

Learning Style Preferences and Academic Performance in Speech and Oral Communication of College Students

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Abstract

This descriptive-correlational study determined the learning style preferences of college students in Speech and Oral Communication at CAPSU Sigma Campus during the second semester of 2016-2017. Specifically, respondents' learning styles and academic performances were identified and categorized as to sex, birth order, interest, course, high school GPA (Grade Point Average) and monthly family income. Also, significant variations and relationships were determined among variables. This study utilized the Learning Style Inventory by Fleming (2006) with 124 respondents identified through stratified random sampling. Findings reveal that generally, students preferred "visual" learning style. No significant differences were found between learning preference and sex, birth order, interest, course, GPA and income. In terms of academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication, results showed that students had "satisfactory" performance. Their grades in the subject did not make any significant variation when they were classed as to birth order and interest. However, significant variations existed as they were categorized as to course, GPA and family income. These findings imply that course, GPA, and monthly income affect students' academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication. There was no significant relationship between learning style and students' academic performance. These findings imply that students have "visual" strength. They learn best through demonstrations, descriptions and recognition by sight. Students also have well-developed imaginations. Meanwhile, their "satisfactory" academic performance reveals a "copy" of their high school GPAs. It is therefore recommended that at the start of the classes, teachers should identify students' learning style to possibly help them achieve optimum learning performance.

Keywords: learning style, CAPSU Sigma, descriptive-correlational, VAK Questionnaire

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Introduction

The student's academic performance is a very important aspect of education that can make a difference in the lives of every individual, the country and the world in general. A person who has good academic records is perceived not only to be educated intellectually but is also equipped with other skills needed for the good of the country. In fact, Reiger (2011) linked good academic success to positive outcomes. In any community, when its citizens are well-educated, they get good jobs and earn a better living. This makes them independent of themselves and freeing the national government from civic responsibilities. In the end, those who are in the high-income group can provide themselves with their needs and are less likely to involve in criminalities. They are the ones happier and healthier. It is for this reason that every country strives to provide quality education to its citizens (Reiger, 2011). In particular, some progressive countries like South Korea, Japan, Singapore and Australia, put education their top priority and had appropriated the highest budget for education.

It is sad to know, however, that in the Philippines, the quality of education has been declining as only nearly two-thirds of the country's high school students scored poorly in the National Achievement Test (NAT) in 2010, with some 67. percent of schools getting better average NAT scores (Quismundo, 2011). Also, the performance in licensure exams shows a low 34% average passing rate (Dacumos, 2012). Alarmed with the problem, the Philippines have increased its appropriation for education since 2010.

A number of studies link students' poor academic performance to the learning style that does not complement with the teaching style in the classroom (Reiger, 2011 & Omrod, 2008). In classroom setting in particular, Omrod (2008) found out that there are some who learn better when information is presented through words (verbal) whereas others seem to learn better when it is presented through pictures (visual learners). This difference in acquiring information or mastering skills is what referred to as 'learning style'.

Park (2002) broadly described learning styles as cognitive, affective and psychological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and perceive to the learning environment. For Pashler et al (2008), they are concepts that individuals differ in regard to what mode of instruction or study is most effective for them. Omrod (2008) defines them as approaches – for example global or analytic, auditory or visual, that students use in acquiring new knowledge. According to Oxford (2008), learning styles are among the main factors that help determine how - and how well – students learn.

Identifying the students' learning style gives many benefits. For the learners, it enables them to reflect on how they learn. Knowledge of their learning style makes them better able to adapt to different situations. Those who are aware of a range of strategies are more likely to select the correct one for a particular task (Sadler-Smith, 2001). For Alfonseca et. al. (2006), educators can become more resourceful

and adoptable in their teaching schemes upon knowing their students' learning style. It may likewise well aid them in using more sensitive teaching practices that best suit the students' learning styles. Cuthbert (2005) asserts that awareness of learning styles is vital it sets a basis for each individual to plan or modify his/her learning strategy in order to sail smoothly in this competency-based education and improve their students' academic performances. This confirms the idea of Wilson (2011) who presumed that students may be encountering some difficulties because of the mismatch between teaching style and learning style. Omar et al (2013) suggested that educators should incorporate different methods and tools in teaching to provide effective and efficient teaching-learning experience.

Numerous studies were conducted along with learning style and academic performance. Johnson (2000) pointed out that the learner's unique learning style and their academic achievements are powerfully related. Sogra et al (2013) stressed that learning styles are good predictors of academic performance. According to Kadir (2013), college 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 style.

