

THE ANALYSIS OF LEARNING STYLES IN DEVELOPING STUDENT LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract: Education plays a vital role in shaping intelligent, well-mannered, and competitive generations. One of the main factors determining students' learning success is their learning style the unique way individuals receive, process, and understand information. Every student has different learning tendencies, whether visual, auditory, or kinesthetics. This study aims to identify the factors influencing the learning styles of fourth-grade students at SD Tamalanrea and to analyze how these learning styles contribute to improving their achievement in English. The study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through closed questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The expected results reveal variations in students' learning styles and a positive relationship between the alignment of teaching methods and students' preferred learning styles toward enhancing English learning achievement. This research is expected to provide practical insights for teachers in understanding students' learning characteristics and in developing more effective and student-centred teaching strategies.

Keywords: Learning Styles, Learning Achievement, English Subject, Elementary Students

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the fundamental aspects in shaping a knowledgeable, creative, and competitive generation in today's global era. The success of education is not only determined by the quality of the curriculum or school facilities but also by the teacher's understanding of students' learning styles. In the learning process, each student has a unique way of receiving and processing information, which is commonly referred to as a learning style.

According to Barbe et al., (1979), learning styles are categorized into three main types: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (VAK). Students with a visual learning style tend to understand lessons better through images and colors; auditory learners grasp information more easily through listening, such as in lectures or discussions; while kinesthetic learners learn best through movement and hands-on activities. A mismatch between students' learning styles and teachers' teaching methods can lead to a decrease in learning motivation, concentration, and even academic achievement (Sanger et al., 2022).

However, in practice, many elementary school teachers still use uniform teaching methods without considering students' individual learning differences. This situation creates learning gaps, especially in English subjects that require integrated skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Preliminary observations at SD Tamalanrea revealed that some students learn more effectively with visual aids like pictures, some understand lessons better through listening (auditory), while many others are more engaged through play-based or hands-on learning activities (kinesthetic). This finding highlights the importance of conducting a study that focuses on analyzing students' learning styles and their influence on English learning achievement among elementary school students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Learning Styles

Learning style refers to an individual's pattern or preference in absorbing, processing, and retaining information (Thoha & Priatna, 2021). Barbe et al., (1979), classified learning styles into three main types: 1) Visual learners – prefer learning through pictures, diagrams, colors, and videos; 2) Auditory learners – understand better through listening to explanations and discussions; 3) Kinesthetic learners – learn more effectively through direct involvement and physical experiences. According to Rita & Dunn (1993), learning styles are influenced by four main factors: 1) Physical factors, such as sensory conditions and body health; 2) Emotional factors, including motivation and readiness to learn; 3) Sociological factors, such as preference for learning individually or in groups; 4) Environmental factors, including lighting, temperature, and the atmosphere of the learning environment.

2.2. Learning Achievement

Learning achievement refers to the results achieved by students after participating in the learning process, covering cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. According to Bire et al., (2014), learning styles significantly influence academic achievement. The more compatible the teaching methods are with students' learning styles, the higher their level of understanding and academic performance tends to be.

3. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of learning styles and their relationship to students' academic achievement. The research was conducted at SD Tamalanrea, Makassar, with all fourth-grade students serving as the subjects of the study. Research Instruments were: 1) Closed Questionnaire – this questionnaire was developed based on the VAK (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic) model to identify the dominant learning styles of fourth-grade students. This instrument was specifically used to answer the first research question, which focuses on identifying how students learn English according to their preferred learning styles; 2) Semi-Structured Interviews – used to explore the factors influencing students' learning styles and how these affect their learning outcomes; 3) Documentation – consisting of students' scores, assignments, and portfolios as supporting data. The data were analyzed using the Miles et al., (2014) interactive model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure the validity of the findings, the researcher applied source triangulation (between teachers and students) and method triangulation (questionnaire, interview, and documentation).

4. RESULTS

The expected findings of this research indicate that fourth-grade students at SD Tamalanrea demonstrate a variety of learning styles. The results show that these students display diverse learning preferences, with the visual learning style being the most dominant. Out of 21 students, most fall into either the visual category or a combination of visual–auditory, meaning they understand lessons more easily through pictures, written texts, and the teacher’s explanations. Meanwhile, kinesthetic learners, who represent a smaller portion of the class, tend to learn more effectively through physical activities and hands-on practice. These findings suggest that visual media and verbal explanations are highly effective in supporting students’ comprehension in English, while some learners require movement-based activities to fully grasp the material. Students with a visual learning style generally show strong attention when the teacher writes on the board and prefer reading or taking notes to help them understand the lesson.

Auditory learners, on the other hand, learn more effectively when listening to explanations and participating in discussions. Kinesthetic learners tend to be more engaged during language games, word-building activities, and tasks that involve physical movement. This pattern aligns with the questionnaire results, which highlight the dominance of visual and visual–auditory learning preferences, indicating that teaching approaches integrating visual media and verbal instruction are more suitable for the majority of students. In addition, several factors such as learning motivation, emotional conditions, social interaction in the classroom, and the physical learning environment are believed to influence students’ learning style preferences. These factors shape how students receive information and determine the learning strategies that feel most comfortable for them. Teachers who adapt their instructional methods to align with students’ learning styles are expected to enhance their interest and achievement in English, as strategies tailored to individual needs can help students become more active, focused, and better able to process the material.

5. DISCUSSION

Learning styles play a crucial role in the success of the learning process. According to Rita & Dunn (1993), students with specific learning styles can understand the material more effectively when the teaching approach aligns with their individual characteristics. In the context of SD Tamalanrea, understanding the VAK learning style model can serve as an important guide for teachers to improve the effectiveness of English instruction. Teachers who recognize that most of their students are kinesthetic learners can apply activity-based learning methods, such as word games, role-playing, or the use of interactive media. For visual learners, the use of pictures, vocabulary cards, and instructional videos can be highly beneficial. Meanwhile, auditory learners can learn more effectively through listening activities such as English songs, class discussions, or verbal instructions given directly by the teacher.

Moreover, other factors such as students’ motivation and emotional state also play a significant role in their learning success. Students who feel happy, calm, and motivated

tend to absorb lessons more easily compared to those who experience anxiety or lack confidence. Therefore, teachers have an essential role in creating a positive and inclusive classroom atmosphere, allowing students with various learning styles to thrive and develop their potential optimally. Sociological factors are also important. Some students feel more comfortable learning in groups, while others are more focused when studying individually. Teachers should therefore combine individual and collaborative learning activities to accommodate all types of learners.

In addition, the physical learning environment such as lighting, cleanliness, and classroom arrangement contributes to the overall effectiveness of learning. According to Dunn and Dunn (1993), a well-structured and comfortable learning environment can enhance students' concentration and engagement during lessons. It integrates an understanding of learning styles with students' emotional and social conditions can help teachers design more adaptive, varied, and student-centered learning strategies. Implementing appropriate learning style concepts can also increase intrinsic motivation, strengthen information retention, and lead to significant improvement in students' academic performance particularly in English subjects that require active participation and communication skills.

6. CONCLUSION

Understanding students' learning styles is an essential step in creating an effective and enjoyable learning process. Every student possesses a unique learning style visual, auditory, or kinesthetics which is shaped by various factors such as physical, emotional, social, and environmental conditions. Teachers who can adapt their teaching methods to match students' learning styles are more likely to enhance their motivation, concentration, and academic achievement. Therefore, this study is expected to serve as a valuable reference for elementary school English teachers in implementing more adaptive and student-centered learning strategies that align with the diverse learning characteristics of their students.

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