STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLES AND PREFERRED TEACHING STYLES IN PHILIPPINE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT--This study determines and analyzes foreign students' learning styles, preferred teaching styles and the challenges they encountered while studying in the Philippines. The study uses Descriptive method to describe the current state of the phenomenon involved in the process. Specifically, Sequential Mixed Approach was utilized to analyze the data through surveys and qualitative interpretation. This study used Purposive sampling to gather respondents based on the purposes of the study, whereas Convenience Sampling was used to choose the respondents according to their availability during the data gathering procedure. The result of the study reveals that most of the respondents are visual learners. Thus, the learning styles have no significant difference when grouped according to profile. Majority of the male respondents preferred Delegator as their preferred teaching style than female. Also, language, teachers, and cultural differences are regarded as the top three challenges of the foreign students while studying in the Philippines. Thus, it is recommended for the foreign students to develop their learning styles and to explore other learning styles so that they may have wide-range knowledge on learning. On the other hand, the teachers may understand that the goal of teaching is learning, therefore, it is suggested that teachers need to cater the differences and the diversity inside the classroom to create a productive learning environment.

Keywords--Learning Styles, Teaching Styles, Foreign students, Philippine classroom, diversity

I. INTRODUCTION

The increasingly diverse multicultural and multilingual student population indicates significant challenges to local teachers. The diversity in terms of profiles, learning styles and cultural background can affect the classroom settings (Montgomery &Groat, 1998). At the present time, numerous foreign students have come from the Philippines' neighboring countries to study in its universities. However, problems like English illiteracy, social isolation, acculturative stress, academic difficulty, and other similar problems are experienced by most foreign students as shown in some researches (Barron, 2006; Chan, Joubert, Pan & Wong, 2007; Grahame &Poyrazli, 2007; Justice & McLachlan, 2009 as cited in Sawal et al., n.d.).

As a consequence, foreign students who were not accustomed to the typical teaching style in this country are most likely to face difficulties that will surely affect their learning (Sicat, 2011). It is with these thoughts that the study is focused, in identifying the foreign students' learning styles and preferred teaching styles in Philippine classrooms and the challenges they encounter.

In order to succeed in this kind of environment, it is important to create a rapport between the teaching styles and learning styles in a multilingual/multicultural setting. Both teaching and learning styles are necessary in

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learning. Shank (2000) argued that in order for learning to be effective, education needs to show awareness and understanding of individual's learning style to achieve the desired outcome.

Hence, culture diversity in particular is visible in multilingual/multicultural environment. Brown (1965) said that congruency between learning style and teaching style may form a consonant environment that will enrich learning. Therefore, positive teacher-student relationship can make effective schools for multilingual learners. This study will also be a basis for the teachers and other educational stakeholders to develop and innovate teaching methods that suit the preferences of the foreign students. Moreover, this study will help teachers to promote unity in diversity inside the classrooms.

Accordingly, this study aims to know the profile of the respondents, the learning styles of the students, the difference of respondents' assessment of learning styles when grouped according to profile, the preferred teaching style of the respondents, difference of respondents' assessment of preferred teaching styles and the challenges encountered by foreign students in the Philippine classrooms. In addition, this study provides the teachers and students information on the learning styles and teaching styles preferences of foreign students that will be needed to address the diversity inside the Philippine classroom. Moreover, this will help the administrators and educational institutions to promote improvement in teaching methods that is suitable in the current student population of Philippine classroom.

