

Learning Methods Preferred by Management Students

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Abstract

Purpose: To obtain the views and recommendations of Management students of MS & MBA programs of Abasyn University, Peshawar about various aspects of the current managerial education learning methods/styles.

Study Design: Cross-sectional survey design is adopted.

Place and Duration of Study: Abasyn University, Peshawar in October and November 2014.

Methodology: Performed close ended structured questionnaire regarding managerial teaching and evaluation methods and recommendations was used to collect the data from students of MS & MBA (n=170) at Abasyn university, Peshawar. SPSS (21) program was used for analysis. Data was presented as a frequency percentage.

Findings: A majority of the students (81%) thought that multimedia was the most effective teaching tool, (58%) students viewed 45 minutes as ideal lecture duration. Measures suggested that young teachers/Lecturers (89%) convey lectures better than senior teachers to students & domestic languages (55%) are better mode of conveying lectures to students. Student (87%) preferred Practical field work as a tool of evaluation.

Conclusion: Managerial students in this study preferred Junior/young teachers, multimedia, Domestic/national Language to understand the lecture, lecture duration less than 60 minutes and Presentations as their preferred mode of evaluation. Students recommended increased emphasis on better lectures, increasing learning motivation in students and more hands on practical field work to improve current managerial education system.

Keywords: Management students. Learning Methods. Teachers.

Introduction

All life experiences hold the potential for learning. Some experiences result in learning, and some do not (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; in Ellinger, 2007). One goal of management education is to help students organize experience in meaningful ways (Kayes, 2007). The importance of teaching and how teachers teach in their classrooms, is being recognized as of key importance in many ways. It is quite clear that teaching their classes is the most important thing that teachers do. Teachers need to understand the learning strategies of students in order to facilitate their learning. The purpose of teaching is to facilitate learning and to encourage the students to learn more effectively. The learning style is an individual's consistent way of perceiving, processing and retaining new knowledge/information. Educational researchers have shown an increasing interest in the learning styles, the related instructional methods and the teaching techniques. Although there are a large number of learning methods, strategies and approaches based on different psychological constructs, there is a great deal of interest amongst educators in identifying whether learners are predominantly visual, auditory, reading/writing or kinesthetic learners. Student's approaches to learning can be influenced by the perception that they gain from their learning environment. It has also been argued that management sciences teachers should not only possess content knowledge but should also be acquainted with their learner's attributes. Learning results in gain of knowledge, attitudes and skills. Learning is done using different learning styles/methods. Students are known to have preferences for the modes in which they receive information easily. Keefe (1987) notes that a better understanding of learning styles by the faculty can help reduce the students' level of frustration and improve instructional delivery methods. Stewart and Felicetti (1992) define learning styles as those educational conditions under which a student is most likely to learn. Thus, learning styles are not really concerned with what learners learn but rather how they prefer to learn. David Merrill (2000) has the best philosophy for using learning styles/methods—instructional strategies should first be determined on the basis of the type of content to be taught or the goals of the instruction (the content-by-strategy interactions) and secondarily, learner styles and preferences are then used to adjust these fundamental learning strategies. Finally, content-by-strategy interactions take precedence over learning-style-by-strategy interactions regardless of the instructional style or philosophy of the instructional situation. We know that teaching to a students' learning style will improve their scores (Dunn & Dunn, 1992).

Research Objectives

To discover the most effective mode of teaching from the perspective of management students and to analyze their preferences for learning, according to their interests. So the main purpose of this study is;

- What do we know about learning methods that can guide the delivery and design of professional development for faculty and administrators regarding equal access of students with disabilities to courses and programs?
- What are the best learning methods being preferred by management students?

Significance of the study

This study is best approach for an instructor to take is to address a variety of learning styles with their teaching plan. It is also helpful to encourage students to understand their preferred leaning style. By the time students reach the university level it is often assumed that they have figured out the best and most productive way to study to retain information.

Teachers should make students aware of the various learning styles and encourage them to consider their preferred style as they complete their studies.

