

**UNDERSTANDING LEARNING STYLES IS CRUCIAL FOR
EDUCATORS**

Karimova Umida

*Teacher of the department of English History and Grammar
Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages*

Suvonov Sherzod

Student of Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

Abstract: *This study explores the relationship between secondary school students' preferred learning styles and demographic factors such as gender, place of residence, religion, and parents' education level. The research was conducted with a sample of 300 secondary school students from Aligarh District, using the Learning Style Inventory developed by Jeffrey Barsch. Since the data was nominal, the Chi-Square test was employed for analysis. The study's findings revealed that the most preferred learning style among the students was visual, followed by auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile styles. Additionally, the study showed no significant impact of factors like gender, place of residence, religion, or father's education level on students' learning style preferences. However, the mother's education level was found to have a significant influence on these preferences.*

Keywords: *Learning styles, secondary school students, educational factors, visual learning, auditory learning, teaching strategies.*

The findings of this research offer valuable insights for teachers, enabling them to better design curricula, plan lessons, and teach according to students' individual learning preferences. These results are important not only for shaping teaching practices but also for helping policymakers, school administrators, curriculum designers, parents, and staff members to reflect more deeply on their roles in supporting student learning. Every individual has a unique or habitual pattern of acquiring and processing information in learning situations. These common ways or

patterns of learning are referred to as learning styles. A learning style is a combination of cognitive, emotional, and psychological factors that influence how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment. While everyone has a mix of different learning styles, some may have a dominant style, with minimal use of the others. Others may switch between different styles depending on the situation. The central idea is that individuals differ in how they learn, and this concept has significantly influenced education since it was introduced in the 1970s. Advocates of using learning styles in teaching suggest that educators should identify their students' learning preferences and adapt their teaching strategies to suit these preferences. Despite substantial evidence supporting the idea that individuals process different types of information in diverse ways, few studies have consistently tested the validity of using learning styles in education.

It is important for individuals to recognize their own learning styles. Being aware of one's learning preferences allows learners to take responsibility for their education. Once learners understand their own learning process, they gain a deeper insight into how they learn, which enhances their learning experience and satisfaction. This self-awareness also allows learners to absorb more information independently, without heavy reliance on others. By mastering how to understand and organize information effectively, learners may reduce the need for constant guidance from teachers.

Students acquire and process information in various ways, such as by seeing and hearing, reflecting and acting, thinking logically or intuitively, analyzing, and visualizing. Similarly, teachers use a range of teaching strategies: some explain concepts, give lectures, or demonstrate, while others guide students to self-discovery, focus on principles, or emphasize applications. When students' learning styles do not match their teachers' teaching methods, students may become bored, disengaged, perform poorly on exams, lose interest in their courses, and even drop out. In such situations, the student-teacher interaction may suffer. In the learning process, it is crucial that learners take responsibility for their own learning by

identifying their preferred learning style and seeking solutions to their challenges. This awareness will improve the learner's perspective on new material.

Understanding learning styles is important for several reasons. First, each individual has a unique style, making learning styles variable. Second, teachers can apply a variety of strategies to effectively teach according to these styles. Finally, if teachers are aware of their students' learning preferences, cognitive abilities, and motivational differences, they can better manage the teaching and learning process.

The findings of this study indicate that the most preferred learning style among secondary school students is visual, followed by auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic. This result contradicts the traditional belief that students primarily learn by movement or through "learning by doing." The study revealed that at the secondary level, students prefer to learn using visual aids such as notes, charts, maps, videos, and recordings, as they have a strong sense of visualization, color, images, and graphs. Furthermore, the study found that the educational level of the mother has a significant impact on a child's preferred learning style. Children with highly educated mothers tended to prefer the visual learning style, followed by tactile, auditory, and kinesthetic styles. Without understanding their children's learning styles, parents may select curricula that do not fully meet their children's needs. While such curricula might still be adequate, they are less likely to provide an optimal learning experience. By understanding their children's learning styles, parents can choose appropriate educational resources that align with their needs and be more confident in their educational choices.

Conclusion:

This study highlights the importance of understanding students' learning preferences and adapting educational practices to suit these styles. The findings provide useful guidance for teachers to develop more effective teaching strategies, improve curriculum design, and offer personalized learning experiences. Awareness of learning styles also helps parents make more informed decisions about their children's education, ensuring better educational outcomes.

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