As a teacher for nearly 20 years, the researcher designs activities she thinks that are suited to the topic and to the achievement of learning objectives without considering the learning style differences of her learners. With the result of this study, she may tailor her teaching approaches to the students' learning style preferences so as to expect better learning and better academic performances of students. Hence, this study was conducted.

The study generally sought to answer the following questions: What is the students' learning style preference in Speech & Oral Communication as a whole and when they are classified according to sex, birth order, interest, course, high school GPA and monthly family income?; What is their academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication as a whole and when they are classified according to the variables mentioned?; Are there significant differences in the students' learning style preference in Speech and Oral Communication and variables mentioned?; Are there significant differences in the students' academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication and the variables mentioned?; and Is there a significant relationship between students' learning style preference and academic performance in Speech & Oral Communication?

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Fleming's VAK model (2006) called "The Modalities of Learning". This theory postulates that all learners have a preference for receiving and storing information through one or more of the sensory modalities: visual, auditory and kinesthetic (VAK/VARK Model 2019). In cases, however, that one's learning style is a mixture of two modalities, the learning style is bimodal; if three modalities stand out, the learners' learning style is called multimodal.

Conceptual Framework

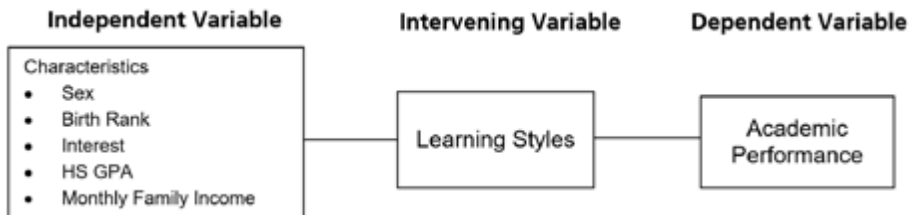


Figure 1. Relationship of students' learning style preferences to their academic performance

Methodology

This descriptive-correlational research was conducted at CAPSU Sigma during the 2nd semester of SY 2016-2017. There were 124 respondents in the study that were identified through stratified random sampling by Cochran (1963). They were those who just completed the Speech & Oral Communication subject. It adapted the Learning Style Inventory by Fleming (2006) to find out the students' learning style preferences. The students' learning style preference was interpreted using the scale below:

Scale	Verbal Interpretation
2.34 – 3.0	Most Preferred
1.67– 2.33	Preferred
1.0 – 1.66	Less Preferred

Statistical Procedure

Frequency, mean, t-test, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Chi-square were employed. Data were then analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Alpha level was set at 5% level of significance.

Results and Discussions

Students' Learning Style

Findings in Figure 1 indicate that in general, students had "visual" learning preference. In particular, when students were classified according to sex, birth order, interest, course, GPA and monthly income, they preferred "visual" learning (73 or 58.87%) over kinesthetic (31 or 25%) and aural (20 or 16.13%). This implies that students have a visual strength in learning their lessons. They want their teacher to provide demonstrations; they find it easier to learn through descriptions; they often use lists to organize thoughts; they recognize words by sight; and they have well-

developed imaginations.

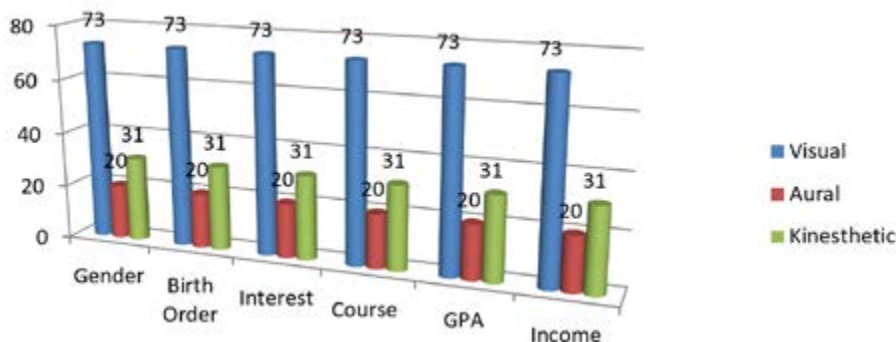


Figure 1. Students’ learning style regardless of sex, birth order, interest, course, GPA and monthly family income

Figure 1.2 reveals that in general, students preferred visual learning (73 or 58.87%) over kinesthetic (31 or 25%) and aural or auditory (20 or 16.13%) learning styles respectively. Specifically, females preferred visual learning (52 or nearly 42%), then kinesthetic (21 or nearly 17%) and aural (9 or 7.26%). Similarly, males’ most learning preference is visual (21 or 16.94%), but they preferred aural (11 or 8.87%) over kinesthetic learning style (10 or 8.06%). This means that although generally students learn through visual preference, males and females have some slight variations in learning style preferences.

