

## A Study on the Preferred Learning Styles of Students

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### ABSTRACT

According to the school of learning styles, each and every individual is a unique learner. So there is a need to know the preferred learning styles of students. This study aims on three learning styles of students, auditory, visual and kinesthetic. The methodology employed for the study was survey method. To attain the objectives of the study O'Brien's (1985) Learning channel preference questionnaire was administered to 200 ninth standard school students in Chennai. The present study is an attempt to find out the relationship between preferred learning style of students to certain demographic variables like medium of instruction, gender, types of institution and father's educational qualification. To find the learning style preferences in relation to sex, medium of instruction, father's educational qualification and type of institution t-test and F-test was employed. The findings show that the most preferred learning style of students is visual and kinesthetic learning style

**Keywords:** Learning Style, Auditory, Visual, Kinesthetic

Each Teacher has their own teaching style; likewise each student has their own learning style. Students acquire and process information by seeing, hearing, investigating and by logical reasoning etc. Teachers also use a variety of teaching methods, like lecture, or demonstration while others use problem-solving method. When learning styles of students and teaching styles of teachers mismatch, the students become bored and lack interest about the subject. This may lead to low academic performance. This study focuses on three major learning styles Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic (VAK). All learners receive information through all three learning styles but however for each learner one learning style will be dominant. It is important for teachers to know the learning styles of students so that they can implement best strategies in their teaching and learning process.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Wan Raihan Wan Shaaidi (2012) have conducted a research on the topic, "A study of the preferred learning styles of students taking the English 1119 paper in SMK Tengku Intan Zaharah: are the teachers aware of these learning styles?". The study was conducted in Malaysia among 600 students. The findings revealed that the most preferred learning styles of students was visual learning style while the major factor that influenced their learning style is that they are digital natives.

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Veena N and Shailaja Shastri (2013) have conducted a research on the topic, “Learning Preferences among students”. The study was conducted in Bangalore city among 656 undergraduate students. The findings revealed that 80% of students preferred single mode of information presentation and 20% preferred multiple mode.

### *Objectives*

1. To find out the preferred learning styles of IX standard students.
2. To find out the significant difference in the preferred learning styles of IX standard students on the sub-groups of the sample based on,
  - Medium of Instruction
  - Sex
  - Type of Institution
  - Father’s qualification

### *Hypothesis*

1. There is no significant difference in the preferred learning styles of IX standard students on the sub-groups of the sample based on,
  - Medium of instruction
  - Sex
  - Type of institution
  - Father’s qualification

## METHODOLOGY AND TOOL

The methodology used for the study was survey method. The sample for the present study was 200 IX standard students from schools in Chennai. The sampling strategy used by the researcher for present study was stratified random sampling. The tool used for the present study was a rating scale constructed by O’Brein (1985) “Learning Channel Preference Questionnaire”.

### *Scoring*

The tool contained 30 statements, with 10 statements under each learning style. The statements were measured in a 3 point scale. The respondents were asked to select their degree of agreement for each statement by selecting any of the three responses: *Often-3, Sometimes-2 and Never-1.*

### *Findings of the Study*

*Table – 1, Mean and standard deviation for preferred learning styles*

Sub samples		N	Visual		Auditory		Kinesthetic	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Medium of instruction	Tamil	92	32.80	4.363	32.24	4.238	32.73	4.458
	English	108	33.79	3.063	32.82	3.529	34.29	3.204
Sex	Male	104	32.16	3.594	31.74	3.924	32.74	3.912
	Female	96	34.60	3.490	33.43	3.635	34.47	3.702
Types of institution	Government	99	32.96	4.295	32.43	4.276	32.95	4.246
	Aided	47	33.80	3.167	32.98	3.920	34.21	3.694
	Private	54	33.61	3.030	32.39	2.986	34.15	3.241
Father’s qualification	Below 12 <sup>th</sup>	134	32.66	3.669	32	3.767	32.72	3.692
	Degree	30	34	2.994	32.13	3.627	35.07	3.947
	Illiterate	36	35.30	3.853	34.94	3.633	35.47	3.660

