EMOTIONAL ELEMENTS ON LEARNING STYLE PREFERENCE OF HIGH AND LOW PERFORMING JUNIOR MARINE TRANSPORTATION STUDENTS

Arnulfo G. Velasco
Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas
PHILIPPINES

Edwin M. Agena
Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas
PHILIPPINES

Arnulfo C. Orence
Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas
PHILIPPINES

Alexander A. Gonzales
Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas
PHILIPPINES

Rheza A. Beldia
Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas
PHILIPPINES

Jake M. Laguador
Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas
PHILIPPINES

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the learning style of the Marine Transportation students in a private Asian university in terms of emotional elements as to motivation, persistence, responsibility and structure; and to compare the learning styles of high and low performing Marine Transportation students. Descriptive type of research was utilized in the study. Results showed that high and low performing students strongly agree that they enjoy learning and they get a sense of accomplishment from achieving and they like to learn most of the time especially when the subject is interesting. The high performing students have significantly higher persistence in completing the things they begun as well as in enjoying working on several tasks simultaneously. Both groups of marine students strongly agree that they feel best when they do things they know they should do while high performing students have significantly higher responsibility on doing conventional things depends on the tasks and on how they feel about the circumstances compared to the low performing students. Marine students wanted to be instructed completely in order for them to perform the activities accurately with the help of other members of the group through teamwork.

Keywords: Emotional element, learning style, motivation, persistence, responsibility, structure.

INTRODUCTION

Identifying the learning style of the students would provide better understanding for teachers who facilitate the teaching and learning activities in the classrooms. The design of the exercises should be appropriate to the emotional elements on how students can best acquire the intended knowledge and skills. According to Xu (2011) that learning style concerns with individual learners; learning style is the ways of learning; learning style is relatively consistent or stable for individual learners; learning style is the favored or preferred way of learning for an individual learner while Ackerman and Hu (2011) refer to it is as an individual's typical ways of acquiring knowledge, attitudes, or skills in the process of learning

Mitsis and Foley (2009) noted that understanding student learning style preferences is one step toward having a deeper understanding of students as consumers of educational services. The study of learning styles has received significant attention in recent years, and in a time

when academic achievement is under scrutiny, it is vital that educators know and utilize the best possible methods for helping students learn successfully (Wilson, 2012).

Education aims to create teaching and learning environment that would bring about desired changes in learners such as making them more knowledgeable, skillful or acquired positive attitudes and values (Reyes, 2013). Since education according to An (2014) is a never ending development which can give students a new meaning and direction, therefore, educators must make a commitment to understanding learning styles, recognizing the unique qualities of each student, and doing everything within their power to provide the tools and opportunities necessary for every individual to achieve success (Wilson, 2012). Motivating students to learn and guiding them learn effectively has always been a challenging task for educators. In recent years, college professors have been paying more and more attention to active learning (Ackerman & Hu, 2011).

Learning is an interactive process that occurs in a specific environment. Learning process should always be meaningful and challenging yet enjoyable in order to stimulate the enthusiasm and interest of the students to perform certain tasks or academic related activities with cooperation (Chavez, Dotong & Laguador, 2014). Classroom is an environment where students expressed their behavior related to academics during lecture session, physical and mental activities (Bulaklak & Pilobello, 2014). Student views about their experience at any educational system, its programs, the component units of the program, and the entire learning environment are essential aspects for quality enhancement (Bay &Subido, 2014).

There are many variables that affect the teaching-learning process. An overall understanding on how students learn and where they are in the process, will help the instructors to meet the needs of new students (Hamidah, Sarina & Jusoff, 2009).

The contemporary practices in education are very often idealized from the administrative and pedagogical perspectives. However, when one looks deeply into the teaching practices of the lecturers, it is possible to infer that the majority of the lecturers are not aware of their students' learning styles. Students' learning styles have been ignored and have been considered an insignificant component in the learning process (Ahmad, Shah, Mulalic, 2009). Different cultures view learning in various forms. Teachers, therefore, should continuously compare, analyze and evaluate the methods being used in order to motivate students and to make the learning as effective as possible (Camello, 2014).

