

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Learning style preferences among the urban and rural schoolchildren

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ABSTRACT

Background: Learning style refers to a person's natural, habitual, and preferred ways of learning. Every individual has its own natural or habitual pattern of acquiring and processing information in various learning situations. The common ways or patterns by which people learn are known as their learning styles. **Aim and Objective:** The study is aimed at finding out the different learning styles preferred by the urban school and rural school students. **Materials and Methods:** The study includes children in the age group of 14–16 years. The sample comprises 50 rural students and 50 urban students from the schools in Dhule, Maharashtra. Data were collected by circulating a visual, auditory, and kinesthetic questionnaire to identify various learning style preferences. **Results:** The analysis of collected data revealed that the students in the urban area use visual aid (33%) more than auditory and kinesthetic. The rural students use auditory (27%) more than visual and kinesthetic. **Conclusion:** The knowledge of the learning styles has implications for both the teachers and the students. To identify the learning preferences of students can help them in using the appropriate learning strategies and as a result, they are more likely to become lifelong self-directed learners and to maximize their true potential. This will lead to learners' ability to improve their own learning and perform better in the subject previously seemed to be difficult.


KEY WORDS: Learning style; Visual; Auditory; Kinesthetic; Schoolchildren

INTRODUCTION

Keefe defines it as “characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment.”^[1] Learning styles are concerned with how students prefer to learn not what they learn. No one style is better than others. The different styles may complement one another instead of competing with one another.^[2] Every individual has their own natural or habitual pattern of acquiring and processing information in different learning situations. The common ways or patterns by which people learn are known as their learning

styles. Learning styles are set of cognitive, emotional, and psychological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment. Everyone has a combination of various learning styles.^[3] The review of the literature reveals that student's learning style plays a key role in his academic success.^[4] It is a stable indicator of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment.

Everyone has a combination of different learning styles. However, according to some people, they have a single dominant style of learning as they barely use the other styles. However, according to some, they have different styles in different situations and circumstances.^[3] Hence, for a more precise analysis of what is the learning style of a particular person and how a teacher should identify and adapt teaching methods to best fit the learning styles of the students, we use the Fleming's model which is also referred to as visual, aural, read/write, and kinesthetic learning styles. Although psychology says that there are differences in individual thinking and processing

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information, there are some studies that have verified the validity of using learning styles.^[5] It is important that individuals should identify their learning styles. Being aware of their own learning pattern, they can take responsibility for their own learning. This will help them in learning how to learn and grasp knowledge in a suitable and a more effective manner. The aim of the study is to evaluate the learning style preferences among the urban and rural schoolchildren aged from 14 to 16 years.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the schools of Dhule, Maharashtra. In this study, the learning styles of 50 urban school students and 50 rural school students were studied. A questioner named “visual, auditory, and kinesthetic” was given to each individual, in which they have to answer for the assessment of their learning styles. The scale consists of 16 indirect questions. Based on the total score, the students will be classified into visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learners. The questionnaire was explained in easy manner for the rural students. The study was conducted after getting approval from the Institutional Ethical Committee (SMC/IEC/2018/11/334). The children between the age groups of 14 and 16 years were included in the study. Students those are who have been diagnosed with attention deficit disorder were excluded from the study.

RESULTS

The findings of the present study are depicted in Figure 1.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of collected data revealed that the students in the urban area use visual aid (33%) more than auditory (13%) and kinesthetic (4%). The rural students use auditory (27%) more than visual (21%) and kinesthetic (2%). This finding of the study is also in coordination with the results of the study conducted by Singh *et al.*, 2015, who reported that major fraction of the urban students appear to be visual learners (53.4%) while major fraction of rural students were predominately tactile learners.^[3] It

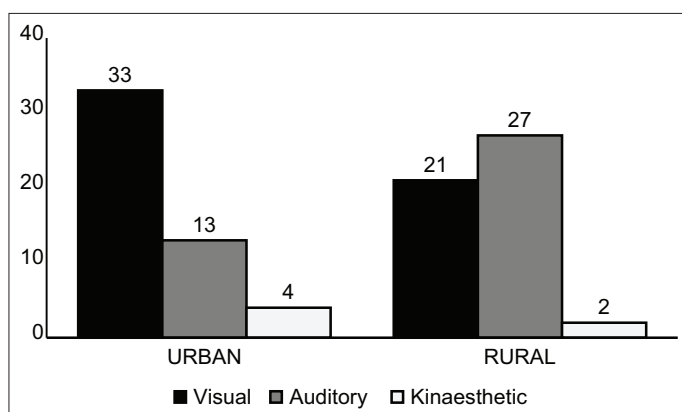


Figure 1: Assessment of learning styles

indicates that most of the urban school students preferred to learn through visual format, i.e., majority of students learns through written material than auditory, tactile, or body movements.

Learning style of the secondary school students is integrally associated with the progress of education.^[6] The rural school students' uneducated family background has disabled them to form efficient learning strategies and affected their achievement level.^[7] Unlikely, the urban school students have easy access to educational resources, technology, and educated family background which have enabled them to develop and use effective learning strategies and achieve high. Rural school students' family background, attitude, environment, cultural value system, and limited exposure to the learning resources and materials are the major causes for these differences. However, the urban school students have a greater reach in the technology and educational resources.^[8,9]

Limitations of the Study

- Sample could not be always collected strictly in accordance with the rule of cluster sampling due to administrative compulsions of some schools.
- Schools were selected randomly from Maharashtra
- The sample of this study was only selected from the government aided schools from rural and matriculation school from urban.
- Learning style has not been tested in along with the achievement of the students.

CONCLUSION

The students in the urban area use visual aid more than auditory and kinesthetic, whereas the rural students use auditory more than the other two. This research has demonstrated a helpful approach, and it has shown major characteristics of learning styles which appear to vary between rural and urban students. Continued research is required to complete this characteristic of general learning styles and the unique characteristics of the rural learner.

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