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Assessment Of Student's Learning Styles As Nexus For Academic Achievements And Career Preference In Nigerian Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study examined student's learning styles as nexus to academic achievement and career preference in Nigeria secondary schools. It renders helpful hand in identifying different learning styles among senior secondary school students and determines if the learning styles influence the student's academic achievement and the career preference, determining the connection between gender and career preference and as well examined the factors that drives student's choice of learning styles, academic achievement and career preference in the study area. The study adopted the use of quantitative design which is descriptive in nature such that involves the use of frequency and percentage. However, ANOVA and T-test correlation analysis were also used to determine the relationship and the degree of significance of the variables in the study. This study employed a random sampling technique in selecting the sample schools in the study area. As a result a total of five schools were selected from the population from which a sample size consisting of three hundred students were selected across the senior secondary classes. Questionnaires were constructed and administered to the selected respondents to elicit relevant information and the contents were based on learning style, academic achievement and career preference. The findings from the study revealed that majority of the student adopted mixed learning styles (ranging from verbal aura, logic solitary and kinaesthetic and their learning styles) and these determine academic achievements of the students regardless of the gender. The study also revealingly established that parents significantly influenced their children's career preference not minding their learning ability and interest.

KEY WORDS: Learning, learning style; Career preference; education, Academic achievement.

1. Introduction

Learners across the world are not totally the same given the fact that their performance under different learning condition and learning contents varies considerably. This is so because the variation in learners manifested in aspect of cognitive ability, levels of assimilation and comprehension of concept, socialization level, family pedigree, health status and other associated factors (Fahd *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, to achieve the best from students and ensure that they are contributing in a classroom teaching-learning arrangement, it is imperative for teachers to understand the learner's differences and culminate effort in managing them (Peter *et-al.*, 2018). The government and the school system encompassing the school management team

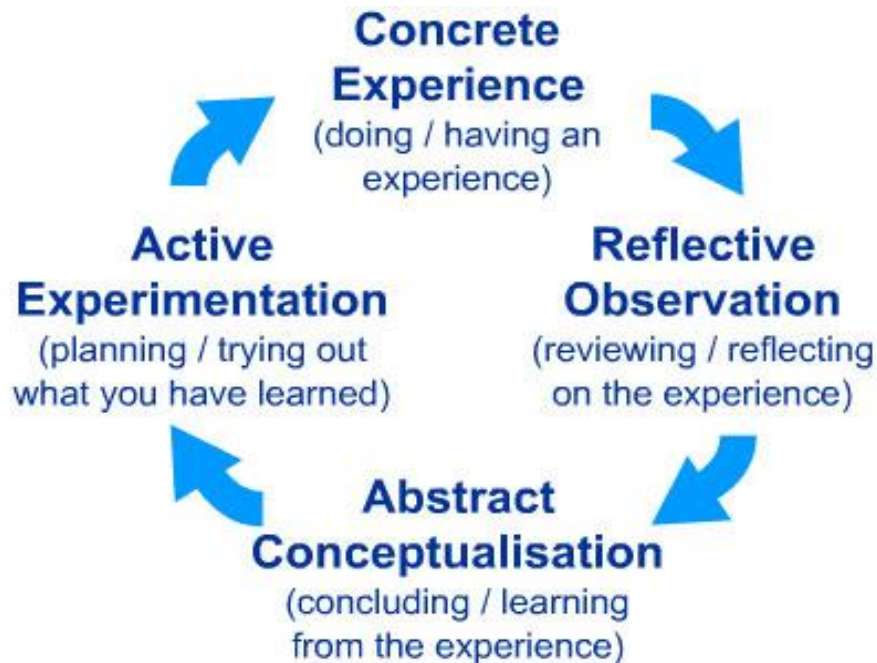
should be proactive and bring to bear facilities for effective management of student's differences and empower the teachers to do so (Oyekan, 2000).

Given this background, educators have noticed that some students prefer certain methods of learning over another. These form traits referred to as learning styles by some scholars or learning preferences by others. This however forms the student's unique preference for learning and aids teachers in the planning of group and individual instruction (Oyekan, 2000). Study has shown that individual students are most effective when they are taught in their personal learning styles; that is, the best approach and method with which they can best comprehend any curriculum content brought to them in the teaching-learning process (Ginting, 2017; Cecilia *et al.*, 2019). This personal preference of learning style is customary to learners because, they have adopted and so became adapted to it during their developmental stages both at home and at school (Vosh and Schauble, 2014). The home in this context serves as the primary and the first agent of socialisation of the child hence it is a platform for moral, cultural and normative training of the learners in terms of how to inculcate respect for elders and relate properly outside the home and the school (Wust and Lekosimic, 2017; Peter *et al.*, 2018).

