



A STUDY ON LEARNING STYLES AMONG TEACHERS AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to find out the learning styles of teachers at secondary level. Survey method was conducted on a sample of 636 secondary teachers in Mandya district. Learning Styles Inventory by Honey and Mumford was used for data collection. Data was analysed by using percentage. The findings were discussed in the study and relevant implications were given.

KEYWORDS: Learning Style, Secondary Teachers.

INTRODUCTION :

Learning styles are personal way in which individual process information and the courts of learning new concepts and principal. Learning styles differ from individual to individual. For the same individual they differ from the subject to subject. As per the definitions offered by Rosenberg, "Learning style refers to an individual's characteristics pattern of behaviour when confronted with a problem. In simple language, a learning approach to learning a task in his learning style. It is his predisposition for behaviour in learning situations.

An individual's characteristics pattern of behaviour when confronted with a problem in his learning behaviour. It is learner's approach to learning a task or it is the learner's predisposition to learn. The learning style of an individual is his pattern of learning a task. It is his predisposition in a learning situation.

Learning style has a bearing on the achievement of learner knowledge of the influence of various styles of learning and achievement will assist the teachers to facilitate the learners while learning. The learning style is a hypothetical construct that has been developed to explain the process of mediation between stimulate and responses. Dunn (1992) viewed that learning style is the way in which each learning to concentrate on process and retain new and difficult information. Hill (1994) defined learning style as the unique way in which one individual searches for meaning.

Though various psychologists have defined the term 'learning style' in their own manner, nevertheless all agree that it refers to individual characteristic pattern of learning behaviour which is pervasive and consistent in nature (Verma, 1988). Keafe (1979) defines learning styles as the "composite of characteristic cognitive, effective and psychological factors that serve as relatively stable indicates of how a learner pervasive, interacts with and responds to the learning environment'. Stewart and Felicetti (1992) define learning styles at those "Educational conditions under which a student is most likely to learn". Learning style refers to the way one internally represents experiences and results or processes information.

LEARNING STYLES IN TEACHERS

Teachers learning styles preferences are little explored the use of instruments reporting individual learning or cognitive style is attractive for educationists, especially within high accountability educational

systems, where schools face rising pressures to reach or improve upon high levels of students performance in public examinations and to promote individualised learning.

One of the strongest advocates for learning styles. Kolb (1984) argued that despite the efforts made to assist the learning process in different educational contexts and subject areas. "The weakness of nearly all those is the failure to recognise and explicitly provide for the differences in learning styles that are characteristic of both individuals and subject matters" (Kolb, 1984, p. 196).

An alternative learning style scale was developed by Honey and Mumford (1986) who share Kolb's view that learning is strongly influenced by intrinsic performances that give individuals a liking for certain approaches over others. Their learning styles questionnaire includes 80 questions aimed to measure an individual's intrinsic learning preferences, activist reflector, theorist and pragmatist. The classification structures used by Kolb and Honey and Mumford are very similar and despite some small differences of nomenclature, the two instruments map onto each other closely at the theoretical level.

The classification of learning styles is as follows. Learning styles includes individual repertoire of learning strategies, behaviour stages, operations, techniques used by students to facilitate the acquisition, memorise, retrieve and utilization of the information combined with cognitive style.

1. **Activist:** which involves implication and openness toward new experiences, enthusiasm in approaching them, first action and then reflections upon consequences with social relationships centered on person itself.
2. **Reflectors:** based on thinking in detail before reaching a conclusion upon very precisely analysis and observation of different perspectives of experiences is preferred by those persons who adopt in their classroom.
3. **Theorists:** in which analysis and synthesis are very important in which things have to be clear, logical to have meaning and to fit with the whole, trying to maximise to certainty.
4. **Pragmatists:** the specific to persevering and confident persons who try to solve problems who take practical decisions and those with an analytical teaching style who want to check how theoretical aspects work in practice prefer it.

There are researches that show us that academic performances are considerable when there is a match between teachers teaching style, learning style and learning style of students (Geary and Sims, 1995).

Teachers learning styles preferences are little explored. Dunn and Griggs (2007) find that 65% of teachers in high school are analytic, while at least 55% of the students are the opposite, global.

For teachers, learning styles requires pedagogy to be taught according to their preferences as emphasized by Dunn and Burke (2007) these students will then get personal insights in how to successfully work with the children who fail in school, but they do not know how to teach "non-traditional" children and this is a direct result of the teacher education program which has not given them the didactic skills. Bruke and Dunn highlight that teaching students with different learning styles is not difficult, but it is very different from how teachers in general do.

Although there are many other theories of learning style which have led to significant amounts of research (Dunn, 1979; Dunn and Griggs, 1988; Kolb, 1984; Witkin and Goodenough, 1981) the learning style theory which makes the most "sense" to me perhaps because of my own learning style is the work of Anthony F. Gregoric, who suggests the following.

Learning style consists of distinctive behaviours which serve as indicators of how person's learn from and adopt to their environment. It also gives clues as to how a person's mind operator (Gregoric, 1979, p. 234). The abstract sequential style is characterized by a rational, logical, theoretical, analytical approach. The person might be described as evaluative, intellectual scholarly, and structured. Implicit in this style is argumentativeness and resistance to change. Abstract random learners are emotional, sensitive and subjective in their approach to learning. They are also sociable, understanding, empathetic, imaginative and colourful orientation is toward media, themes and interpretations style includes flexibility and adaptability.

RATIONALE OF STUDY

Learning style of teachers occupy a prestigious place in not only teaching but also on the learners achievement. A perusal of review of studies related to this area indicates, not much studies have been conducted in India. Therefore it would be appropriate to understand learning styles of teachers and there is an urgent need to investigate into this area and this is the main rationale of the present study.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers' learning styles differ according to their teaching subjects?
2. How does experience of teachers influence their learning styles?

