

**INFLUENCE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' DEMOGRAPHICS  
AND THEIR LEARNING STYLES:**

**A STUDY OF UUM'S STUDENTS IN BANK RAKYAT RESIDENTIAL  
COLLEGE**

**MA LEI**

**MASTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA.**

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is expressly dedicated to my father, Ma Zhan Ming who gives us with the most precious asset in life, knowledge. I know that he would be the happiest father in the world to know that his son has successfully completed his master thesis. May Allah place the blessing to him and to my mother, Ma Yan Lan, for her continuous blessings and prayers and whose love and guidance throughout my life can never be repaid.

## **PERMISSION TO USE**

In presenting this thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for master degree from the Northern University of Malaysia, Sintok, kedah. I agree that the library of this University may make it freely available for inspection. I also agree that permission to copy this thesis in any manner, in whole or in parts, for scholarly purposes may be granted by the lecturer or lecturers who had supervised this thesis, or in their absence, by the Dean of faculty of Human and Social Development to which this thesis is submitted. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gains shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to Northern University of Malaysia for any scholarly use which may be made on any of the material presented in this thesis.

Request for permission to copy or make use of materials in this thesis in whole or parts should be addressed to:

**Dean  
College of Business  
University Utara Malaysia  
06010 Sintok,  
Kedah Darulaman, Malaysia**

## **DISCLAIMER**

The author is responsible for the accuracy of all opinion, technical comment, factual report, data, figures and illustrations in this dissertation. The author bears full responsibility for the checking whether material submitted is subject to copy right or ownership right. UUM does not accept any liability for the accuracy of such comment, report and factual information and the copyright or ownership right claims.

Student signature:

---

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First of all would like to thank ALLAH who allows me to complete this research successfully.

Second I like to thank my supervisor Professor Dr.Mohmed Yazam Sharif, for his endless support and knowledgeable correction and supervision. I am indebted to him for his direction, guidance, moral support, suggestion, encouragement and ideas that helped me during the course of this thesis. My thanks to him for the constructive ideas about this research he provided which assured me that it was actually possible to complete this work, without her I never would have finished this research.

After my almighty Allah who endowed me the completeness of this research I would like to convey my special thanks to my beloved father, mother and uncle without whom I would not get the light of the world. They are, namely, my father and mother: Ma Zhan Ming and Ma Yan Lan, who supported me morally and financially to conduct this research.

I am also giving special thanks to my best friends Saiful Azizi Bin Ismail, Sumathi Ganesan, Li Xin, Nor Hidayah Ismail and also Aidha Dhalan for their honest and continuous assistance, substantial suggestions, encouragement, data collection, contribution and preparation during my research and interviews process.

I will be always grateful to friends of University Utara Malaysia, particularly, Ismail Hashi Ali, Abdir rizak Ali Isse, Ahmed Abukar Ahmed and all my colleagues of this University those who influenced and contributed to this research directly and indirectly.

Last but not least, I wish to thank all those people who through their time and generous support made this research possible to be completed successfully. Special thanks to students from Bank Rakyat residential college from UUM whom patiently answered my many question also all those authors their ideas I have used during my research work.

## **TABLE OF CONTENT**

<b>Dedication</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Permission to Use</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Disclaimer</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	
<b>Questionnaire list</b>	
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Problem Statement	2
1.3 Research Questions	4
1.4 Research Objectives	4
1.5 Scope and Relevance of the Study	5
1.6 Definition of Main Terms	6
1.7 Structure of Chapters	7
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 Importance of Student Learning in Universities	9
2.3 Definition of Student Learning	9
2.4 Definition of Learning Style	10
2.5 Dimensions of Learning Style	11
2.6 Learning Style Identifiers	13
2.7 Four of the Most Common Identifiers	13

2.7.1 Myers-Briggs Type Indicator	13
2.7.2 The Dun and Dun Learning Style	15
2.7.3 Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligence	17
2.7.4 Kolb's Learning Model	19
2.8 The Kolb's Experiential Learning Model and Its Strengths	20
2.9 Predictors of Student Learning Styles	23
2.10 Conclusion	23