To stimulate the need in addressing the learning style and preferred teaching styles of the foreign students, the study utilized the Barsch's Learning Style model, then the students' learning styles are identified and their preferred teaching styles are determined through the use of Grasha and Reichmann's theory of teaching styles. In addition, the study used a checklist to identify the challenges encountered by the foreign students in the Philippine classroom.
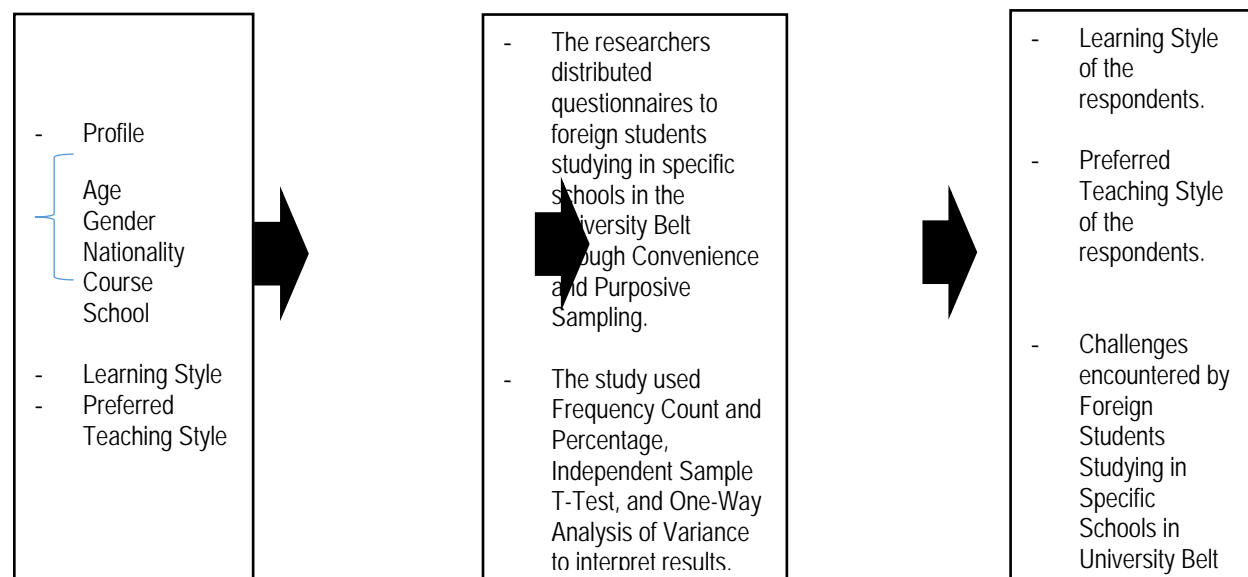
Research Process

Figure 1: Input-Process-Output Mechanism

This study follows the IPO mechanism wherein the dependent and independent variables are the inputs of this research. The researchers used Barsch's Learning Styles Inventory and Grasha and Riechmann's Teaching Styles Inventory to identify the learning style and preferred teaching style of the respondents and a checklist to identify the challenges they encountered as they study in the Philippines. Through convenience and purposive sampling, the researchers gathered data from the foreign students studying in specific schools in University belt, Manila. The researchers consulted a statistician and used Frequency count and Percentage, Independent Sample t-test and One-way Analysis of Variance to analyze the gathered data and finally identify the learning style and preferred teaching style as well as the challenges encountered by foreign students studying in the Philippines.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Students' diversity is clearly observed in every classroom nowadays. Likewise, many of those classrooms are composed of ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse students. Aning (2010; Infante et al.) said that many foreign students choose to study in the Philippines for the following reasons: for South Koreans, to improve their communication skills in English; Iranians say that it is because of affordable cost of education; and Americans visit for tourist purposes. With this emerging population of foreign students crossing over the country, teachers are now facing the challenges of what teaching styles should they perform in the classroom or what adjustments do they need to associate their teaching styles to their students' learning styles Pesirla (in Brown, 1993) stated that learning styles are defined according to students' preferred way to learn, while teaching styles are based on the techniques used by the teachers to utilize learning (Pesirla; Petty 1985). Therefore, matching of teaching styles to learning styles can create effective learning (Claxton & Murrell, 1988). However, there are some factors affecting students' learning. As Armstrong (2014) identified, there are three major difficulties experienced by foreign students: language, culture and homesickness.

The language as a challenge refers to inabilty to communicate due to language barrier as Bradley & Bradley (1984; Burke, 1986 & 1989; Juntaciergo et al. 2014) stressed that Asian students experienced language difficulties in speaking, reading, listening and writing. The second factor that affects learning is culture which means that an individual has his own register to variation of other languages (Ouane, 2003). Social barrier is another factor that makes students encounter difficulties in learning, especially in terms of socializing with other people, communicating with their classmates, and talking to their teachers. Moreover, there is an instance that foreign students pretend to understand the lesson discussed by their teachers in order to show that they are engaged in social discussion (Terui; Tas, 2003). Considering all factors, the teachers may provide classroom standards necessary for foreign students and promote classroom that gives respect to individual's identity.

III.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used Descriptive method to describe the current state of the respondents involved in the study regarding their profile in terms of age, gender, school, course and nationality to understand its impact to their

learning styles and teaching styles preferences. Specifically, Sequential Exploratory Mixed Approach was used to analyze the qualitative data through the surveys and interpret and present it quantitatively.