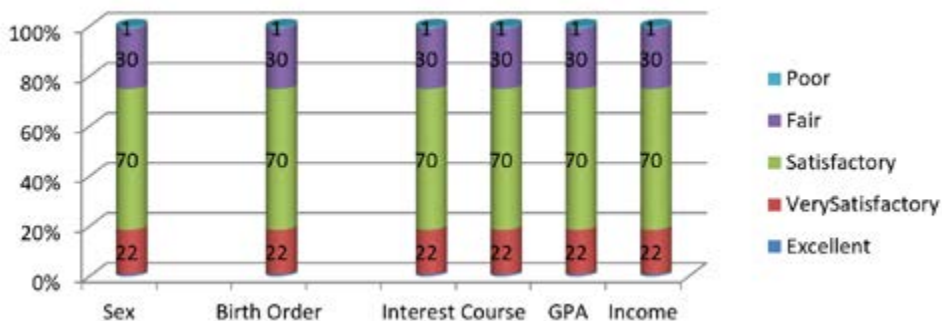


Figure 1.2 Learning preferences of students classified as sex

As shown in Figure 1.3, findings indicate that in general, students preferred most “visual” learning style (73 or 58.87%) over kinesthetic (31 or 25%) and aural (20 or 16.13%). Specifically, 18 or 14.52% from first born, 33 or 26.61% from the middle child, 19 or 15.32% from the youngest and 3 or 2.42% from the only child group preferred “visual” learning style. This indicates that regardless of birth order, the learning style of students was still the same.

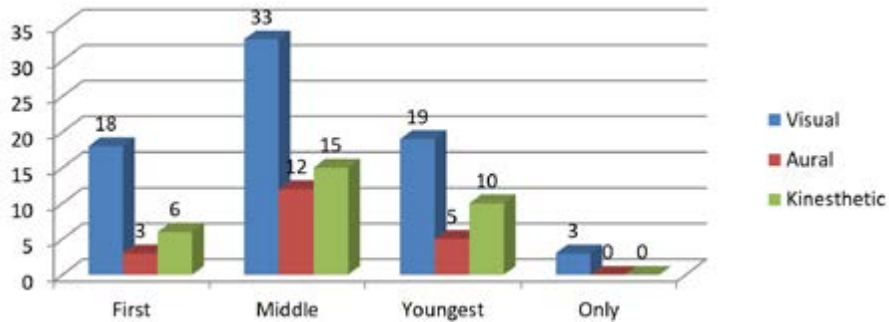


Figure 1.3 Learning preference of students classified as to birth order.

Figure 1.4 shows that in general, students had a “visual” learning style preference (73 or 58.87%). Specifically, 52 or almost 42% from the language group, 11 or 8.87% from mathematics group, 5 (4.03%) each from the natural and social sciences, are visual learners. However, it is apparent to note that in terms of those whose interest fall on social sciences, mostly preferred kinesthetic learning style. This implies that as students’ interest are on social science subjects which are economics, history, sociology and the like, may like to travel or do activities physically in relation to their subject in comparison to those who preferred visual and aural from the language, mathematics and natural sciences groups.