Literature review

Everyone has a own learning style. Our style of learning, if accommodated, can result in improved attitudes towards learning and continuous an increase productivity, academic achievement, and creativity (Griggs, 1991).

The term “learning style” has many definitions. For many years educational researchers have been curious about “how individuals learn”. Educators recognize that different students/individuals learn differently. Researchers have learned a great deal over the last fifty years about learning styles and how identifying learning styles and teaching to those styles can improve students’ result scores and increase content knowledge (Pitts, 2002). Many researchers have their own definition of the learning styles. Ausubel, Novak, & Hanesian (1978) stated that “learning styles” have been defined as “self-consistent, enduring individual differences in cognitive organization and function”. Keefe (1982) defined learning styles as “cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment” , while Gregorc (1979) describes learning styles as “distinctive behaviors which serve as indicators of how a person learn from and adapts to his environment”. Dunn & Dunn (1992) defines “learning style is the way in which individuals begin to concentrate on, process, internalize and retain new and difficult academic information”. Learning styles are different ways of taking in and understanding the information. These ways are affected by age, experience, physiology, culture, social and many other factors. Learning methods can change over time and can be modified purposely. Information does not always come to you in your preferred way, so you need to be able to both improve on your weaknesses and translate information into your preferred style/method.

One of the most important known theories assessed is the learning style model Dunn & Dunn (2000). Dunn & Dunn’s learning style model uses four main sensory receivers which are visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile to determine the most dominant learning style. According to this theory, one or two of these receiving styles is normally dominant. This style may differ according to task. An important principle in Dunn & Dunn’s model is the idea that students’ achievements are highly influenced by relatively fixed characteristics (Dunn & Griggs 2003). Researchers have pointed out that students learn effectively in a harmonic environment and by using teaching aids which match the students learning style preferences (Li et al., 2008). Although learning styles have been heavily researched (Duff & Duffy, 2002; Lhori-Posey, 2003; Coffield et al., 2004; Reynold& Vince, 2007; Welsh et al., 2007; Hornyaket al., 2007; Herbert & Stenfors, 2007; Sievers, 2007; Hyde, 2007; Kayes A.B., 2007; Kayes D. C., 2007; Garcia et al., 2007; Demirbas & Demirkan, 2007; Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008; Li et al., 2008), little is known about students’ learning styles, especially in the field of management education. Dewey John stated once that if we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of the tomorrow. Technological advancements of this century have revolutionized every field of life. Teaching is no more exception. Different professional institutes differ in their gross structure, teaching aids utilized and their study design/method. In the management sciences institutions of Pakistan, we observe the use of both conventional and non-conventional teaching methods. Learning styles are personal qualities of the person that influence the way students interact with their learning environment, peers, and teachers. According to Felder and Silverman, mismatches exist

between common and traditional learning styles of students and traditional teaching styles of professors. Effective teaching is inspiring and memorable. It is etched in the insights and memories of students who witness and experience it. Effective teaching is deeply personal because students feel as though they are co constructing their understanding with each other and with their teacher. Learning style is the composite of cognitive, affective and physiological characteristics that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts and responds to the learning environment. The traditional chalk-talk methodology provides strong student-teacher interaction, but its effectiveness declines as the number of students increases in the class. Aafandyar yousaf and Muhammad Hashim (2010), this paper report how there is difference between two different systems, that is annual and semester, they have identified complete list of difference between these two system by way of teaching methodology.

The Multimedia is a very powerful tool for instruction - it allows information to be displayed in a persistent manner, and can give the audience a consistent view of far more information than can be held in short- term memory. Small group teaching has become an important component of managerial education. Problem-based learning (PBL) relies entirely on small group teaching methods. It is an obvious observation e gradually “the use of electronic media has become common in managerial institute”. Research has shown that after 30 to 40 minutes of continuous lecture, assimilation falls off rapidly. Domino found out those college/universities students taught in their preferred learning styles scored higher on tests, fact knowledge, attitude and efficiency than those taught in instructional styles different from their preferred styles.