However, the family plays another vital role in developing the learning perception of students towards a particular career and ensure preference development for career along that path (Lerner, 2001). It is an agent of learner's learning development in the early developmental stage to have an indelible impact on personality formation and increasing the perception of the child in self-actualization (Oyekan, 2000; Stangor, 2014). Hence the home is considered to be the first school and agent of socialization of the students where societal attitudes, beliefs, expectation and behavioural pattern are introduced to them within the family circle (Lerner, 2001; Nyamwange, 2016). Children learn certain basic social rules pertaining to one's personality and way of life through experience of love, resentment and hope within the family circle (Nyamwange, 2016). Furthermore, studies have shown that parents often become source of approval and disapproval of their children's development of certain learning style, perception to education, the fulfilment of his career preference as his or her basic needs rest on the learner's ability to live up to and act in accordance with the expectation of his parents and ultimately, the expectation of its immediate environment and society (Micheal, 2002). Consequently, the student learns how to respond and act in manner he or she thinks the parents want thus beginning to see himself as others see him and as someone responsible to another person and needs to be fulfilled in life (Maxwell, 2015). Through this, the student is developing self-perception, and way of life with respect to his method of learning. Hence students from unstable home are likely to become imbalance in their learning style because of the odd experiences accumulated over time (Bubic and Ivanisenic, 2016).

Similarly, the school is seen as an organisation specialised in providing education-based experiences. On this basis however, the school performs some basic functions which include developing the cognitive ability of the students, inculcating socially approved and accepted attitudes into the students, providing training for particular vocation or profession and most importantly it helps in sorting the students into different classes for self-discovery. Ipso-facto, this streaming will place the students in the right classes which will serve as the pathway of self-potential actualisation, personality formation, increasing self-perception, self-awareness and consciousness, and consequently helping the student in the choice of the right career (Stanger, 2014; Nyamwange, 2016; Ginting, 2017). Therefore, a learning style is a student's consistent way of responding to and using stimuli in the context of learning (Awla, 2014; Cecilia *et al.*, 2019). However, they are usually different ways that an individual can learn with ease with and without the help of an external instructor such that will enhance the achievement of the learner's personal goal as well as the general objectives of the teaching-learning process. It encompasses the method and technique inherent in the learner or otherwise acquired through self-development and self-directed aim by which an individual learner can acquire knowledge or engage in meaningful leaning which is usually regarded as meaning making experiences Oyekan (2000). Studies such as Awla (2014), Bethel and Eremie (2017) and Ginting (2017) have shown that students are favoured by particular methods of interaction with learning content which they adopt as such individual learner is usually favoured by a particular learning style or the other. See Figure 1.

Diagrammatic illustration



Source: Author's design, Modified from Kolb's Learning Model 2025

Furthermore, since different students have different learning styles, they learn at different pace which brings about individual differences and these dissimilarities are not being catered for in most of our educational institution especially in Nigeria Secondary Schools (Ayima, 2025) Nonetheless, teachers teach the way they think is best for the students and the student whose learning style is in conformity with the adopted teaching methods tend to learn faster, grasps concept, recollects easily in such class (Ginting, 2017). Cecilia *et al.*, (2019) therefore noted the implications of variation in student learning preferences by stating that 'the wide range of individual differences surely must mean that there is no single method for nurturing creativity. Normatively and ideally, the experiences we provide should be synthetic and construction oriented, if not for individual students at least for different types of student (Cecilia *et al.*, 2019) However, it is more likely that a student will have preference and choose a career in subjects in which he feels he will perform optimally or that in which he had previously recorded excellent and exceptional performance with respect to his most convenient learning styles (Ayima, 2025).