Understanding the characteristics of learning style preferences of students in terms of emotional elements would give proper insights for the teachers to gain the interest of the students through proper motivation and giving enough time to complete certain task through measuring their persistence. The amount of responsibility would also be identified before assigning them in various committees or roles to perform if they are more likely to be a leader or member of the group and how they will respond or act on certain set of instructions and procedures especially the marine students will be future ship captains, they need to learn things with confidence and they should willingly accept leadership responsibilities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the learning style of the Marine Transportation students in a private Asian university in terms of emotional elements as to motivation, persistence,

responsibility and structure; and to compare the learning styles of high and low performing Marine Transportation students.

METHOD

Research Design

The descriptive type of research will be utilized in the study. Descriptive survey method is appropriate for data derived from simple observational situations, whether these are actually physically observed or observed through the use of a questionnaire or poll techniques (Zulueta & Costales, 2003).

Participants

The respondents of the study are the 30 percent of the Junior BS Marine Transportation students enrolled during 2nd Semester S.Y. 2013-2014 who finished Seamanship, Meteorology and Oceanography and Terrestrial Navigation courses. They will be classified between low and high performing students based on their General Weighted Average during 2nd Semester SY 2013-2014.

Instrument

The survey questionnaire was utilized in the study. The instrument was adapted from the similar study conducted by Boneo (2007) in the attitude of education students. The questionnaire will still have to undergo content validation of the expert from the University Research Council and pilot testing was administered to test its reliability.

Procedure

The questionnaires were administered personally by the researchers during the 1st Month of 1st Semester in SY 2014-2015 among BS Marine Transportation Students. One-hundred (100) percent retrieval rating of the questionnaire was achieved to all the randomly selected participants.

Data Analysis

Gathered data were coded, tallied, analyzed and interpreted using percentage, weighted mean, rank, T-test, as statistical tools. The given scale was used to analyze and interpret the result of the data gathered: 3.50 – 4.00: Strongly Agree (SA)/Very High; 2.50 – 3.49: Agree (A)/ High; 1.50 – 2.49: Disagree (D)/Low; 1.00 – 1.49: Strongly Disagree (SD)/ Very Low.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Learning Style of Marine Engineering Students in terms of Emotional Element as to Motivation

Learning Styles as to Motivation	High	Low	Total	VI	Rank	Sig.
1. I am not really tuned in to academic learning in a conventional classroom.	2.24	2.32	2.28	D	4	0.182
2. I occasionally enjoy academic learning – but not too often and not conventionally.	2.51	2.44	2.48	D	3	0.302

3. It depends on what is supposed to be learned. Sometimes I tuned in, but if I am not interested, no one can make me do it.	2.17	2.36	2.27	D	5	0.062
4. I like to learn most of the time, especially when the subject is interesting.	3.59	3.41	3.50	SA	2	0.091
5. I enjoy learning and get a sense of accomplishment from achieving.	3.69	3.54	3.62	SA	1	0.103

Table 1 shows the learning style of Marine Engineering Students in terms of emotional element as to motivation. Both groups strongly agree that they enjoy learning and they get a sense of accomplishment from achieving and they like to learn most of the time especially when the subject is interesting as denoted by the total computed weighted mean scores of 3.62 and 3.50 on rank number 1 and 2, respectively with p-values which are greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

The respondents generally disagreed when they were asked if they occasionally enjoy academic learning – but not too often and nor conventionally as indicated by the computed total weighted mean score of 2.48 on rank number 3.They also disagree on being not really tuned in to academic learning in a conventional classroom and depending on what is supposed to be learned where sometimes they tuned in, but if they are not interested, no one can make them do it as denoted by the computed total weighted mean scores of 2.28 and 2.27, respectively. This signifies that the Marine Transportation students were emotionally motivated to learn things inside and outside the classroom activities. The high and low performing students have various levels of learning style preference in terms of motivation where the computed variances between groups are not enough to consider the differences.