Conceptual Framework

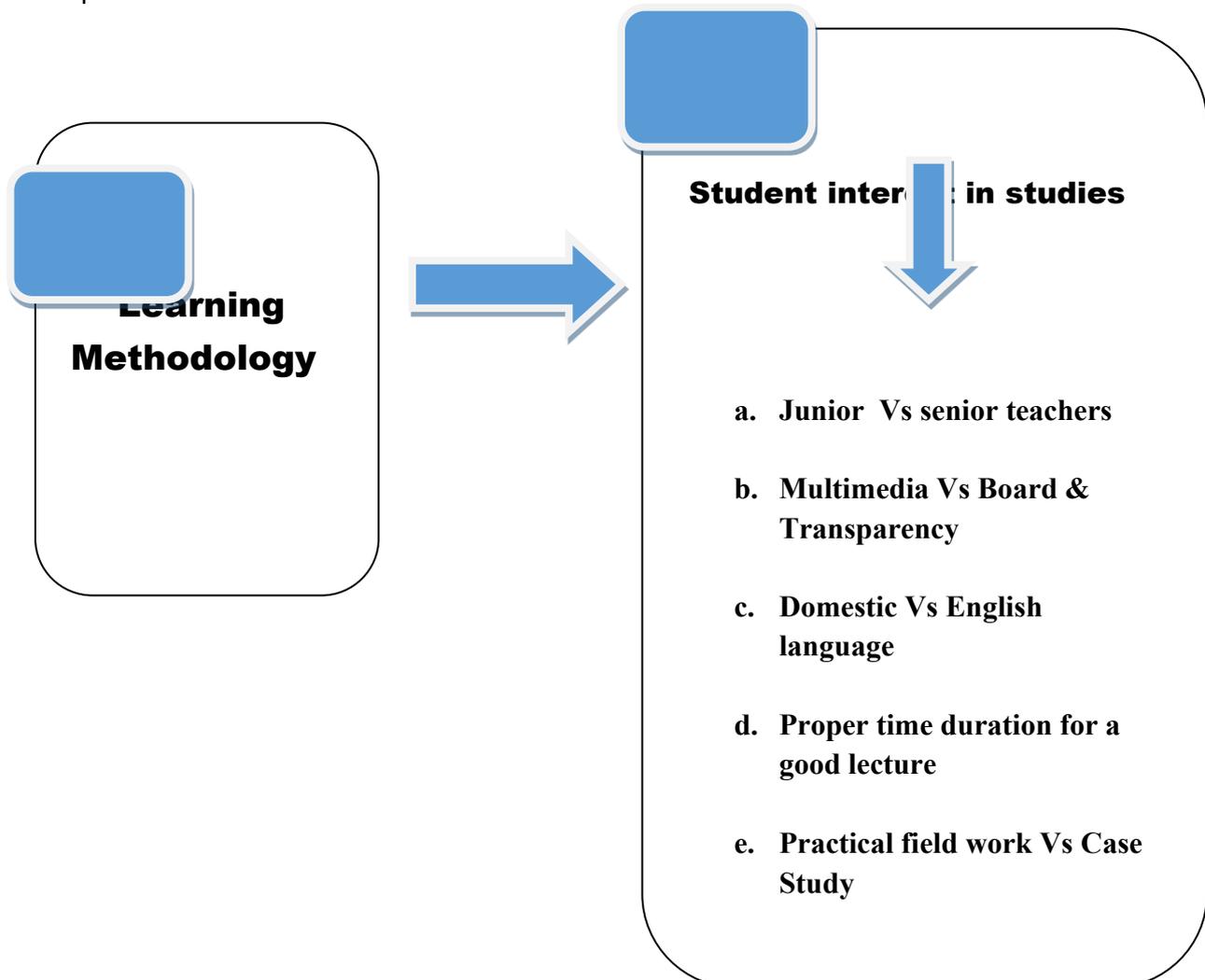
The conceptual framework of the study is:

According to this study, learning methodology is fully dependable on student interest in studies.