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

3.1 Introduction	24
3.2 Research Framework	24
Figure 3.1 Research Framework	24
3.3 Research Design	25
3.4 Research Method	25
3.5 Population and Sampling	25
3.6 Questionnaire Design	26
3.6.1 Variables and measures	26
3.6.2 Kolb's learning style categories	27
3.7 Data Collection	28
Table 3.2 Survey Responses	29
3.8 Data Analysis Method	29
3.8.1 Descriptive Statistic	30
3.8.1.2 Gender and Student Learning Style	30
3.8.1.3 Ethnic Group and Student Learning Style	30
3.8.1.4 Nationality and Student Learning Style	31
3.8.1.5 Education Background and Student Learning Style	31
3.8.2 Correlation Analysis	31
3.8.3 Regression Analysis	32
3.8.4 Factor Analysis – Determination of Construct Validity	32
3.9 Conclusion	33



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS**

4.1 Introduction	34
4.2 Respondents' Profiles	34
Table 4.2: Summary of Demographic Profile	35
4.3 Respondents' Learning Styles (The Identifiers)	35
4.3.1 Learning styles	35
Table 4.3 Distribution of Learning Styles	36
4.3.2 Descriptive Statistics of the Learning Style	36
Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics of the study variables (N=100)	36
4.3.3 Reliability of the Learning Style Construct	37
Table 4.5 Reliability Coefficients for the Variables of the Study	37
4.3.4 Correlation analysis of the Learning Style	38
Table 4.6: Correlation of Variables	39
4.4 Relationship between Gender and Student Learning Style	40
Table 4.7: Correlation of Variable on Gender	
4.5 Relationship between Ethnic Group and Student Learning Style	41
Table 4.8: Correlation of Variable on Ethnic	
4.6 Relationship between Nationality and Student Learning Style	42
Table 4.9: Correlation of Variable on Nationality	
4.7 Relationship between Education Background and Student Learning Style	43
Table 5.0: Correlation of Variable on Educational background	
4.8 Regression Analysis between Demographic and Learning Style	44
Table 5.1 Regression Result of influence of students' demographics and learning style	
4.9 Impact of Gender on Student Learning Styles	45
Table 5.2 Regression of Gender on Student Learning Styles	
4.10 Impact of Ethnic Group on Student Learning Styles	46
Table 5.3 Regression of Ethnic Group and Student Learning Style	47
4.11 Impact of Nationality on Student Learning Styles	
Table 5.4 Regression of Nationalities and Student Learning Style	47
4.12 Impact of Education Background on Student Learning Styles	48

Table 5.5: Regression of Education Background and Student Learning Style

4.13 Conclusion	48
-----------------	----

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction	49
5.2 Summary of the Study	40
5.3 Discussion of the Results	50
5.3.1 Objective No.1: To Identify the Student Learning Styles	50
Table 5.6 Identification of Students Learning Style	
5.3.2 Objective No. 2 : To Determine the Relationship between the Respondents' Demographics and Their Learning Styles (Correlation Analysis)	51
5.3.3 Objective No. 3 : To Determine the Influence of the Respondents' Demographics on Their Learning Styles (Regression Analysis)	52
5.4 Suggestions to University Lecturers (The Teachers)	52
5.5 Suggestions to University's Policy Makers (The Senior Management)	53
5.6 Suggestions to Future Researchers	53
5.7 Limitations of the study	54
5.8 Conclusion	54

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper investigates the relationship between students' demographics factors and the learning style preferences of students. By linking Kolb' model of learning style preferences to the students demographics differences of individual learners the researcher develop a study by data collected from 100 students from different nation backgrounds enrolled in different courses at university in Utara Malaysia. The finding show that learning style preferences differ across nationalities, gender, race, educational background and that these preferences are affected by a number of cultural values. We also find important differences in the learning styles of male and female students and between local and exchange students. The results are of importance to teachers and managers active in the education and development of individuals from different academic background and for researcher's influences in the influences of academic improvements on learning style preferences.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

A university education is a defining role in the well-being and success of people in today's society. University education is important in all countries thought the world. In today's educational system, a person has the ability to grow as a member of his or her society and culture, gain knowledge for a career in the "real world" and mature both spiritually and physically (Lunsford, Andrea A, 2000). It is, therefore a good education that can help them face such challenges and learn some of the most important life lessons from everyday experiences.