Thirty foreign students from schools within the University Belt in the Philippines were carefully chosen through Purposive and Convenience Sampling. Purposive Sampling was utilized in the sense that the respondents were chosen only from the population of foreign students studying within the University Belt. Whereas, Convenience Sampling was used when the respondents were chosen regardless of their attendance during the data-gathering procedure. As a result, the study came up with 26 male and 4 female respondents of different nationalities.

The study used three different questionnaires as research instruments. First is the Barsch Learning Style Inventory (1991) that contains three major elements of learning styles which are Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic (VAK). Second is the GrashaRiechmann Teaching Styles Survey (1975) which includes five different teaching styles namely: Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator and Delegator teaching styles. This questionnaire was modified by the researchers through classifying the statements under a particular category or learning style to make it more appropriate for the study and to further understand the students' point of views. Lastly, a checklist of challenges encountered by the students was made by the researchers and was validated by selected professors to identify the foreign students' difficulties in a Philippine classroom.

The study utilized quantitative statistics to find the frequency and distribution of the respondents. Independent sample t-test and One way Analysis of Variance were used for the significant differences between the respondents learning style and preferred teaching style when grouped according to their profile.

IV.   PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

	Sex		School			Course		
	Male	Female	A	B	C	Dentistry	Med Tech	AB Eng
F	26	4	25	3	2	24	2	1
P	86.67	13.33	83.33	10.0	6.67	80.0	6.67	3.33
Nationality						Age		
Iranian	Chinese	Korean				21 to 25	20 & Below	26 to 30
20	4	2				11	7	5
66.67	13.33	6.67				36.67	23.33	16.67

The table shows that majority of the respondents are male, comprising of 26 students or 86.67% of the total population sample; 83.33% or 25 students are from School A; 80% or 24 of the respondents are taking Dentistry; 66.67% or 20 of the respondents are Iranians; and 36.67% are ages 21-25.

The various courses where the students are enrolled in supports the statement of Santos (2014) saying that most of the foreign students in the Philippines are taking up arts and medical courses including Dentistry, in Metro Manila schools like Centro Escolar University, Adventist University of the Philippines, University of the East, Far Eastern University.

Then, the results that show the different nationalities of the respondents imply that the Philippines is chosen for varied reasons as the venue for education of many foreignersAning(2010; Infante et al.,) stated that South Koreans chose the Philippines for improvement of their oral communication skills; the Iranians because of the affordable cost of education; and both the American and the Chinese students because of tourist attractions.

Respondents' Learning Styles

Table 2: Respondents' Learning Style

	Visual	Auditory	Tactual
F	11	10	4
P	36.67	33.33	13.33

Table 2 shows that 36.67% of the respondents are visual learners consisting of 11 students; 33.33% or 10 of the respondents are auditory learners; and 13.33% or 4 respondents are tactual/kinesthetic learners. Pesirla (in Keefe, 1979) states that learning styles can be thought of as different traits that indicate how we visualize, react with, and respond to the learning environment. Considering that language is the foremost challenge encountered by foreign students' studying in Philippine classrooms, it is evident that language anxiety is present. Lucas et al. (2011) justified that a wide variety of language may lead to language anxiety and will make students have fear of conversing with others, or eventually, fear of being judged by them. Foreign students, therefore, have a language anxiety which leads them to learn by relying more on what they see.

Relationship between the Respondents' Learning Style and Profile

Table 3: Difference in Respondents Learning Styles when grouped according to Profile

	Sex	Age	School	Course	Nationality
p-value	0.9357	0.7134	0.9270	0.5610	0.4303
Remarks	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant

Table 3 shows that all the aspects of the respondents' profile have no significant relationship with their preferred learning styles.

In terms of the findings for the respondents' sex, it is viewed and suggested that there is no particular learning style related to gender (Thomas et al., 2000).

Then, the insignificant relationship of the respondents' age and learning is counterfactual with the perception where it is argued that younger students are more interested with activities and games, or tasks that are classified under Kinesthetic learning style (Chan, 2001). There is also no significant difference between the courses of the respondents when it comes to learning styles. It was mentioned by Thomas et al. (2000) that students of different courses tend to have different learning styles and those differences are mostly influenced and determined by elements associated to personality development such as social, ecological, cultural, personal, and behavioral elements (Garza and Lipton, 1982). Yet, the findings revealed that the courses of the respondents do not affect the preferred learning styles of foreign students.