Model of the Study

The following is the model of the study which will be further discussed and justified step by step:

**Research Methodology**

The qualitative, descriptive survey designed as a cross-sectional study. This study is carried out through a Perception survey method, using questionnaires as the main instrument. The sample consists of 170 respondents among male and female students, aged 20-27 years old, who were enrolled in MBA & MS program at ABASYN university. Data will be collected through self-administered questionnaires through personal visit to ABASYN university. Measurement will use likert scale. Secondary data will be obtained from relevant research that includes conference proceedings and research journals. This survey was voluntary and confidential. Any student who refused to participate in this study was excluded. Demographic characteristics of the study like population (age, gender) were also noted. We will use SPSS (21 version) to find out the relationship between student interest in studies factors (Independent Variable) and learning methodology/methods (Dependent variable). Results of this study were presented as frequency percentages. Respondent's confidentiality was assured so the students could answer the various questions without any bias.

Findings

Managerial students in this survey consisted of 170 students of MBA (47.1%) and MS (52.9%) at Abasyn University Peshawar. There were 93 (54.7%) male students and 77 (45.3%) female students in the study, mention in the table 1.

Table 1.

Variables	Number of Participants (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	77	45.3
Male	93	54.7
Total	170	100
Groups		
MBA	80	47.1
MS	90	52.9
Total	170	100

Figure A.

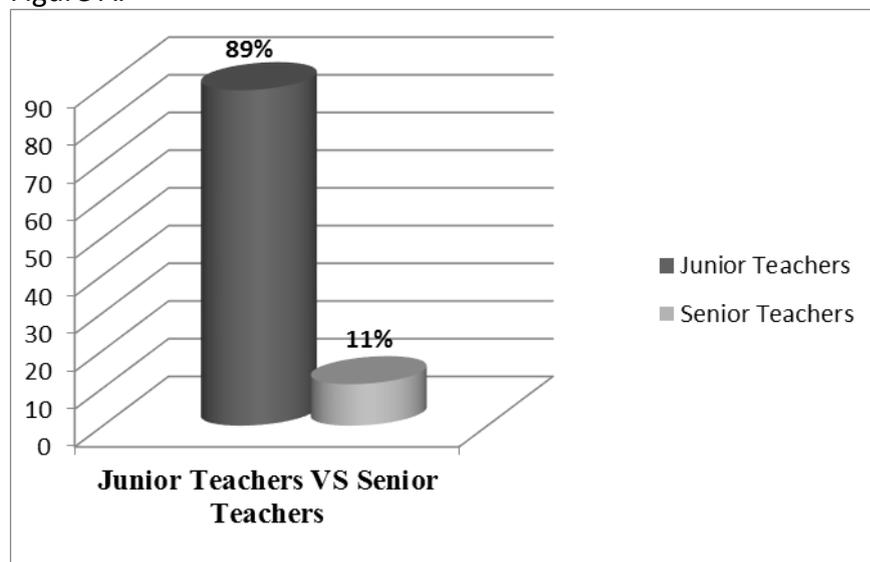


Figure A shows that junior teachers/Lecturers (89%) convey lectures better than senior teachers/Assistant Professors to students. The main reason of preferring junior teachers is that they have fresh and new knowledge, and they can easily convey their lectures by adopting different methodology.

Figure B.