Academic achievement is often a measure of the learner's ability in terms of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain based on learning content and an administered test or examination. As such it is defined as the measurement of the student classroom performance across various academic subjects (Ginting, 2017). This typically measure in the school system by subject scores, graduation grades, graduation rates and results from standardized tests. On the other hand, is a profession, occupation or trade from which an individual earns a living and sustain livelihood and which requires specific length of training, skills and educational qualification (Micheal, 2002). However, preference for a career can help in selecting the right education, skills and attitude needed to support the career (Kerta, 2000; Nyamwange, 2016). The preference for a career is often affected by multiple factors such as interest, identity, self-concept, globalization, role model, social support, available resources, length of training, monetary accrument, globalization, personality, and socialization (Kerta, 2000). Similarly, parents decide what they want their children to study regardless of their interest and not minding the fact that the child has his or her learning style and the career that suits the learning style (Fahd *et al.*, 2024). More so, Wust and Lekosimic (2017) frankly considered career preference as the occupation with the highest positive value among other alternative forms of work value (Ayima, 2025). Moreover, several other factors have been considered to exert a wide range of influence on the career preference and choice of the learners. One of these factors according to Peter *et al.*, (2018) is intelligence of the learner. Intelligence in this regard describes the ability to think rationally, act purposively and deal precisely with the issues and challenges emanating in the environment. Several researches in separate studies have examine the effect of learning styles on academic success of learners across different levels of schooling, despite the reliability of the studies, none has been able assess with accurate figure the learning styles among secondary school students and establish the nexus of learning styles, academic achievement and career preference. Hence this study.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The quantitative research design was used to analyse the data collected for this study. This involves the descriptive design which involves the process of conducting a study on specific group or populations and describing their responses accordingly using numerical values. This approach described the status quo of variables and the relationship between variables. The study population consisted of all Senior Secondary School Students in Akure, Ondo State from where six secondary schools were randomly selected and fifty student each were drawn from the selected schools cutting across male and female gender. The selected schools included Aquinas College, Akure. Saint Micheal Catholic Secondary School, Akure, Ijomimo High School, Akure, Oyemekun Grammar School, Akure and Fiwasaye Girls Grammar School, Akure. A total of three hundred questionnaires were constructed and administered to the students to elicit relevant information on their knowledge of learning styles, academic achievement and career preference. The responses of the respondents were analysed using the SPSS in which the analysis of variance was carried out to test the relationship between perception of learning styles, academic achievement and career preference. The responses also provided information on the drivers of academic achievement and career preference in the selected schools in the study area. Descriptive statistics involved the use of frequencies and percentage was also used to analysed the data acquired on variables from which the stated hypotheses were tested and conclusion drawn using inferential statistics

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study were presented inn tables.

Table 1: Presentation of Demographic data of the Respondents

S/N	Items	Options	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
1	Age	10-15	120	40.1	40.1
		16-20	172	57.5	98.0
		21-25	4	1.4	99.3
		26+	3	1.0	100
		Total	299	100	
2	Sex	Male	143	47.8	47.8
		Female	156	52.3	100
		Total	299	100	
3	Class	SSS1	105	35.1	35.1
		SSS2	70	23.4	58.5
		SSS3	124	41.5	100
		Total	299	100	

Source: Authors's work, 2025.

From the table 1 above, it is indicative that the students used for this research were in SSS1, SSS2, SSS3, including both mixed and single-sex schools. The percentage of the respondent in SSS1 was 35.1%, SSS2 was 23.4% and SSS3 accounted for 41.5%. This however indicated that respondents were selected among the categories of students who are able to make choices and decision about their future. And all categories were fully represented and devoid of error of sampling.

Table 2: Responses of students on Career Preferences

S/N	Items	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1	Career Class	Science	150	50.2
		Commercial	70	23.4
		Art	79	26.4
		Total	299	100.0
2	Career Preferences	Doctor	79	27.0
		Nurse	13	4.4
		Lawyer	56	19.1
		Pharmacist	33	11.3
		Engineer	14	4.8
		Accountant	59	20.1
		Media officer	5	1.7
		Sport-man	6	2.0
		Teacher/lecturer	6	2.0
		Others	28	9.4
3	I have always dreamt of becoming a fulfilled fellow in my future career	No	43	14.4
		Yes	256	85.6
		Total	299	100
4	My parents decided the subjects I am now offering for me	Yes	89	29.8
		No	210	70.2
		Total	299	100
	I was motivated by things around me to be placed in this class	Yes	159	53.2
		No	140	46.8
		Total	299	100
	I was encouraged by my teacher to be in this class	Yes	140	46.8
		No	159	53.2
		Total	299	100
	I chose this class because most of my friends are there	Yes	44	14.7
		No	255	85.3
		Total	299	100
	I am placed in this class because of JSSCE recommendation	Yes	160	53.5
		No	139	46.5
		Total	299	100
	I chose this class because the subjects are easily understood by me	Yes	220	73.6

		No	79	26.4
		Total	299	100
	My gender influences my choice of this career	Yes	182	60.9
		No	117	39.1
		Total	299	100
	My knowledge of the inherent prospect of this career facilitate my preference for it	Yes	200	66.9
		No	99	33.1
		Total	299	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2025

Table 3.1 ANOVA (Analysis of Variance Showing the test of difference between parent's influence and career preference of Senior Secondary School Students.

	Sum of Square	Diff	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between groups	36.351	1			0
Within Groups	5015.663	290	36.351	2.102	0.148
	5052.015	291	17.295	0	0

Source: Authors's computation, 2025

Therefore, since $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$ which is 2.71, it means that there is significant influence of parents on career preferences of Senior Secondary School Students in Akure

Test for the relationship between learning style and career preference

Research Question: What are the various perception of learning style among senior secondary school students in Akure?