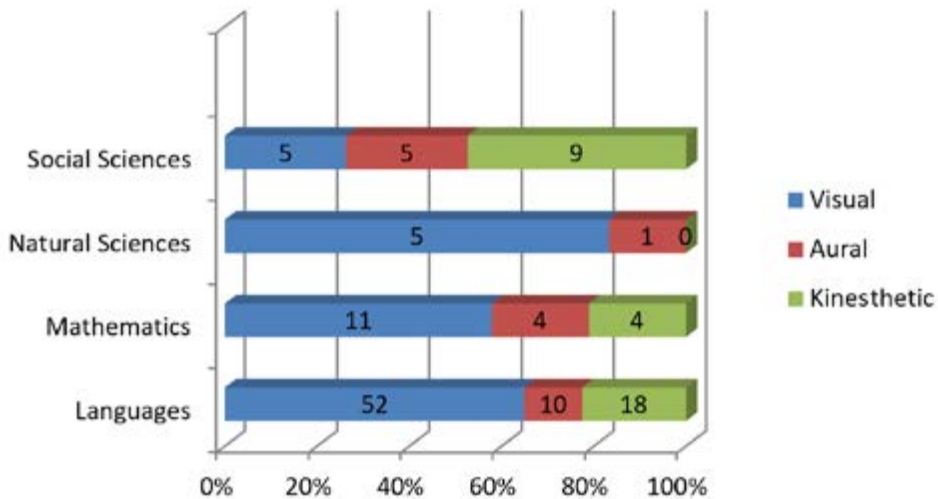


Figure 1.4 Learning preference of students classified as to interest.

As shown in Figure 1.5, results reveal that in general, students had a visual learning style preference (73 or 58.87%). In particular, 21 or almost 17% each from the BS Industrial Engineering and BS in Tourism Management group and 31 or 25% from the HRM group, had visual learning preference. This means that the students’ course had no influence on their learning preference.

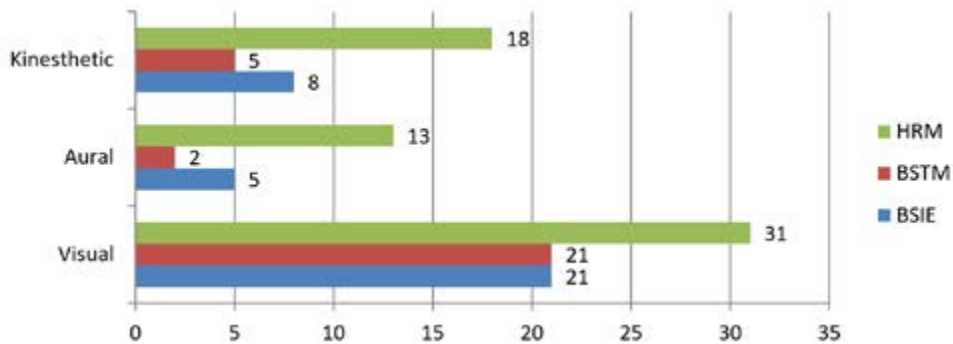


Figure 1.5 Students' learning style preference categorized as to course.

Figure 1.6 above explained that in general, students preferred “visual” learning (73 or 58.87%). In particular, 33 or almost 27% from the fair GPA, 35 or 28.23% from the good GPA and 4 or 3.23% from the very good GPA preferred visual learning. However, the figure shows that the poor GPA group preferred either aural or kinesthetic learning style over visual. Meanwhile, no one had outstanding GPA. This means that students' high school GPA had no effect on the students' learning style preference. Whatever their GPA was, their learning style preference was still the same.

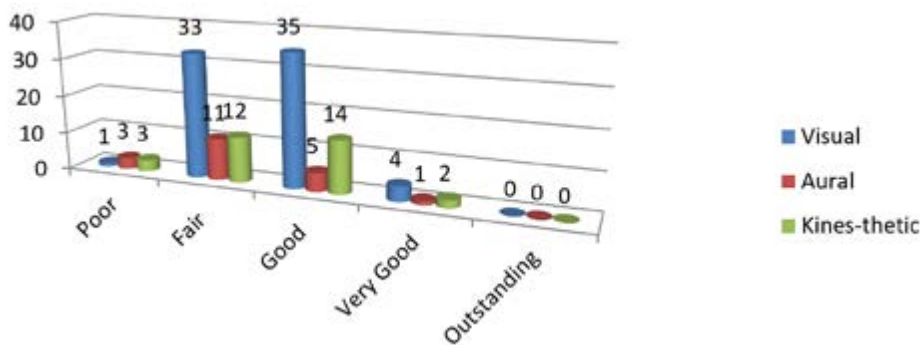


Figure 1.6 Respondents' learning style preference classed as to high school GPA.

Data in Figure 1.7 indicates that in general, students were visual learners with more than 50% of them preferred that particular learning style. Specifically, 3 or 2.24% from the high-income group, 15 or 12.10% from the average income group and 55 or 44.35% from the low-income family group, had visual learning style preference. This indicates that regardless of monthly family income, still they had the same learning preference.