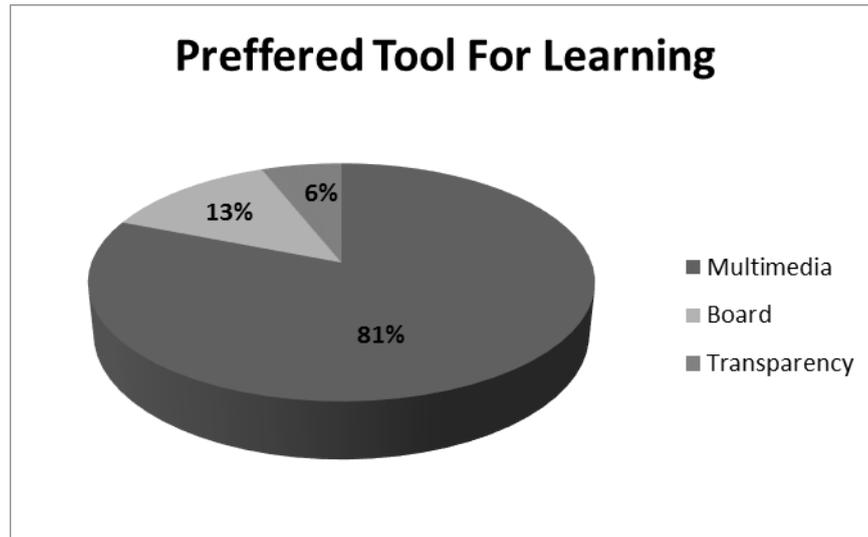


Figure B indicates that majority of the managerial students (81%) thought that multimedia was the most effective teaching tool compare to Board (13%) and Transparency (6%). This means multimedia plays a key role as a tool of learning for managerial students.

Figure C.

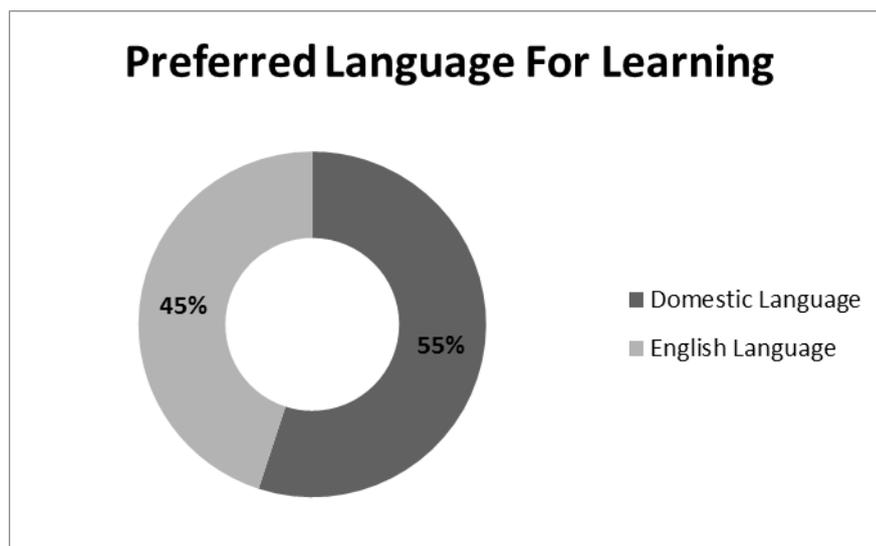


Figure C shows that managerial students preferred Domestic languages (55%) for learning lectures comparatively with English language (45%). It means that managerial student can easily learn lecture in their own domestic languages rather than English language.

Table 2.

Duration for ideal lecture	Participants (N)	Percentage (%)
30 mints	52	31 %
45 mints	99	58 %
60 mints / 1 hour	19	11 %
Total	170	100 %

As can be seen from Table 2, most of the students 99 (58%) viewed 45 minutes as an ideal lecture duration for learning. While some students 52 (31%) mark 30 minutes and remaining students' 19 (11%) select 60 minutes as ideal duration of lecture.

Figure D.