Since learning styles play a crucial role in the learning process, lecturers should not neglect the importance of choosing the appropriate teaching method (Ahmad, Shah, Mulalic, 2009) to motivate and develop more the interest of the students in learning the subject. There appears to be a connection between motivation and learning styles in educational practice as instructional activities that accommodate a variety of learning style preferences tend to increase student motivation (Fine, 2003; Tomlinson, 2005 as cited in Wilson, 2012). It is understood that the levels of students' interest towards their degree program may vary from time to time due to different degrees of experiences encountered by the students themselves (Ramirez & Dizon, 2014).

Interest is an intrinsic motivational factor that stimulates the enthusiasm of a person to perform better or more than what is expected of him to accomplish (Laguador, 2013a). Interest in pursuing certain program in tertiary level is an important factor in considering the success of the students. It drives the motivation of the person to reach his dreams no matter how hard to travel the road towards certain direction that would bring not only his thoughts in the reality but also along with his presence (Laguador, 2014).

Table 2: Learning Style of Marine Engineering Students in terms of Emotional Element as to Persistence

Learning Styles as to Persistence	High	Low	Total	VI	Rank	Sig.
1. I always enjoy working on several tasks simultaneously.	3.54	3.21	3.38	A	5	0.034*
2. Occasionally, I use to work on several tasks simultaneously.	3.34	3.45	3.40	A	4	0.063
3. Whether or not I complete what I have started depends on my interest in it.	3.52	3.67	3.60	SA	1	0.082
4. I usually complete the things I begun.	3.61	3.42	3.52	SA	2	0.041*
5. I always complete the things I begun, in fact it bothers me not to.	3.53	3.41	3.47	A	3	0.132

**Significant at 0.05*

Table 2 shows the learning style of Marine Engineering Students in terms of emotional element as to persistence. The high performing students have significantly higher persistence in completing the things they begun as well as in enjoying working on several tasks simultaneously compared to the low performing students as denoted by the computed p-values of 0.041 and 0.034 which are less than the 0.05 level of significance. However, there is no significant difference between the two groups in their level of agreement in terms of occasionally working on several tasks simultaneously; whether or not they complete what they have started depends on their interest in it; and always completing the things they begun, in fact it bothers them not to as denoted by the computed p-values which are greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

Table 3: Learning Style of Marine Engineering Students in terms of Emotional Element as to Responsibility

Learning Styles as to Responsibility	High	Low	Total	VI	Rank	Sig.
1. I like to do things most other people usually don't do. I do not respond well to authority, but do to my group mates.	2.18	2.38	2.28	D	4	0.062
2. Sometimes, I enjoy doing things I know I would be better off not doing. I am fairly disobedient.	2.01	2.34	2.18	D	5	0.027*
3. Whether or not I do conventional things depends on the tasks, how I feel about the circumstances, etc.	3.45	3.01	3.23	A	3	0.041*
4. I usually do things that I believe I ought to be done.	3.56	3.45	3.51	SA	2	0.172
5. I feel best when I do things I know I should do, and that is what is do most of the time; I am obedient.	3.78	3.56	3.67	SA	1	0.092

**Significant at 0.05*

Table 3 shows the learning style of Marine Engineering Students in terms of emotional element as to responsibility. Both groups of marine students strongly agree that they feel best when they do things they know they should do, and they are obedient in what is doing most of the time (3.67); they usually do things that they believe they ought to be done (3.51) while they disagree on doing things most other people usually don't do and they do not respond

well to authority, but do to their group mates (2.28). It signifies that the marine students were responsible in doing things right with sense of urgency and they follow instructions from their teachers.

Meanwhile, high performing students have significantly higher responsibility on doing conventional things depends on the tasks and on how they feel about the circumstances compared to the low performing students. However, low performing students have significantly higher degree of disagreement on enjoying doing things they know they would be better off not doing where they are fairly disobedient as denoted by the computed p-value of 0.027 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Obedience of the students to their professors helped them built a strong character of complying with the requirements and demands of their degree program (Bernardo, Landicho & Laguador, 2014).