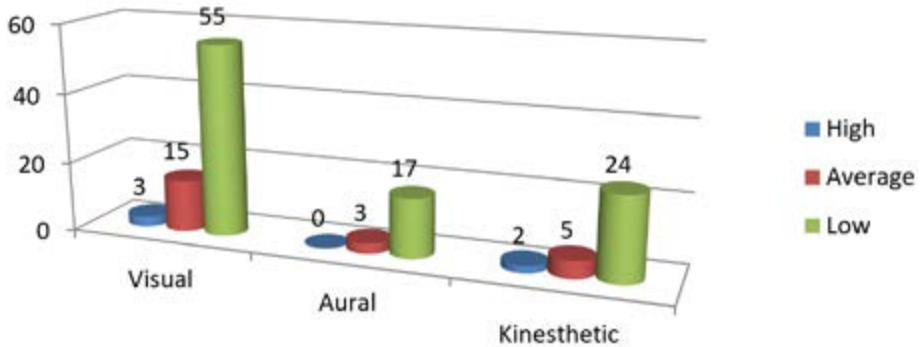


Figure 1.7 Respondents’ learning style preference classified as to monthly family income

Students’ Academic Performance

Results in Figure 2 reveal that in general, students had “satisfactory” academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication. Specifically, when students were classed as to sex, birth order, interest, course, GPA and monthly family income, they had “satisfactory” academic performances. This means that regardless of these characteristics, the students’ academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication was still “satisfactory”.

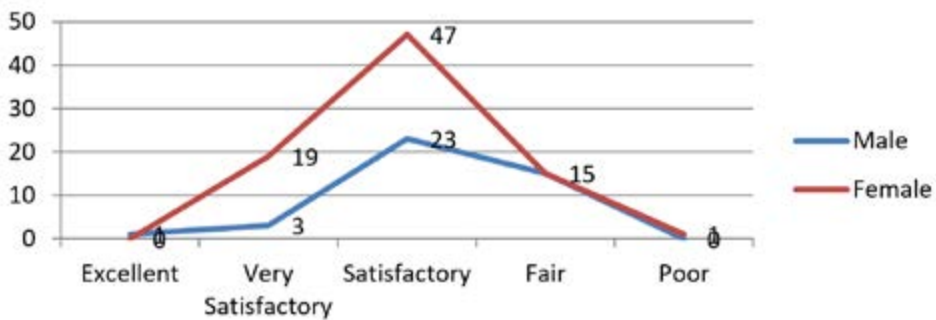


Figure 2. Respondents’ academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication categorized as to sex, birth order, interest, course, high school GPA and estimated monthly family income.

Results shown in Figure 2.1 indicate that in general, students had “satisfactory” academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication (70 or 56.45%). Specifically, 23 or 18.55% of the males and 47 or nearly 38% of the females had “satisfactory” academic performance. This means that sex did not affect students’ academic performance in the said subject.

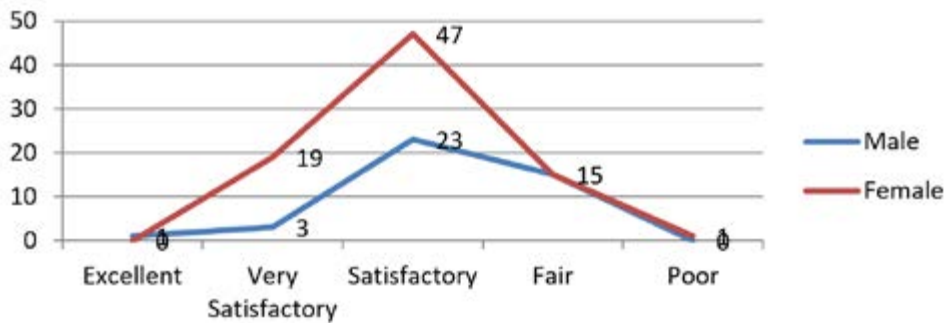


Figure 2.1 Students' academic performance in Speech & Oral Communication classified as to sex.

Generally, students had "satisfactory" academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication as shown in Figure 2.2. Specifically, 16 or nearly 13% from the first born, 37 or nearly 30% from the middle child, 15 or 12.10% from the youngest and 2 or 1.61% from the only child, had "satisfactory" academic performances in the subject. This implies that regardless of students' birth order, the students' academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication was still the same.

