

**LEARNING STYLE AMONG MULTI-ETHNIC STUDENTS IN FOUR  
SELECTED TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN THE KLANG VALLEY**

**By**

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Learning style is affected by individual differences such as gender, academic and cultural background (Hyland, 1993). However ethnicity is indicated to be the main factor in influencing learning styles (Park, 2000 and Ewing, 1993). In relation to the above statements, Malaysia, a multiracial country provides a rich source of information in finding the relationship between ethnicity and learning styles. Although the three major races, the Malays, Chinese and Indians, are given equal opportunities to further their studies in the institutions of higher learning in the country they were brought up in different cultural backgrounds that influenced the development of their own style of learning.

This study examined the learning styles of multi-ethnic students' in four selected universities in Klang Valley in terms of gender, program of studies and

academic achievement levels. Using a modified Honey and Mumford learning Style Questionnaire, 291 valid responses from two public and private universities were subjected to further quantitative analyses of the study.

The result of the descriptive analyses revealed that the multi-ethnic students exhibited all the four learning styles that were Activist, Reflector, Theorist and Pragmatist style. Reflector style was found to be the most preferred learning style by the multi-ethnic students while the Activist style was the least preferred. The male and female students demonstrated different patterns of learning styles even though the Reflector style was the most preferred style of both genders. The arts and science students seemed to exhibit similar patterns of learning styles except for the Malay students. The students from IPTA and IPTS too demonstrated similar pattern of learning styles.

However the result of Chi-Square Test showed that there was no significant difference in the learning styles among ethnicity, between genders and program of studies. Similarly, the ANOVA did not show any significant difference in the academic achievement among students with different learning styles.

Based on the results, five conclusions are made. First, the result of the study is congruent with the learning style theories by Kirton (De Ciantis and Kirton, 1999), Kolb (1984), and Honey and Mumford (1986). Second, The Malay,

Chinese and Indian are considered as all-rounder learners. Third, the learning styles have no relationship with academic achievement. Fourth, ethnicity has no bearing on learning styles among multi ethnic tertiary students. Finally, the learning styles are not significantly different between male and female students, and between science and arts students.

The study has contributed new knowledge in the literature of learning styles especially the one based on Malaysian context. Besides providing more insight in understanding multi-ethnic students' learning styles, the study also provides recommendations for higher institutions in Malaysia, providers of extension education and also creates the need for further research in this area.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi sebahagian syarat keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**STAIL PEMBELAJARAN DI KALANGAN PELAJAR PELBAGAI ETNIK DI  
EMPAT INSTITUSI PENDIDIKAN TINGGI TERPILIH DI LEMBAH  
KLANG**

Oleh

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Perbezaan individu seperti jantina dan latar belakang akademik dan budaya memberi kesan kepada stail pembelajaran seseorang (Hyland, 1993). Walau bagaimanapun, etnik merupakan faktor utama mempengaruhi stail pembelajaran (Park, 2000 & Ewing, 1993). Sehubungan dengan kenyataan di atas, Malaysia sebuah negara pelbagai bangsa menyediakan sumber maklumat yang kaya dalam mengkaji perhubungan antara etnik dan stail pembelajaran. Walaupun bangsa Melayu, China dan India diberi peluang yang sama untuk melanjutkan pelajaran di institusi pengajian di negara ini namun mereka dibesarkan dari latar belakang budaya yang berbeza yang mempengaruhi perkembangan stail pembelajaran masing-masing.

Kajian ini mengkaji stail pembelajaran pelajar-pelajar pelbagai etnik di empat buah universiti terpilih di Lembah Kelang dari segi jantina, program pembelajaran dan pencapaian akademik. Dengan menggunakan soal selidik stail pembelajaran Honey dan Mumford yang telah diubah suai, seramai 291 orang responden daripada dua buah universiti awam dan swasta telah berjaya dikutip dan dianalisis secara kaedah kuantitatif.

Analisis diskriptif mendapati kesemua pelajar pelbagai etnik tersebut mengamalkan kesemua keempat-empat stail pembelajaran tersebut iaitu stail Aktivist, Reflektor, Theoris dan Pragmatis. Stail pembelajaran Reflektor merupakan pilihan tertinggi manakala stail Aktivist mendapat pilihan terendah. Pelajar lelaki dan perempuan didapati mengamalkan stail pembelajaran yang berbeza walaupun stail Reflektor merupakan pilihan utama. Pelajar aliran sastera dan sains didapati mengamalkan pola stail pembelajaran yang serupa kecuali di kalangan pelajar Melayu. Begitu juga dengan pelajar-pelajar dari universiti awam dan swasta mereka menunjukkan pola stail pembelajaran yang sama.

Walau bagaimanapun hasil ujian Khai Kuasa Dua menunjukkan tidak terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan di kalangan etnik, jantina, dan program pengajian. Keputusan ANOVA juga menunjukkan tidak terdapat perbezaan yang

signifikan pada pencapaian akademik di kalangan pelajar yang mempunyai pelbagai stail pembelajaran yang berbeza.

Hasil kajian ini telah menghasilkan lima kesimpulan. Pertama, hasil kajian selaras dengan teori stail pembelajaran Kirton (De Ciantis and Kirton, 1999), Kolb (1984) dan Honey dan Mumford (1986). Kedua, pelajar-pelajar Melayu, Cina dan India dianggap sebagai pelajar serba boleh. Ketiga, stail pembelajaran tidak mempunyai hubungan dengan pencapaian akademik. Keempat, etnik tidak memberi sebarang perbezaan terhadap stail pembelajaran di kalangan pelajar pelbagai etnik. Akhirnya, stail pembelajaran didapati tidak mempunyai perbezaan yang signifikan antara pelajar lelaki dan wanita dan antara aliran sastera dan sains.

Kajian ini telah memberi sumbangan pengetahuan baru dalam bidang stail pembelajaran terutamanya dalam konteks Malaysia. Di samping memberi celik akal dalam memahami stail pembelajaran di kalangan pelajar pelbagai etnik, kajian ini juga mencadangkan beberapa panduan yang boleh digunakan oleh institusi pengajian tinggi di Malaysia, penganjur program pendidikan pengembangan dan penyelidikan pada masa hadapan.

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I certify that an Examination Committee has met on 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2006, to conduct final examination of Syed Jamal Abdul Nasir bin Syed Mohamad, on his Doctor of Philosophy dissertation entitled “Learning Style among Multi-Ethnic Students in Four Selected Tertiary Institutions in The Klang Valley” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulation 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

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SYED JAMAL ABDUL NASIR BIN SYED MOHAMAD

Date: 18 April 2006

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