

INFLUENCE OF AGE ON LEARNING STYLES AMONG POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT:

The present study aimed at finding the Age influence on learning styles (in practicing to master the Communication Skills in English) among Diploma (Polytechnic) students of North Coastal Districts of Andhra Pradesh. To achieve the object of study Joy M Ried's Learning styles instrument model Questionnaire is adopted. A Sample of 207 Polytechnic students of North Coastal Districts of Andhra Pradesh was selected on the basis of random sampling method. Both Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. The findings are noted as per the study. The purpose of the present study is to investigate students' learning style in order to know the style he/she belongs with the particular object, the age influence.

KEY WORDS:

Learning styles : Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, Tactile, Group and Individual

INTRODUCTION:

Learning is an important phenomenon in the process of studies to each and every student. For it, he/she prefers the ways or means in adopting to learn which is called as style. It is a measurable behavior. Everyone have individual differences of learning as per their intelligence, abilities, attitudes, achievements, age and personality etc. This is also common in learning Communication Skills. Technical Students Communication is to be in English as it is the medium of instruction in their studies or at work place or to know the updates of technological advancements. So the authors have taken up the study of English Communication Skills. Thus Learning Styles are not really concerned with what learners learn, but rather how they prefer to learn¹. Age is also an influencing factor in the learning process.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

The goal of the Polytechnic student is to get good rank/marks in their examinations to get the attractive placement in job market. The Multy national Companies (MNC) need the technicians who excelled in good proficiency of communication skills rather than technical skills. Technicians need proficiency in English Communication Skills to meet the needs of Globalization. In learning them ample stress is given to widen their career. The factors and the ways of learning which advocated by the individual are called style or strategy. These

adopted styles are measurable though the individual may not identified. The motto behind it is to master over the subject. By observing them and lying emphasis on the followed style, he will become a successful learner.

Thus the present study is likely to make a reasonable contribution in knowing the learning styles in the subject of English communication Skills of the polytechnic (Diploma level) students in respect of their age.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The basic objectives of the present study are:

- To study the influence of the age of the student on learning styles while learning English Communication skills.

HYPOTHESES:

The null hypotheses (Ho) is used for statistical purpose in helping to conclude whether

- The actual hypotheses is valid or not,
- There are no significant differences in learning styles of English Communication skills with differential age backgrounds of the students.
- Factors of age that motivating the learning styles.

METHODOLOGY:

Descriptive survey method was used to serve the study.

SAMPLE:

The sample of the study consists with the responses of 207 Polytechnic students studying in the North coastal Districts of Andhra Pradesh comprising Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram and Visakhapatnam Districts. The sample is selected in the method of random sampling method.

TOOL:

A Questionnaire was prepared with hundred questions in keeping view of Joy M Reid learning style instrument. Its validity was measured and the same sample is successfully used for Ph.D of the researcher.

PROCEDURE:

The statistical tests were administered with responses made by the Polytechnic Students of the sample (207) collected. The scores are tabulated and analysed by using appropriate statistical techniques.

LEARNING STYLES:

The identified Learning styles are six: Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, Tactile, Group and Individual learning styles as classified by Joy M Ried.2

ANALYSIS:

The researchers have studied with the following identified descriptions of age above 18. In Andhra Pradesh the entrants of diploma is 10+ , the age group is 15+ after joining they continued for 3 years that is 18 years in and around. So the age group sample is 18 above and below.

DESCRIPTION OF THE GROUP: AGE

Sample Size	Below 18 [146]		Above 18 [61]					
Attribute/ Learning Style	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	M.D	S.E.D	C.R	S/N.S
Visual	69.79	6.48	69.48	6.87	0.31	1.03	0.3	S
Auditory	67.9	6.48	66.79	7.41	1.11	1.09	1.02	S
Kinesthetic	65.03	6.79	64.59	7.89	0.44	1.16	0.38	S
Tactile	64.18	6.9	63.56	6.08	0.62	0.97	0.64	S
Group	45.92	4.85	45.59	3.98	0.33	0.65	0.51	S
Individual	56.69	4.95	55.93	5.34	0.76	0.8	0.95	S
Totality	365.76	26.48	362.38	26.25	3.38	4.01	0.84	Ho accepted