The generated p-value, 0.4303, implies that there is no significant difference between the nationalities of the respondents when it comes to learning styles. Joy and Kolb (2009 cited in Fundi, 2015) stated that the role of cultural background affects the learning styles preferences. However, the researchers found out that the nationality of the respondents does not have impact on their learning styles.

Respondents' Preferred Teaching Styles

Table 4: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Preferred Teaching Styles

Teaching Style	LOW		MODERATE		HIGH		TOTAL	
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
Expert	2	6.67	12	40.00	16	53.33	30	100
Formal Authority	---	---	6	20.00	24	80.00	30	100
Personal Model	3	10.00	9	30.00	18	60.00	30	100
Facilitator	4	13.33	16	53.33	10	33.33	30	100
Delegator	---	---	1	3.33	**29**	**96.67**	30	100

Table 4 indicates that 96.67% or 29 out of 30 respondents see that their teachers have Delegator teaching style while the remaining 3.33% or 1 respondent scored the teachers' Delegator style Moderate. Therefore, the respondents' preferred teaching style is Delegator. Grasha&Riechmann (1975) identified that the Delegator teaching style allows the students to work independently. The students are given freedom to work on their activities and projects given that teachers are available when needed by the students for guidance. The results suggest that the preferred teaching style of the respondents is associated with their learning styles. It also reinforced the statement of Grasha (2010) that teachers with delegator teaching style help students learn separately and depend on their proficiencies. Also, the data shows that all teaching styles were rated as High by the foreign students leaving the Facilitator teaching style scored as Moderate.

Difference in Respondents' Teaching Styles According to Profile

Table 5: Differencein Respondents' Preferred Teaching Styles when grouped according to their p Profile

Sex					Age					School					Course					Nationality				
E	FA	PM	F	D	E	FA	PM	F	D	E	FA	PM	F	D	E	FA	PM	F	D	E	FA	PM	F	D
0.01122	0.7970	0.4408	0.1487	0.0082	0.8005	0.5697	0.9698	0.8927	0.1775	0.1135	0.5003	0.2039	0.0696	0.9108	0.3877	0.8960	0.5778	0.1062	0.9989	0.1357	0.7667	0.6184	0.2835	0.9986
Not Significant				S	Not Significant					Not Significant					Not Significant					Not Significant				

Legend: E: Expert; FA: Formal Authority; PM: Personal Model; F: Facilitator and D:Delegator

Table 5 shows that for the p- values for Expert (0.01122), Formal Authority (0.7970), Personal Model (0.4408), and Facilitator (0.1487) teaching styles, the researchers conclude that there is no significant difference between male and female in evaluating their professor regarding the said teaching styles. However, Delegator teaching style has a p-value of 0.0082 which means that there is a significant difference between male and female respondents in terms of evaluating their instructor for Delegator teaching style. Since the mean for male is greater than female on Delegator teaching style, the findings suggest that male respondents tend to work more effectively given their preferred learning styles and proficiencies. In addition, Oxford (1995) suggested female students are more likely to be less tactile, kinesthetic and more auditory, whereas male students tend to be more tactile, kinesthetic and visual (Greb, 1999).

The differences in the respondents' teaching styles when grouped according to age with p- values for expert (0.8005), Formal Authority (0.5697), Personal Model (0.9698), Facilitator (0.8927) and Delegator (0.1775) teaching styles are greater than the 5% level of significance; therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the ages of the respondents in assessing their teachers regarding on the said teaching styles.

Given the p- values for Expert (0.1135), Formal Authority (0.5003), Personal Model (0.2039), Facilitator (0.0696) and Delegator (0.9108) teaching styles, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the schools of the respondents in evaluating their teachers regarding on the said teaching styles. This indicates that the schools of the foreign students do not define their preferred teaching styles.

The differences in the respondents' teaching styles when grouped according to course with the p-values for Expert (0.3877), Formal Authority (0.8960), Personal Model (0.5778), Facilitator (0.1062) and Delegator (0.9989) teaching styles show that there is no significant difference between the courses of the respondents in evaluating their teachers regarding on the said teaching styles. The data reveal that the courses of the respondents do not have impact on their preferred teaching styles.

