

STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Institutions of higher learning are engaged in a sustained and continuous process of maximising the quality of their graduates so as to enhance their readiness for the job market. Thus, it is important for educational institutions to focus on improving the critical aspects of teaching and learning. One area which has received increasing attention is the learning styles of students. Several studies have shown that academic performance of university students is related to their learning styles. The objectives of this study were to ascertain the dominant learning styles of the students and to discover the relationship between learning style and academic performance. The Grasha-Riechmann Student Learning Style Scales (GRSLSS) was administered to determine student learning preferences in six learning style categories. The subjects of this study were the first year students at the International Education Center (INTEC), Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam. These sponsored students were undergoing their preparatory programmes at INTEC before pursuing their degree at reputable universities in, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, among others. Cluster analysis was used to identify their dominant learning styles, while discriminant analysis was used to analyse the relationship between learning styles and the various demographic and educational variables. Academic performance based on learning style was found to be significant. Analysis was carried out using SAS/STAT[®], SAS/GRAPH[®] and SAS/EM[®].

Keywords: Learning styles, cluster analysis, discriminant analysis, SAS/STAT[®], SAS/GRAPH[®], SAS/EM[®]