Pandemic Portrayed: Learning Style In Online Learning

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ABSTRACT

Learning style is one of the most important factors in determining how students learn and has a significant effect on student learning strategies, which in turn affects their learning outcomes. It refers to the methods by which students collect, store, and extract material. Since pandemic came to all over the world, all od aspect in teaching and learning process is changing. It is included to students's learning style. Some issues were discovered during online learning, especially in English learning for students at the University of Muhammadiyah Jambi. By these issues, it seemed that there was a doubt of how they really learned from online learning. The aim of this study was to report data on the types of students' learning styles used in their English online learning. Data were analyzed using The VARK Questionnaire by Neil Fleming. This research used the qualitative descriptive method. The population of this research was 1st semester of Management Department students in the academic year 2020. There were three classes; R.B1, R.A7 and R.B3. The result showed that the majority of students in this research used kinesthetic learning style. Then audio learning was the next place, then followed by reading and writing learning style. And the last was visual learning style.

Keywords: *learning style*, *online learning*, *pandemic online learning*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic is a big challenge to all aspects, as what happening in learning process. It makes us to respond quickly on how to adapt the learning process with the current situation. In learning process, it is not allowed to have a crowd in a room such as in a classroom, if it is done, as if there is a reactive person of Covid 19, he/she may transmit that virus to the people in that classroom. So in adapting and minimizing the risk of transmission of Covid 19,online learning is chosen to cope it.

Online learning has also been carried out in nearly all parts of the world since the pandemic. Elements of education are needed in order to promote learning such that it stays successful even without face-to-face interaction. Teachers or lecturers as key feature of formal education are expected to respond to the introduction of learning that initially used traditional face-to-face approaches and moved to online learning. As happening in University of Muhammadiyah Jambi, when it was declared that all learning process must be done virtually, all the lecturers immediately replied. They created an online education development plan, addressing the delivery of teaching, online classroom administration and oversight, and learning evaluation elements. They were also advised to use suitable learning platforms that they are familiar with. Yet, even all preparation had been prepared well; it didn't mean that those worked effectively. It is necessary to bear in mind the various forms of learning styles in the development of online learning.

Learning style is one of the key variables that decides how students learn and has a major impact on student learning strategies, which further influences their learning outcomes. It refers to how students obtain, store and extract information. Through online learning, there were some problems found especially in learning English for students of University of Muhammadiyah Jambi. As we know that, this pandemic makes learning process done virtually. By preparation side, everything had been prepared well. The materials are designed interestingly so that students are not bored while online learning process. Not only that teaching technique is also considered as well as possible for the same goal. But, the result is not really satisfying. It seems from the tasks that are given; some of them still do the task incompletely and far from the expectation. Sometimes the students` work is not responded as what have been asked. And the surprising one is their final grade is not the reflection of their progress. For example, in learning process she/he seemed very pay attention in absorbing the learning material, but for the quiz given in the next week, her/his grade is not really good, and it is also contrast to the final grade that she got a good grade. By these issues, it seems there is a question on how actually their learning style through online learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Online Learning

Various terminologies have been used in the literature to explain online learning. As a result, developing a generic description is challenging. Online learning is as an innovative approach for delivering instruction to a remote audience, using the Web as the medium (Anderson & Elloumi, 2004). Today's concept of online learning, however, includes more than just the presentation and delivery of materials through the Web; it also includes the student who uses the Internet to access learning material and communicates with the course, teacher, and other students. It includes the learning process, which should be assisted by the student in order for the learner to gain and develop information and evolve from the learning experience (Anderson &Elloumi, 2004; Dietinger, 2003; Wentling, Waight, Gallaher, Fleur, Wang &Kanfer, 2000).

Online learning has many benefits for improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning. It helps students to study and view materials at their own speed and in the way that best suits their needs in terms of time and technique. As opposed to conventional classes, it offers multimedia materials that provide immediate access to content and input from others.

However, the online learning environment presents significant obstacles for both students and teachers. Some students might not be experienced enough to choose the most effective routes to go about learning the targeted knowledge (Hsu, Lin, Ching& Dwyer, 2009). While, teachers only change the old experience and methodologies to the online version, they only think it will work as well as offline class. Then, Ewest (2009) adds it is no surprise, that many teachers struggle to capture students' learning style, despite the fact that they are "one of the key components of the e-learning world."

In order to minimize the obstacles above and maximize the benefits of online learning there must be some ways that need to do. Educators must tailor their instructional methods to the needs of their students. They need to enlarge their experience and knowledge on how to teach in online version. In other words, they have to have un-monotonous atmosphere in teaching in avoiding students of lack motivation in learning. It can be done by knowing how their students learning style.

Learning Style

The definition of learning style is very various depend on researcher perspective. Such as Naserieh and Sarab (2013) who defines that learning styles explain how an individual processes information.This definition reflects that one student may have different process to

extract information which is different to another student. Barmeyer (2004) adds that learning style is as a mechanism through which learners deal with difficulties and challenges in their learning. This theory completes the previous one, not only to process information but also students is able to challenge themselves when they get trouble in obtaining the information. And Gantasala (2009) defines that learning style refers to how students view, communicate with, and react to the learning environment based on perceptual, affective, and psychological characteristics. To sum up learning style is the fact that students vary in terms of what mode of teaching or study fits well for them.

Different individuals learn differently (Alqunayeer & Zamir, 2015). The difference might be existence because of gender, age, culture, etc. This particularly faced by higher education students. This affects to their learning style. They might better to learn visually, orally, so on. And there are four types of learning style based on VARK models; visual (V), auditory (A), read/write (R), and kinesthetic (K).