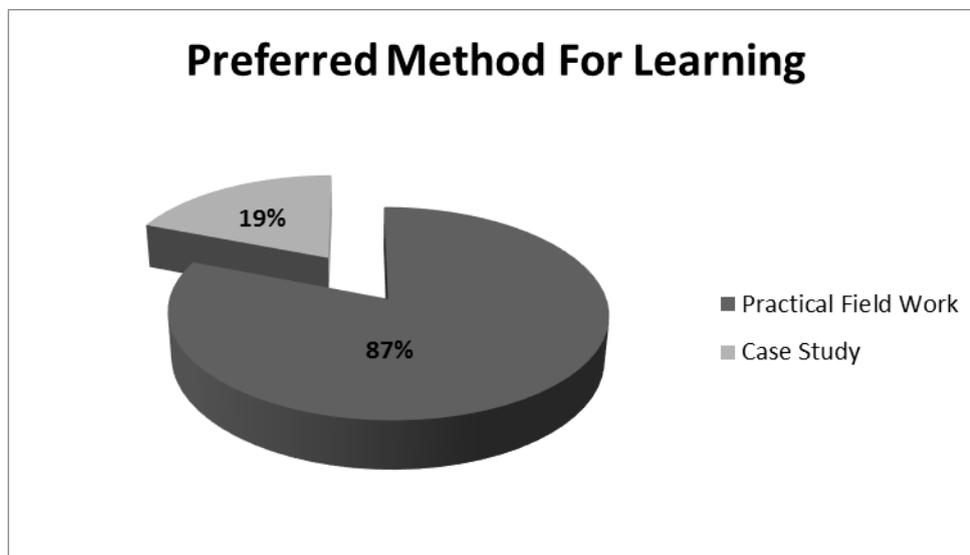


Figure D indicates that practical field work (81%) is a best evaluation from managerial students point of view while case study (19%) is less preferable by managerial students.

Discussion

We know that the educational environment strongly affects students' achievement, success and satisfaction. It is important to get regular feedback from students, if we want to change and improve the quality of managerial education in our country. Managerial students bring fresh ideas, knowledge and perspective which can be very helpful in improving the current managerial educational system. Although it is not mandatory to incorporate the opinions of the students in formulating the managerial education curriculum. It is obvious that one of the most important and helpful sources of information in any evaluation of the education process is the learners' opinions about their study. The graduates are unique in their understanding about the quality of the managerial education and their feedback is an invaluable source for improving current managerial education system.

This was a basic theme in mind for this research; we decided to conduct this survey to obtain managerial students' opinion in our selected university about the current managerial education system. Managerial students preferred junior teachers/Lecturers (89%) convey lectures better than senior teachers/Associate Professors/ Professors to students. The basic reason of preferring junior teachers is that they have fresh and new knowledge, and they can easily convey their lectures by adopting different methodology. Majority of the managerial students (81%) thought that multimedia was the most effective and efficient teaching tool compare to Board (13%) and Transparency (6%). This means multimedia plays a key role as a tool of learning for managerial students. Multimedia is a modern technology which produces an ease for both teachers (to convey good lectures) as well as for students (to learn maximum). The other main learning style is about domestic versus English language, Managerial students preferred Domestic languages (55%) for learning lectures comparatively with English language (45%). This shows that managerial student can easily learn lectures in their own domestic languages rather than English language because domestic/national languages are helpful to understand the basic concepts of lecture.

According to managerial students, 99 (58%) viewed 45 minutes as an ideal lecture duration for learning. While some students 52 (31%) mark 30 minutes and remaining students' 19 (11%) select 60 minutes as ideal duration of lecture. Student thinks that 45 minutes lecture is more effective and interesting than 60 and 30 minutes of lecture. Student bunks their classes because of long duration of lectures/classes. The most important methodology for managerial students is practical field work rather than case studies. Majority students of MBA and MS (87%) both forcedly indicate that practical field work is a best evaluation from managerial students' point of view while case study (19%) is less preferable by managerial students. Students think that practical field give them a good experience that how to handle a problem or how to find a solution for existing problem ?, while case study is only for study or just to increase your basic information about handle an occurring problem.

Conclusion

Students of management in this study preferred multimedia, time duration for lectures upto 45 minutes and young teachers/lecturers as their preferred mode of evaluation. Long time duration of a lecture was cited as a basic reason for poor attendance in a lecture. Managerial students recommended increased emphasis on domestic languages and more hands on practical field work for learning as well as for experience. This is a preliminary study done in a private university, limiting generalization of the outcome. However, it is an original baseline study for understanding students' views and their recommendations about current managerial education system. It was a snap short survey, doesn't represents the changing trends in management education. The study should be repeated in both public and private sectors universities, from the view of management students.

Research Gap

There is no research done on learning methods that is preferred by student of management sciences particularly in KPK, Pakistan.

Limitations

Time constrains, since research is subject to conduct within a specific time (limited) so data from diverse market is difficult to collect with in limited time. Financial constrains is another issue that can hinder the researcher to visit around the province and collect data and information.

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