To answer this research question, this hypothesis was formed and the correlation table below was constructed to determine the relationship.

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between perception of learning styles and career preferences of Senior Secondary students in Akure.

H_1 : There is significant relationship between perception of learning styles and career preferences of Senior Secondary students in Akure.

Table 3.2: showing correlation of perception of learning style and career preference

Perception of learning style			Career preference
Perception of Aural learning style	I get ideas about things better When listening to music	Pearson correlation Sig (2-tailed)	0.152 0.10
Perception of activity based(kinaesthetic) learning style	I enjoy working with my hands or constructing things	Correlation Coefficient Sig.(2-tailed)	0.199 0.001 0.914
Perception of Solitary learning style	I hate discussing things with people when preparing for examination	Correlation coefficient Sig.(2-tailed)	-0.117 0.046

Source: Author's work, 2025

I enjoy working with my hands or constructing things has a positive significant correlation coefficient with career preference [$r=0.199$]. This implies that there is 19.9% degree of correlation or relationship between career preferences and the students' perception of activity-based (kinaesthetic) learning style. More so, students' perception of aural learning style was positively correlated with academic achievement and career preference. I get ideas about things better than when listening to music was positively significant with correlation coefficient of 0.151, representing 15.1% degree of relationship borne by students' perception of Aural learning style with career preferences of senior secondary school students. Similarly, I hate discussing things with people when preparing for examination was negatively significant and correlated with career preference of Senior secondary school students in Akure with a correlation coefficient of (-0.117). The implication of this however, is that solitary learning style has 11.7% degree of negative correlation with career preference. They are significant at point 0.01 and 0.05 level, (2-tailed) In view of the above, the positive alternative hypotheses which states that there is significant relationship between the learning style and career preference of Senior secondary school students is accepted.

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings from this study show that there are various learning styles peculiar to and adopted by senior secondary school students in the study area. Prominent among these learning styles were verbal, solitary, aural, activities-based, and social learning style. Similarly, findings from the tested hypothesis and the research question formulated therefrom revealed that the learning styles of the students vary depending on the gender of the student indicating that some of the students developed learning style that suits their gender and subsequently form career in that line. This therefore shows that there is significant relationship between gender differences of the students and their learning style. This was revealed by the significant relationship of F_{cal} being greater than F_{tab} in the table at a significant level of $P < 0.05$. Findings from the study further revealed that the differences in the students' gender have no influence on their academic achievement and career preference by the F_{tab} value on the mean correlation table of 0.111 significant at 0.01.

In line with the tested hypothesis three and the research question formed therewith, the research findings revealed that there is significant relationship between parents influence and the career preference of senior secondary school students in the area of study, suggesting the fact that parents regardless of the perception of learning styles of their children, regardless of their learning ability and potential, parents tend to influence their ward to career that they considered lucrative and suits their interest. This was revealed by the means score of 2.7 and significant value of 0.15 at $P > 0.05$. Furthermore, the tested hypothesis four and the research question revealed information on the effect of learning styles on career preference of the senior

secondary school students. And in all, it was revealed that learning styles influences the career preference of the students in that the various learning style identified have positive correlation. For instance, perception of Aural learning style and perception of kinaesthetic learning style were positively correlated at $r=0.199$ and 0.151 respectively. The perception of solitary learning style was negatively correlated with $r=0.117$

Moreover, the results show that student's learning styles influence achievement and career preference of senior secondary school in Ondo State Nigeria. However, the findings confirmed and agreed to the study of Bethel and Eremie, (2017) on Learning styles and academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Student in Rivers State and that of Cecelia *et al.*, (2019) on the influence of learning styles on academic performance among science education undergraduates at the University of Calabar.

5. CONCLUSSION AND RECOMENDATION

This study focuses on the assessment of student's learning style as a nexus academic achievement and career preference of senior secondary school students in Akure-Ondo State-Nigeria. Through this, the various learning styles adopted by students in the study area were identified as (being visual, verbal, solitary, kinaesthetic, and aural). It is along these that the students develop their various level of awareness of their innate learning potentials. However, it was revealed that teachers and parents does not care about student's or learners' style of learning before placing them in classes. The study concludes that the student's awareness of their learning capability and styles influences their academic achievements in school work and this also influenced their career preference and choice. The study therefore recommends that student should be taught and motivated to discover their inherent learning capacity and the best way in which they can effectively learn and the teacher under the auspices of the school management should adopt the teaching method that will inspire the students to self-discovery and full awareness of their ability.

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