Table 1. Description of the Age

The value of the Critical Ratio is 0.84 that is less than the normal value of 2.58 at 1% (0.01) confidence level. There is no significant difference in the learning styles of English between different age groups of students of Polytechnics. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

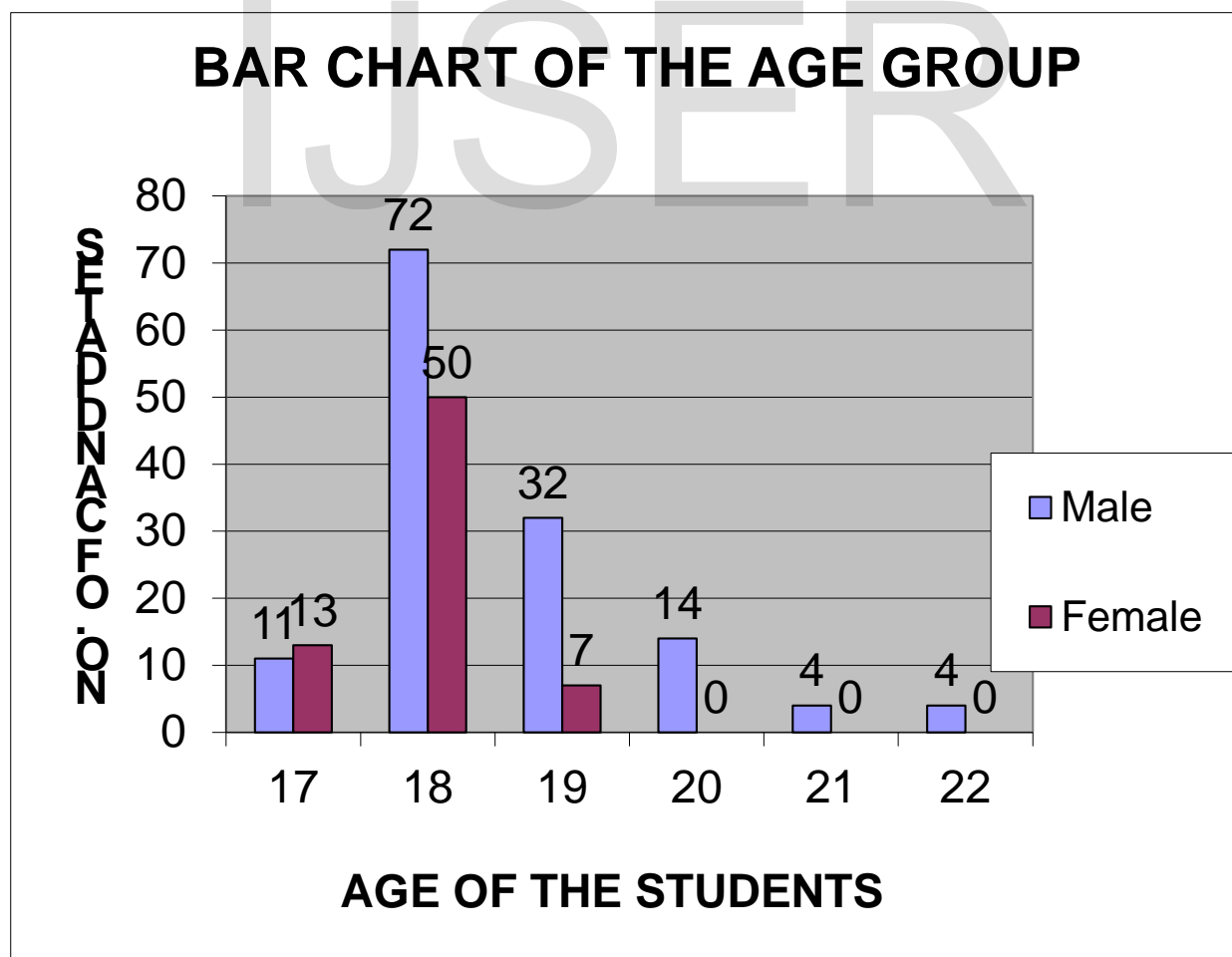
So, the hypothesis formulated that there is no significant difference in the learning styles of English between different age groups of students of Polytechnics is accepted.

