**RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

**Title: Impact of learning styles on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Ernakulam district**

**Introduction:**

Education is the key to national development. It is the only panacea for the ills and evils of the country. The process of acquisition of knowledge continues from individual’s birth to death through different ways. One of the most important processes of one’s life is learning, which is a multi-sided phenomenon in nature. By providing purposeful education, we can easily raise the general level of intelligence of students and develop clear and sound thinking. Through education, we can enable them to appreciate new values and turn their acquisitive impulse to the direction of truth, as it enables the person to bring dynamic and constructive changes in society. Teaching/leaning situation directly or indirectly depends upon the learning styles of learners. Different theorists and educationists have defined learning styles in their own way. The concept of learning style helps to understand how learners differ from each other in terms of learning.

Every individual has its own natural or habitual pattern of acquiring and processing information in 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. Some people may find that they have a dominant style of learning, with far less use of the other styles while others find that they use different styles in different circumstances. A core concept is that individuals differ in the ways they learn. The idea of individualized learning styles was initiated in 1970s and since then has influenced education remarkably. It was recommended by the proponents of the use of learning styles in education that teachers should identify the learning styles of their students and adapt their teaching methods to best fit learning style of each student. Although there is ample evidence for differences in individual thinking and ways of processing various types of information, few studies have reliably tested the validity of using learning styles in education.

It is important that individuals should identify their learning styles. Being aware of their own pattern of learning, they can take the responsibility for their own learning. When the learner shows the conscientiousness of his/her own learning he/she attributes meaning to the process of learning, develops understanding of his/her own form of learning and becomes much more satisfied with the environment he/she interacts with. In this way, he/she will acquire constantly changing and increasing amount of information without any need for the assistance of others. Learning how to learn and grasping knowledge in a suitable manner may lessen the need for an overbearing control by teachers.

Generally students acquire and process information in different ways: by seeing and hearing, reflecting and acting, reasoning logically and intuitively, analysing and visualizing etc. Teachers also vary in their teaching methods, some apply instructions, lecture, or demonstrate while others lead students to self-discovery; some focus on principles and others on applications; some emphasize memory and others understanding.

In the process of learning the important issue is that an individual should take the responsibility for his/her own learning. The learner should search answers to his/her problems and explore own style of learning. He/she should know what to learn and how to solve the problem. This awareness will change learner’s perspectives on learning new things. The knowledge of learning style is important for many reasons. First of all, since everyone is different from others, learning style is liable to vary. Secondly, teachers may use a wide range of methods in an effective way to teach according to the style of learning and thirdly, if teachers really identify patterns of learning of the group, they can manage many things in education and communication. Being aware of their students’ learning styles, psychological qualities and motivational differences teachers can regulate the teaching-learning process in desirable direction.

In the beginning the concept of “learning style” was introduced by Rita Dunn in 1960 and since then a number of psychologists have tried to define the concept in a number of ways.

According to Kefee (1987) learning styles are, “characteristic cognitive, affective and physiological traits that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment”.

Kolb describes learning styles as an individual’s preferred ways which they use to process information (Johassen& Grabowski, 1993).

According to Grasha (1996) learning styles are “personal qualities that influence a student’s ability to acquire information to interact with peers and teachers and otherwise to take part in learning experiences.”

In the view of Felder and Silverman (1988), learning style is an individual characteristic strengths and preferences that they prefer while processing information.

**Need and significance of the study:**

The present study is an attempt to find out the relationship between preferred learning style and academic achievement of students to certain demographic variables like gender, place of living, religion and parents’ educational level. The findings of the study will provide better understanding to the teachers to construct curriculum, planning of lessons and to teach according to students’ learning styles. These findings are important not only in shaping teaching practices but also in highlighting issues that help policy makers, administrators, curriculum framers, stakeholders, parents and faculty members to think more deeply about their role in facilitating student learning.

**Review of literature:**

The review of the related literature reveals that student’s learning style plays a vital role in his academic success.

Agrawal and Chawla (2005) revealed that the Co-operative Learning Strategy Based Material was significantly effective in Improving the level of academic achievement.