Many people seek a higher university education to prepare themselves for a career. They can spend thousands of dollars in education, hoping for higher standards of living and substantial jobs to support their families. The most effective education, therefore is to provide people with individual programs pertaining to their interests and careers. Education in Malaysia is overseen by two government ministries where by the Ministry of Education for matters up to the secondary level and the Ministry of Higher Education for tertiary education (Wikipedia, 2006).

Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) is one of the public university where providing higher education to the students. UUM is known as the management university with specific mission of providing a leadership role in management education in Malaysia.

The contents of  
the thesis is for  
internal user  
only

representative of the population. Therefore, a small sample size is one of the major limitations of this study. Thus the generalizability of the results to other Universities may be restricted. Secondly, the time constraint on the researcher had also affected the data collection process.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

Chapter 5 has presented the findings of this study which had analyzed the relationship and the influence of students' demographics and their learning style. The study also had found that there was a significant difference between the relationship and the influence of students' demographics and their learning styles. Overall, the result of this study had indicated that there was a significant relationship and impact on students' demographics and their learning style.

## **REFERENCES**

- Broyatzis, R.E. and Kolb, D.A. (1995). *From Learning Styles to Learning Skills: The Executive Skills Profile*, Journal of Managerial Psychology, Volume 10, Number 5, pages 3-17. CD ROM, MCB University Press
- Cavana, R.Y., Delahaye, B.L., & Sekaran, U. (2001). *Applied Business Research. Theoretical framework*. New York. Prentice Hall.

- Chen, S.Y., & Ford, N. (2001). Matching/mismatching revisited: *An empirical study of learning and teaching styles* [Electronic version]. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 32(1), 5-22.
- Dunn, R. and S.A. Griggs (eds.) (2000). *Practical Approaches to Using Learning Styles in Higher Education*. Bergin & Garvey, Connecticut.
- Hein, T.L. and D.D. Budny (1999). *Teaching to Students' Learning Styles*: Retrieved November 15, 2002 from <http://fie.engrng.pitt.edu/fie99/papers/1208.pdf>.
- Hong, E., & Suh, B.K. (1995). *An analysis of change in Korean-American and Korean students' learning styles*. *Psychological Reports*, 76, 691-699.
- Johnson, D. A. & Saunders, D. R. (1990). *Confirmatory factor analysis of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Expanded Analysis Report*. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 50, 561-571.
- Keefe, J.W. (1989). *Learning style profile handbook: Accommodating perceptual, study and instructional preferences* (Vol. II). Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Koper, R. and Tattersall, C. (2004) "*New directions for lifelong learning using network technologies*" British Journal of Educational Technology, Volume 35 Issue 6, pp 689-700.

Lunsford, Andrea A (2000). *Commentary on John Henry Newman's "The Idea of a University."* *The Presence of Others*. Ed. Andrea A. Lunsford and John J. Ruszkiewicz. Boston: St. Martin's, pg. 46.

Montgomery, S.(1996). *Addressing Diverse Learning Styles through the Use of Multimedia*, University of Michigan.

Mumford, A. & Honey,P. (1996). Using your learning styles, Honey, Maidenhead.

Osborne, C. (1994). *Independent learning at Middlesex University*. Draft text for International Symposium on Independent Study and Flexible Learning, Cambridge, 6-9 Sept. 1994.

Park C.C. (1997a). *Learning style preferences of Asian American (Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese) students in secondary schools*. *Equity & excellence in education*, 30(2), 68-77.



Park C.C. (1997b). *Learning style preferences of Korean, Mexican, Armenian-American and Anglo students in secondary schools*. National Association of secondary School. Principals (NASSP) bulletin, 81(585), 103-111.

Riding, R. and Rayner, S. (1998). *Cognitive Styles and Learning Strategies*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Slavin, R.E. (1983). *Cooperative learning*. White plains, NY: Longman.

Warr, Peter, Dowling, Jonathon. (2000). *Learning strategies, learning anxiety and knowledge acquisition*, British Journal of Psychology, Aug 2000, Vol 91 Issue 3, p 311, 23p.

Wikipedia. (2006). University Education.