Objectives

- To study the learning style of teachers with respect to teaching subject at secondary level.
- To study the learning style of teachers with respect to teaching experience at secondary level.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant association between learning styles and teaching subject of secondary level teachers.
2. There is no difference in learning styles of teachers with respect to teaching experience of secondary level teachers.

Design and Sample

The present study is a survey method research. The researcher has attempted to study how learning styles of teachers vary according to their teaching experience and subject they teach at secondary level. There are 212 Government secondary schools in Mandya district. Of these school teachers, 636 teachers were selected for the study.

Results

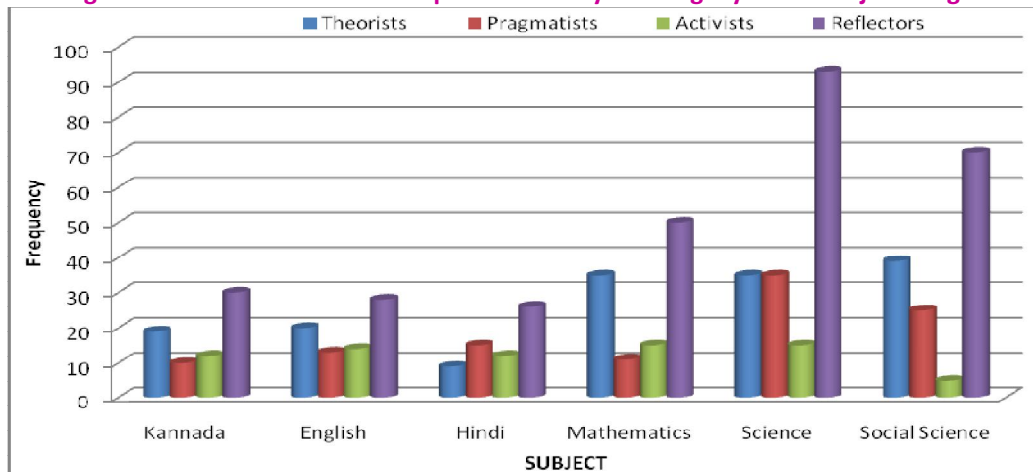
Hypothesis 1: There is no significant association between learning styles and teaching subject of secondary level teachers.

Table 1: Learning Style of the Sample Selected by Subject and Results of Cramer's V Test

Learning Styles		SUBJECT						Total
		Kannada	English	Hindi	Mathematics	Science	Social Science	
Theorists	F	19	20	9	35	35	39	157
	%	26.8%	26.7%	14.5%	31.5%	19.7%	28.1%	24.7%
Pragmatists	F	10	13	15	11	35	25	109
	%	14.1%	17.3%	24.2%	9.9%	19.7%	18.0%	17.1%
Activists	F	12	14	12	15	15	5	73
	%	16.9%	18.7%	19.4%	13.5%	8.4%	3.6%	11.5%
Reflectors	F	30	28	26	50	93	70	297
	%	42.3%	37.3%	41.9%	45.0%	52.2%	50.4%	46.7%
Total	F	71	75	62	111	178	139	636
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test Statistics		CV=.136; P value=.002						

From Table-1, a non-significant association observed between teaching subjects of teachers and categories of dominant learning style. Cramer’s V value of .136 was found to be significant (p=.002). In other words, the pattern of distribution of teachers based on teaching subjects was different as reflective type of teaching was found to be dominantly used.

Figure 1: Distribution of the sample selected by learning style and subject taught



Hypothesis 2: There is no difference in learning of teachers with respect to teaching experience of secondary level teachers.

Table 2: Distribution of Selected Sample on Dominant Learning Style by Experience and Results of Test Statistics

Learning Styles		Experience (in years)							Total
		0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	
Theorists	F	26	52	31	19	18	11	0	157
	%	25.7%	23.7%	27.9%	21.3%	23.4%	30.6%	0.0%	24.7%
Pragmatists	F	17	45	16	15	9	6	1	109
	%	16.8%	20.5%	14.4%	16.9%	11.7%	16.7%	33.3%	17.1%
Activists	F	13	27	14	13	4	2	0	73
	%	12.9%	12.3%	12.6%	14.6%	5.2%	5.6%	0.0%	11.5%
Reflectors	F	45	95	50	42	46	17	2	297
	%	44.6%	43.4%	45.0%	47.2%	59.7%	47.2%	66.7%	46.7%
Total	F	101	219	111	89	77	36	3	636
	%	100%	100.0	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test Statistics		CV=.089; P value=.655							

Table-2 shows a non-significant association observed between work experience and categories of dominant learning style. Cramer’s V value of .089 was found to be non-significant (p=.655). In other words, the pattern of distribution of teachers based on work experience was same irrespective of the dominant learning style.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Learning styles help in learning of concepts acting as mediators between the precursors and reaction. These learning styles help in the internal and personal learning styles as they basically help themselves to understand the concepts clearly, for introspection, analysis based on their experience which helps in the representation of what is being taught that can reach students in an effective way. Being aware of one's own learning styles aides teachers in categorising students and provide them with required inputs thereby helping to achieve learning objectives. Learner's achievement is majorly based on the positive interaction between teachers' and learners' learning styles.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion it may be said that learning is a beautiful art of understanding the lesson from different perspectives. Teachers with excellence use their gestures and movements to elicit and maintain attention and stimulate student's emotions in enhancing their learning. Therefore it may be said that teaching and learning styles are complementary in nature and not contradictory.

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