Another study by Nasir, (2006) examined the learning styles of multi-ethnic students in four universities of Malaysia. The students were compared on gender, program of studies and academic achievement levels, using a modified Honey and Mumford Learning Style Questionnaire. The results showed that both male and female students’ most preferred learning style was reflector style, while the activist style was the least preferred. Similar pattern of learning styles was exhibited by the Arts and Science students. It was also concluded that there was no significant difference between male and female, science and arts students so far as their learning styles were concerned. Moreover, there was no significant relationship between learning style and academic achievements. When learning styles of most students mismatch with teaching styles of the teachers, the students may become bored and inattentive in the class, do poorly on tests, get discouraged and lack interest about the courses, curricular activities and themselves too. In some cases students may lead to poor attendance and dropouts. (Nasir, 2006)

Abidin, et al. (2011) studied learning styles and overall academic achievement in a specific educational system. It was concluded that the high, moderate and low achievers have a similar preference pattern of learning. Moreover, the learning styles framework does not change with subjects.

A careful perusal of the above studies reveal that learning style contribute significantly in academic achievement, however only few studies found relationship between academic achievement and learning style (Nasir, 2006 Abidin, et al, 2011).

Erton (2010) explored the relations between personality traits, language learning styles and success in foreign language achievement. Maudsley’s Personality and BLSI instruments were used in the study. The findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between the personality traits (introversion/extroversion) of the learners in their foreign language achievement. It was also concluded that students with visual leaning style were the most successful as compared to the students with other learning styles.

Liang (2012) studied the effects of learning styles and perceptions on application of interactive learning guides for web based courses. The results revealed no significant statistical differences in learning styles and learning performance between the two groups. However significant main effects for both gender and learning style, and gender and the perception of utility were reported.

In the present study the researcher is attempting to explore the learning style preferences of secondary school students and to investigate the demographic determinants (gender, place of living, religion and parents’ educational level) of learning styles specifically visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile among these students.

**Statement of the problem:**

In the present study the researcher attempts to analyse the impact of learning style on the academic achievement of secondary school students.

**Keywords**:

1. **Learning style:**

According to Kolb(1984), individual’s learning styles are like a circle, which contain four learning stages. These stages are Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualization (AC) and Active Experimentation (AE).

In the present study learning style refers to the style of learning which the secondary school students use while learning, which is measured by using learning style inventory.

1. **Academic achievement:**

According to Wikipedia, academic achievement or academic performance is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their long term or short term educational goals.

In the present study the academic achievement refers to the academic performance of the students at secondary level from their previous examination.

**Objectives:**

1. To investigate the learning style of secondary school students.
2. To find out the differences in learning styles of students studying at secondary school level in relation to specified demographic variables (gender, place of living and type of institution).
3. To investigate the differences in the academic achievement based on learning style among secondary school students.

**Hypothesis**:

1. There will be no significant difference in the learning styles of secondary school students in relation to specified demographic variables (gender, place of living and type of institution).
2. There will be no significant difference in the academic achievement of secondary school students based on their learning styles.

**Methodology:**

**Method/Design of study:**

The method used by the researcher in this study is **Survey Method.**

**Sample and Sample size:**

The **population** of this study consists of the secondary school students of Ernakulam District.

In this study, the researcher has taken the sample of 100 secondary school students, of which 50 are girls and 50 are boys.

**Tools and techniques:**

In the present study the tool used by the researcher is **personal data sheet.**

The researcher also uses **Learning Style Inventory.**

**Variables:**

The independent variable in the present study is **learning style.**

The dependent variable in the study is **academic achievement.**

**Statistical technique:**

Appropriate statistical technique will be used in the study.

**Conclusion**:

In the present study the researcher is attempting to explore the learning style preferences of secondary school students and to investigate the demographic determinants (gender, place of living, religion and parents’ educational level) of learning styles specifically visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile among these students. The findings of the study provides better understanding to the teachers to construct curriculum, planning of lessons and to teach according to students’ learning styles.

**References:**

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