THE AGE GROUP OF STUDENTS TAKEN FOR STUDY:

The sample that was taken for the study has been segregated into the following age groups. The age groups taken for study were from 17 years to 22 years of the total population (207). In it 17 years male were 11, whereas female were 13. The percentage wise the male who attain 17 years were 8%. Female were 18.6%, the highest in the sample group was 18 years students; in them male were 72(52.6%), Female were 50(71.5%). The age group of 19 years next highest of the population was male 32(23.35%), Female 7(10%). The age group consisting of 20 years of male was 14 (10.2%), 21 years age group male were 4(2.9%) of the total population. It is equal in 22 years age group of male. The female group for the 20,21&22 years were reported nil from the total population. As per the study it is reported that the age group of 18 were preferred and join in polytechnics for study and ready to leave the institution.

Years	Male	Female	Total
17	11	13	24
18	72	50	122
19	32	7	39
20	14	-	14
21	4	-	4
22	4	-	4
Total			207

Table 4.9: Description of the Age groups of the study



INFLUENCE OF AGE ON LEARNING STYLES:

LEARNING STYLE	17 YEARS		18 YEARS		19 YEARS		>19 YEARS	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
VISUAL	13	48.15	44	31.88	23	46.94	6	26.09
AUDITORY	6	22.22	30	21.74	6	12.24	3	13.04
KINESTHETIC	0	0	17	12.32	5	10.2	3	13.04
TACTILE	2	7.41	11	7.97	7	14.29	4	17.39
GROUP	1	3.7	12	8.7	2	4.08	1	4.35
INDIVIDUAL	5	18.52	24	17.39	6	12.24	6	26.09

Table 4.15 Influence of Age on learning styles

Analyzing further in age groups of polytechnic students about their learning styles, the following conclusions are drawn. Visual Learning style is the most dominant style among the age group of 17, 18 and 19 years. And above 19 years age group has given equal importance to both Visual and Individual Learning Styles. The least importance is given in the learning styles of age groups, 17 years age group follows Kinesthetic Learning style, 18 years age group follows Tactile Learning style, 19 years age group and 19 above years age group follows Group Learning style. The second preferential style among the age groups 17, 18 and 19 years is Auditory Learning Style and above 19 years age group has Tactile Learning Style.

