purpose or General English affected the result of the study. Some previous studies did not show a significantly different learning style between male and female students. The writer found the study which showed that kinesthetic was the most preference of learning style for both male and female students. There were no differences in learning styles between male and female students. Contradictory, this study showed the differences between male and female students when they learned English. It showed that female students preferred in Group learning style. Meanwhile, male students preferred in Auditory style. This could be occurred based on the need for students' learning.

The other thing that made the result of the study was different is because there was a certain skill that the students learn to be assessed. Even the result showed significantly different, but it different toward the result of this study, because

there was a specific skill which made the result of the study was different.

So here, it could not be confirmed whether female students are always preferred in group style and male students are always preferred in auditory style. Here can be said that there were different needs in students learning. There was a dynamic change in female and male students when they got a different need in learning. Female students preferred group style when male students preferred in auditory style when they learned English as Academic Purpose. In contrary, female and male students preferred kinesthetic style when they learned English in General. It may be stated that the different necessity also has a different preference in students learning style.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The result of the study revealed that every student had their own way of learning. Every student had differences in choosing what made them enjoyed learning and easy to get the information. It also revealed from theory in the book of Michael Gurian. It stated that in the brain, there were some parts that made students

decided to choose in the best way how they learned. In this study, it showed that male and female students have different preferences in learning style. Even the result showed not significantly different, but the result showed differences.

Comparing with the other result of the research before, it showed that the result of this study was far different. This study revealed that the group was the most preferred learning style of management students, and the individual was the most students dislike in learning English. In contrary the other studies before revealed that kinesthetic was the most students preferred in learning style. Just like in the study from (Naserieh et al., 2013) which revealed kinesthetic as the most preferences learning styles. The other studies about students' preference in learning styles showed the different preferences of learning styles toward this study. It may be argued that there were some aspects that made the students' preferences in learning styles were variant and different. It may be from the purpose of study, students need in learning such students who took English as Academic Purpose and English in General, certain language skills, and even field of study. Those aspects could be the contribution of this study.

This study was not as perfect study. It needs improvement to make this study better and useful to others. This study has a suggestion toward the first research question about perceptual learning styles preference in Management students that the focus of study can be spread out. The learning style may be investigated by examining the field of study and the purpose of the study. The result will be consistent with this study or even different results of the study.

About the second research question about learning style preference between male and female students, this study also has a suggestion for the next researcher. The possibility of examining age and field of study may have different priorities of students learning style preferences, especially for male and female students. It may be advised that gender also impacts toward the age of them and the field of study. It means that for the next researcher, the other aspect such as age and field of study can be something which can affect the learning style preference students in spite of gender.

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