Table 4 shows the learning style of Marine Engineering Students in terms of emotional element as to structure. Both groups of students strongly agree that they feel best when told exactly what is required and when they know exactly how to proceed before starting (3.61). They both agree in what is being done, with whom and why, determines whether it gets done they way, with someone or cooperatively (3.32). It signifies that the marine students wanted to be instructed completely in order for them to perform the activities accurately with the help of other members of the group through teamwork.

Table 4: Learning Style of Marine Engineering Students in terms of Emotional Element as to Structure

Learning Styles as to Structure: How do feel when given instructions?	**High**	**Low**	**Total**	**VI**	**Rank**	**Sig**
1. I find it difficult to have other people tell me what to do or how to do it.	2.32	2.67	2.50	A	5	0.043*
2. I feel like to do things my way.	2.53	2.78	2.66	A	4	0.092
3. What is being done, with whom and why, determines whether it gets done my way, with someone or cooperatively.	3.43	3.21	3.32	A	2	0.391
4. I don't mind being told what or how to do a task – as long as I like the person telling me.	3.31	3.23	3.27	A	3	0.405
5. I feel best when told exactly what is required and when I know exactly how to proceed before starting.	3.57	3.64	3.61	SA	1	0.642

**Significant at 0.05*

Marine students agree that they don't mind being told what or how to do a task – as long as they like the person telling them (3.27) and they feel like to do things their way (2.66). However, low performing students have significantly higher mean in finding difficulty to have other people tell them what to do or how to do it compared to the high performing students as denoted by the computed p-value of 0.043 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

Structured learning was consistently and positively related to conscientiousness, consistent in the conception of conscientiousness as an indicator of a methodical attention to detail.

Research on the conscientiousness construct provides indicators on the types of learning situation that might benefit structured learners (Towler & Dipboye, 2003).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Both groups strongly agree that they enjoy learning and they get a sense of accomplishment from achieving and they like to learn most of the time especially when the subject is interesting. Motivation is an important factor in student learning, influencing learning in both directions (Wilson, 2012). The high performing students have significantly higher persistence in completing the things they begun as well as in enjoying working on several tasks simultaneously. Both groups of marine students strongly agree that they feel best when they do things they know they should do, and they are obedient in what is doing most of the time while high performing students have significantly higher responsibility on doing conventional things depends on the tasks and on how they feel about the circumstances compared to the low performing students. Marine students wanted to be instructed completely in order for them to perform the activities accurately with the help of other members of the group through teamwork.

Creating and sustaining learners' active involvement in learning requires an understanding of their learning style preferences (Tuan, 2011). The effective understanding and management of students' learning experiences when they come from diverse cultural value backgrounds is important for competitiveness of universities within the global education service industry (Mitsis & Foley, 2009). When the learning styles are determined, it is suggested that lecturers take into consideration the differences in learning styles among students when designing the course material (Ahmad, Shah & Mulalic, 2009). Teachers must treat the students equally even the slow learners and give them proper attention to develop the appropriate way of study habits and practices inside and outside the classroom (Laguador, 2013b). Giving the low performing students enough attention would lead them to greater accomplishment of their future careers (Dotong, 2014).

Teachers should also try to diversify their teaching styles to match the preferred learning styles of students given that classrooms consist of students with diverse learning styles. They should create lessons that complement multiple styles and try to use multisensory instructional materials, thus providing resources and alternatives to assist their students in gaining mastery of the curriculum (Park, 2000).

Lecturers may not be aware of their own learning styles, or that their learning style preferences may differ from those of their students. They cannot assess the learning styles of the students without administering a proper learning styles inventory (Ahmad, Shah, Mulalic, 2009). Helping students become lifelong learners should be the ultimate goal of education, and understanding students' various learning styles can help educators achieve that goal (Wilson, 2012).

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