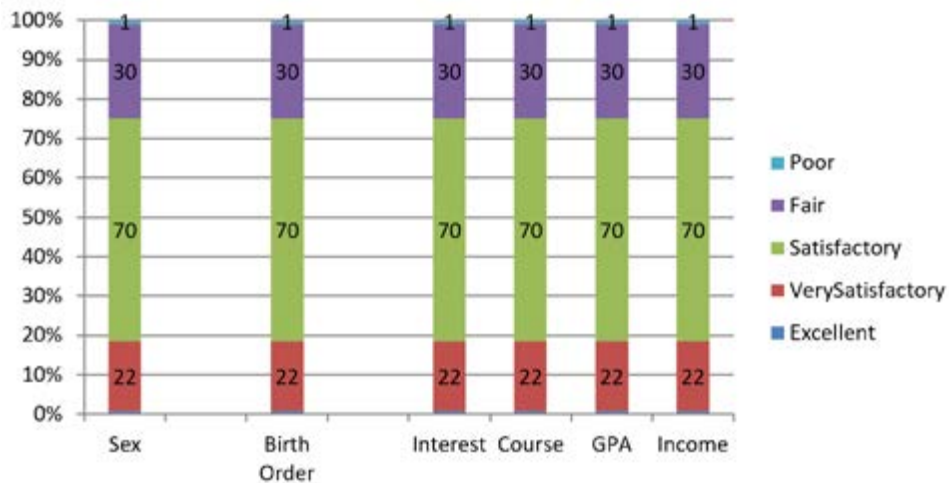


Figure 2.2 Students' academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication classified as to birth order.

Findings reveal that in general, students had "satisfactory" academic performances in Speech and Oral Communication as shown in Figure 2.3. Specifically, language group had 46 or 37.10%, mathematics group had 9 or 7.26%, social science group had 11 or 8.87% and natural science group had 4 or 3.23% of the respondents, all belonging to "satisfactory" academic performances in the subject. This means that students' interest does not affect their academic performance.

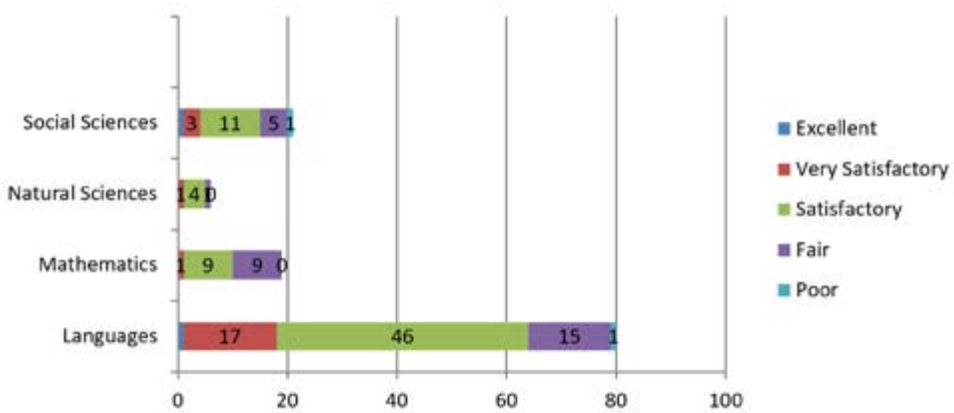


Figure 2.3 Students' academic performance in Speech & Oral Communication categorized as to field of interest.

Findings in Figure 2.4 indicates that in general, students had "satisfactory" academic performance (70 or 56.45%). In particular, 22 or 17.74% from the BSIE group, 11 or 8.87% from the BSTM group and 37 or 29.84% from the HRM group, had "satisfactory" academic performances in the subject. This means that regardless of course, the students' academic performance remains "satisfactory".

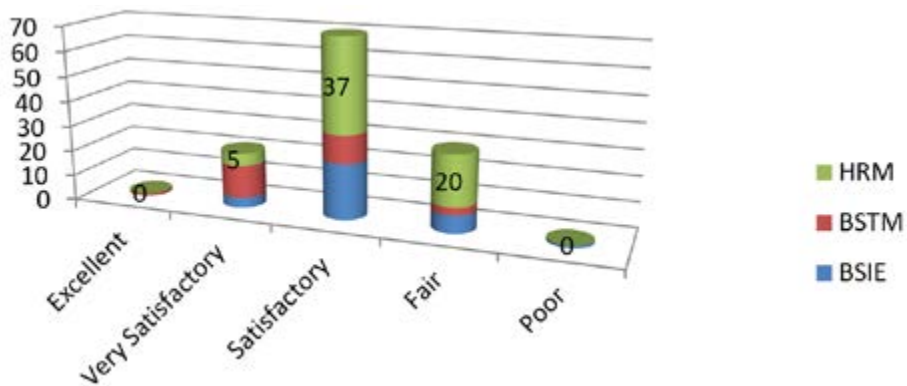


Figure 2.4 Students' academic performance in Speech & Oral Communication categorized as to course.