Learning style affects to learning achievement. Concerning to this, educators should consider it and design the effective learning activities and environment to increase student engagement. As same as Vaseghi, etal., (2012) who state that educators should understand the variations in learning styles among students and improve students' learning strategies for good learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is using descriptive qualitative method. It was conducted at the University of Muhammadiyah Jambi. The population of this research was 1st semester of Management Department students in the academic year 2020. There were three classes; R.B1, R.A7 and R.B3. All of classes were taken to be the sample so that the result will be more representative.

This research used the questionnaire as the instrumentation. Because the condition was not allowed to share the questionnaire face to face, so the questionnaire was typed using google form. And the link of it was sent to the students. When completing the questionnaire, the respondent will read the question, understand it, and then offer answers to the questions. Neil Fleming's The VARK (visual, audio, read/write and kinesthetic) Questionnaire version 8.01 was used to evaluate learning types. It was translated into Indonesian to make easier students to choose the option. This questionnaire is a sensory modality for learning something. These four learning modalities represent the students' backgrounds during the learning process. This questionnaire contains 16 questions, each with four choices. Each query has four choices (A, B, C, and D) that correspond to the form of learning style. The researcher obtained the findings by calculating the number of answers from the test object using a description of the Google form.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

After collecting the data of students` learning style, it was found that the learning styles in these classes are varied. The result of questionnaire is as follow:

Figure 1. Result of Learning Style
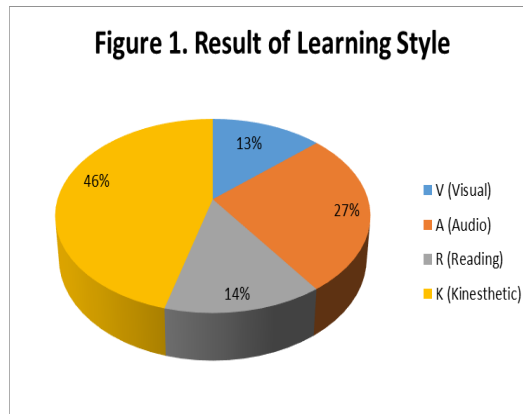
Based on the table above, the results of the questionnaire were 13% of 106 students used visual learning style. Then, there was as 27% of students used auditory (aural) learning style. As 14% of students used read/write learning style. And 46% of students used kinesthetic learning style. It could be concluded that the majority of students in this survey used kinesthetic learning style.

Kinesthetic students tend to learn something by doing. As Pritchard (2009) states that kinesthetic students are excellent at remembering details and relating emotions or physical experiences to memory. They are uninterested in tuning in explanation or watching series. It arose from the need for visual and auditory consideration. Then, Lightbown & Spada (2006) add that hands-on training is needed for the kinesthetic learner to "get it."The ability to turn while studying would appeal to the kinesthetic learner. To sum up, kinesthetic students perform more as they experiment and participate emotionally in classroom activities. They retain knowledge well as they regularly engage in lessons, field trips, and role play.

On the second place of research result was audio (auditory) learner.Auditory learners are students who learn better by listening and from oral explanation. Reading aloud will help students recall details, particularly when they are learning new content. Then, they like to hear a lecturer's lecture or another person's talk rather than engage in doing something. As Flemming (2012) states that an auditory learner can recall lecture content in a number of courses and may be skilled at memorizing items like music or lines for a theater performance.

In the third place was read/write learner. They understand and recall what they read, and they often enjoy learning. College courses have historically been especially suited to the reading/writing learning style; these students will take notes in most classes and would benefit from reading them as a research form. When learning content is printed in words on the web browser, read/write learners tend to engage in a web-based learning experience that needs a lot of reading (Battalio 2009).

And, the least was visual learner as 13% of students. Visual learners learn better by seeing and viewing; they generally focus on picture and diagrammatic content. Visual learners are typically depending on others. They choose to operate in a shared working environment that is built on technology (Pamela 2011). When instructional resources are introduced visually, visual learners learn more quickly and efficiently (Fleming 2008). This type of learner is more likely to interact with a web-based learning experience if collaborative resources are available (Franzoni and Assar 2009). This is because these students excel at group discussion, knowledge exchange, and group learning.

To bear in mind in conducting learning process especially in learning English, this research focused in online learning, as it was known that there must be the difference from offline class (face to face). As Clark (2012) argued that traditional face-to-face lessons differ from online e-learning environments in that synchronous learning is based on time and location,

while asynchronous learning is time varying and enables students to function independently at their own speed. But, theories on previous paragraph were also proven even it was done in online learning process. Here,students tended to be more active whenever the materials presented interactively and they were asked to get involved in presenting materials. Here, the lecturers used zoom, and the materials were made by using power point consisted of some videos (role play) on it. When it was played, students paid more attention because they could imitate directly. Then they also related the materials into their own experience. And they were very excited to perform role plays that related to the topic.It was supported by O`Connor (2007) who stated that Since the bulk of online classroom experiences are text-based, interactive technologies such as interactive flash animation, augmented reality environments, simulations, drag and drop technology, and game interfaces can be advantageous to this learner.

CONCLUSION

Several phenomena emerged from the field as a result of the researcher's findings, which were discovered, studied, and discussed. The data that was presented indicates that predominant 1st semester of Management Department students in the academic year 2020 were kinesthetic. Not only by analyzing the questionnaire, the result could be seen by online learning process. The findings showed that students perform more as they experiment and participate physically in classroom activities. When they regularly engage in sports, field trips, and role play, they recall things well.

By having result, it could be suggested for students to know their learning style and adapt it into suitable learning way so that they could reach their learning achievement. Then for the teachers and lecturers, it is better for them to know how students learning style, in order that they have a consideration in designing learning materials and process.

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