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**Table – 2, t-test and F-test for the preferred learning styles of students based on medium of instruction, sex, type of instruction and Father’s qualification.**

Sub Samples		Visual		Auditory		Kinesthetic	
		T-Value	P-Value	t-Value	P-Value	t-Value	P-Value
<b>Medium of instruction</b>	<b>Tamil</b>	1.863	0.064	1.048	0.296	2.868	0.005*
	<b>English</b>	1.813	0.072	1.033	0.303		
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Male</b>	4.866	0.000*	3.146	0.002*	3.203	0.002*
	<b>Female</b>	4.871	0.000*	3.155	0.002*		
Sub Samples		F-Value	Sig.	F-Value	Sig.	F-Value	Sig.
<b>Type Of Institution</b>	<b>Govt.</b>	1.022	.362	.377	.687	2.523	.083
	<b>Aided</b>						
	<b>Private</b>						
<b>Father’s qualification</b>	<b>Below 12<sup>th</sup></b>	8.230	.000*	9.093	.000*	10.572	.000*
	<b>Degree</b>						
	<b>Illiterate</b>						

*\*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level*

**From table 1 and table 2,**

1. It is inferred that there is a significant difference between male and female students regarding **visual learning style**. Female students prefer visual learning style than male students.
2. It is inferred that there is a significant difference between male and female students regarding **auditory learning style**. Female students prefer auditory learning style than male students.
3. It is inferred that there is a significant difference between male and female students regarding **kinesthetic learning style**. Female students prefer kinesthetic learning style than male students.
4. It is inferred that there is a significant difference between Tamil medium and English medium students regarding **kinesthetic learning style**. Students with medium of instruction English prefer Kinesthetic learning style than students with medium of instruction Tamil.
5. It is inferred that the p-value for **type of institution** is 0.362, which is greater than the significant value 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the **visual learning style** preference of IX standard students with respect to their type of institution.
6. It is inferred that the p-value for **father’s qualification** is 0.000, which is lesser than the significant value 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and there is significant difference in the **visual learning style** preference of IX standard students with respect to their father’s educational qualification. From the Post hoc test, it is inferred that there exists a significant difference in the visual learning style preference of IX standard students, whose father’s educational qualification is below XII standard and illiterate. Students whose fathers are illiterate prefer visual learning style than whose father’s educational qualification is below XII standard.
7. It is inferred that the p-value for **type of institution** is 0.687, which is greater than the significant value 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that

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there is no significant difference in the **auditory learning style** preference of IX standard students with respect to their type of institution.

8. It is inferred that the p-value for **father's qualification** is 0.000, which is lesser than the significant value 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant difference in the **auditory learning style** preference of IX standard students with respect to their father's educational qualification. From the Post hoc test, it is inferred that there exists a significant difference in the auditory learning style preference of IX standard students, whose father's educational qualification is below XII standard and illiterate and whose father's are illiterate and undergraduates. Students whose fathers are illiterate prefer auditory learning style than whose father's educational qualification is below XII
9. It is inferred that the p-value for **type of institution** is 0.083, which is greater than the significant value 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that there is no significant difference in **kinesthetic learning style** preference of IX standard students with respect to their type of institution.
10. It is inferred that the p-value for **father's qualification** is 0.000, which is lesser than the significant value 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant difference in the **kinesthetic learning style** preference of IX standard students with respect to their father's educational qualification. From the Post hoc test, it is inferred that there exists a significant difference in the kinesthetic learning style preference of IX standard students, whose father's educational qualification is below XII standard and illiterate and whose father's educational qualification is below XII standard and degree holders. Students whose fathers are illiterate prefer kinesthetic learning style than whose father's educational qualification is below XII standard.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The Research findings highlighted the learning style preferences of IX standard students in Chennai city. It has been inferred from the study that the most preferred learning style of students is visual and kinesthetic learning style. As visual learners learn by seeing and observing, teachers can use visual aids like graphs, pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, videos and other visual materials. Kinesthetic learners learn by physical activities, teachers can give activities where they can learn by touching, feeling, doing and having hands-on experiences. The teachers can couple visual aids and physical activities with lecture method to enhance the teaching-learning process.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

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