Since the p- values for Expert (0.1357), Formal Authority (0.7667), Personal Model (0.6184), Facilitator (0.2835), and Delegator (0.9986) teaching styles were present when compared to their nationality, it can be

concluded that there is no significant difference between the nationalities of the respondents in evaluating their teachers regarding the said teaching styles. The data indicate that the nationality of the respondents does not determine their preferred teaching styles.

Challenges Encountered by Foreign Students Studying in Philippine Classroom

Table 6: Factors Affecting Foreign Students' Learning

	Language	Culture Differences	Teacher/s	Accent	Food
f	19	17	17	15	15
%	11.05	9.88	9.88	8.72	8.72
	Climate	**Financial Pressure**	**Interaction**	**Physical Environment**	**Learning Style**
f	10	10	9	9	8
%	5.81	5.81	5.23	5.23	4.65

Table 6 presents that language topped as 11.05% or 19 respondents marked it as the major challenge they encounter while studying in the Philippines; a total of 17 respondents or 9.88% said that teachers and cultural differences are their utmost concern; accent and food tied in the same rank with 15 respondents or 8.72% who said that they are hardest to deal with while studying in the Philippines. The data reveal that the language, teachers, cultural differences, food, and accent, are the factors that challenge foreign students in their pursuit to study. Likewise, Armstrong (2014) identified the three major difficulties experienced by foreign students which are language, culture, and homesickness. It is true that a learner of one culture has a unique style of registering to any language inside the classroom (Ouane, 2003). Teacher factor is greatly considered because some international students feel the lack of support, guidance and attention (Lucas et al., 2011). There are also instances when foreign students pretend to understand the lessons of their teachers in order to show that they are engaged in the discussion (Terui in Tas, 2003). In short, students have the same learning difficulties when they are engaged in a different culture. Most often these problems have negative effects on students' academic performance and make them lose their self-esteem, confidence and eagerness to learn (Liu in Wu et al., 2015). With this, Kuipers (2009) concludes that learners' diversity often centers on comparisons of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Furthermore, this suggests that the given factors greatly affect the academic performance of the foreign students in the Philippine classroom.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the study, the researchers concluded that most of the respondents are visual learners. Thus, foreign students studying in the Philippines learn best through viewing concepts, that is, processing and remembering information from what they see. Also, there is no difference when the respondents are grouped according to their

profile (gender, age, school, course, and nationality). Majority of the respondents perceived Delegator as their preferred teaching style. Therefore, learners prefer to do tasks independently and/or collaboratively. It is also shown in the findings that there is no difference in the foreign students preferred teaching styles. Additionally, Language topped as the predominant challenge encountered by the foreign students in the Philippines. Therefore, foreign students have difficulty in communicating with their peers, classmates, and teachers, especially in class discussions.

Based on the data gathered, the researchers hereby offered some recommendations that could help the teachers, foreign students, and future researchers.

Foreign students are encouraged to enhance their learning styles and explore other learning styles so they may have wide-range knowledge on learning.

For teachers, it is suggested that their instructions should be assisted by visual concepts which will aid the understanding of the students; they may also consider using the Barsch Learning Style Inventory to determine the learning style of the learners and may design strategies to accommodate and suit the diversity in the classroom; the teacher may understand that his students are different to each other, and may consider giving more tasks and activities to students to work on their own; the teachers are also encouraged to focus their teaching on learner-centered tasks such as through small-group discussions, collaborative works, etc.; since most of the male respondents perceived that Delegator teaching style is most appropriate for them, it is necessary for teachers to provide tasks like Self Learning Kit which gives students freedom to perform their learning styles; multifarious strategies in language teaching are also recommended like the Silent Way, to develop independence from the teacher; Communicative Approach, which stresses the need to teach communicative competence as opposed to linguistic competence; Grammar-Translation Method, that focuses on developing students appreciation of the target languages literature as well as teaching the language; foreign students teachers could study the background, culture, and language of their foreign students; to inform the foreign students about the country's tradition and culture, teachers could provide activities such as fieldtrips, immersions, visiting museums, etc..

Lastly, future researchers could use the study as a foundation/source for researches of similar nature. They can manage to use other respondents with different nationalities that were not mentioned in the given different setting. They may also use the study for further investigation on the topic where they may consider the balanced number of respondents (e.g. 15 males and 15 females for a total of 30 respondents) to gather a more precise result.

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