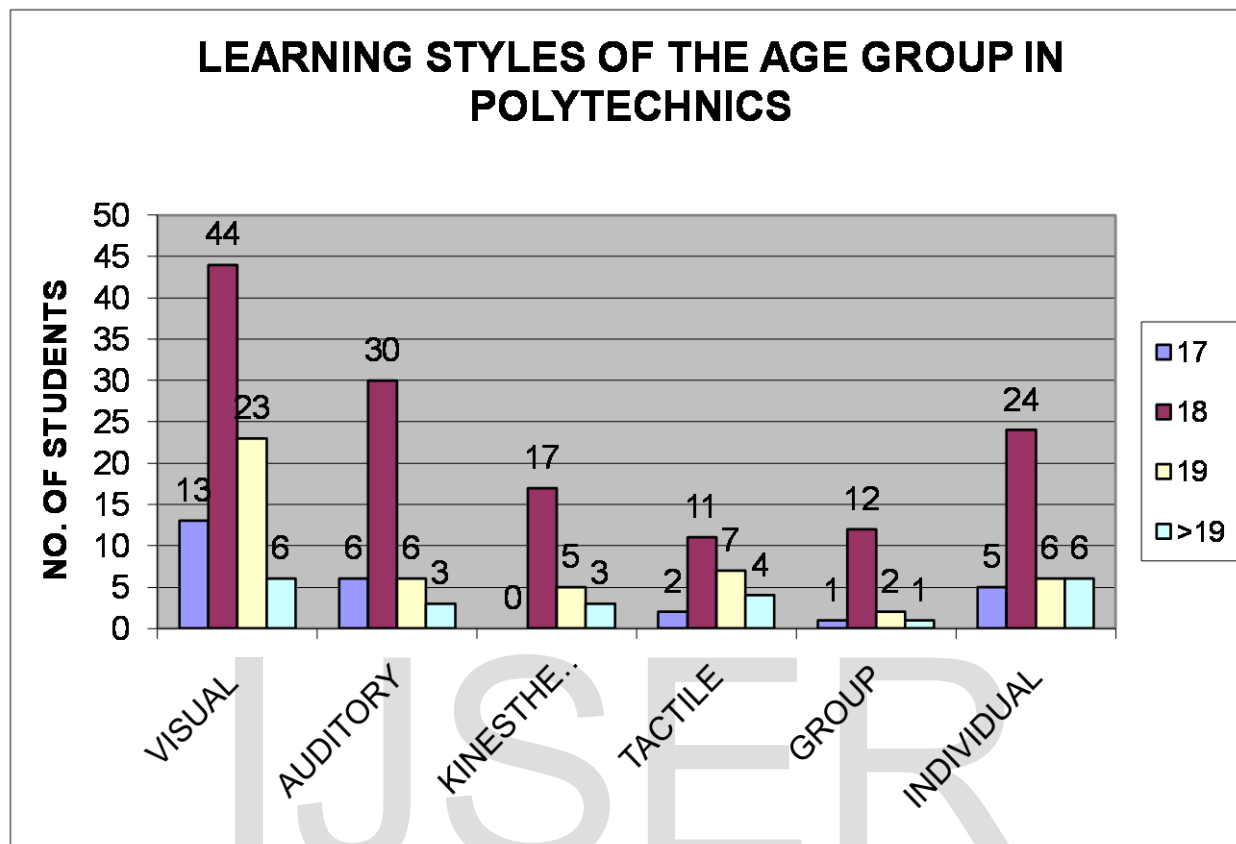
So it is to be concluded that all the age groups of polytechnic students up to 19 years has follows the Visual Learning style followed by Auditory Learning style. As age advances they change their learning style.

INFLUENCE OF SEX ON AGE GROUP FINDINGS:

Age in Years	Sex	Visual		Auditory		Kinesthetic		Tactile		Group		Individual	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
17	M	7	58.33	0	0	0	0	1	8.33	1	8.33	3	25
	F	6	40	6	40	0	0	1	6.67	0	0	2	13.33
18	M	28	34.57	13	16.05	12	14.81	5	6.17	7	8.64	16	19.75
	F	16	28.07	17	29.82	5	8.77	6	10.53	5	8.77	8	14.04
19	M	20	50	5	12.5	5	12.5	5	12.5	2	5	3	7.5
	F	3	33.33	1	11.11	0	0	2	22.22	0	0	3	33.33
>19	M	6	26.09	3	13.04	3	13.04	4	17.39	1	4.35	6	26.09

Table 4.16 Age group division as per learning style

The age group of 18 in polytechnics is going to write the final year examinations. This is the major group among polytechnics. In it, analyzing the male and female attribute the finding is that male prefers to Visual Learning style, female prefers to Auditory Learning style. The second preference is given to Individual Learning style by male and Visual Learning style by female. No great change is found in other age groups. The 17 years female age group has given equal importance to Visual and Auditory Learning styles and the 18 years female group has given equal importance to Visual and Individual Learning styles.



Bar chart 4.5 Age group division on learning styles

FINDINGS:

Hence the major findings from the study of age group are:

- All the age groups of polytechnic students up to 19 years have followed the Visual Learning style followed by Auditory Learning style. As age advances they change their preferential learning style.
- Analyzing the male and female attribute the finding is that male prefers to Visual Learning style, female prefers to Auditory Learning style. The second preference of learning is given to Individual Learning style by male and Visual Learning style by female.
- The 17 years female age group has given equal importance to Visual and Auditory Learning styles and the 18 years female group has given equal importance to Visual and Individual Learning styles

CONCLUSION:

Hence, it is reported that the age group of 16 preferred and join in polytechnics for study and the age group 18 is ready to leave the institution. The topic is basically indicates that there is a wide range of acceptance in the concept of learning styles, however 'there is disagreement on how to best measure learning styles(Coffield, et

all,2004). Any how the learning style may be single or combination of two or more but by knowing it, may improve the grades of the individual.

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