As revealed in Figure 2.5, results indicate that as a whole, students had "satisfactory" academic performance in Speech & Oral Communication regardless of their high school GPA. Specifically, 6 or 4.84% from the "poor" GPA, 31 or 25% from "fair" and from "good" GPA, 2 or 1.61% from "very good" GPA, got "satisfactory" academic performances. Meanwhile, no one had an excellent GPA in high school. This implies that students with "good" academic performance carried on their grades in their Speech and Oral Communication class.

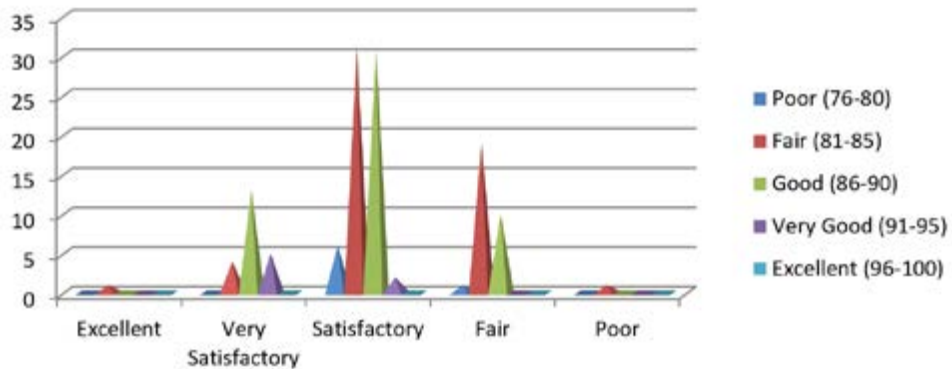


Figure 2.5 Students' academic performance in Speech & Oral Communication categorized as to course.

Data shown in Figure 2.6 reveals that in general, students had "satisfactory" academic performance in the subject in favor of the "low" income family. In particular, not even one percent or 0.81% from the "high" income group, 7 or 5.65% from the "average" income group and one-half or 50% of the respondents from the "low" income group, had "satisfactory" academic performance in Speech & Oral Communication. This means that income does not affect one's learning style.

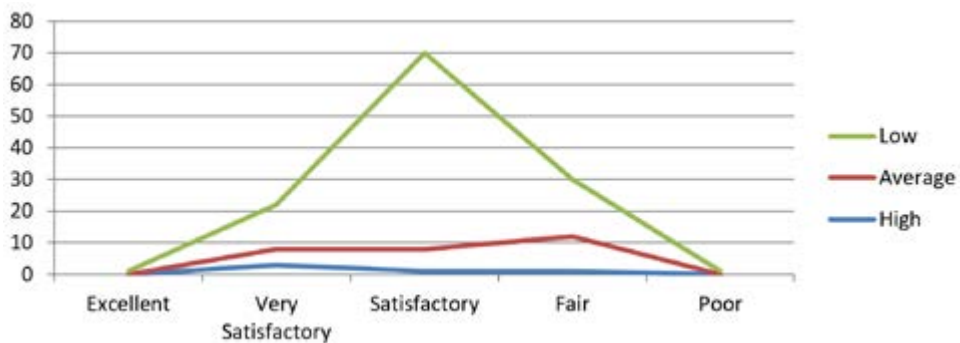


Figure 2.6 Students' academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication categorized as to monthly family income

Differences in the students' learning style

It was found out that there was no significant difference in the learning style of students when they were grouped according to sex. This means that this variable does not make a variation in the respondents' learning style preference.

Table 1. t-test Result on the Differences in the Students' Learning Style Preference

Category	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	.11	.065	1.61	122	.110
Female	.11	.069	1.52		

Findings in Table 2 reveal that no significant variations existed between learning style and students' birth order, interest, course and monthly income. This means that these variables had nothing to do with the students' learning style. On the contrary, there was a significant difference in the students' learning style preference when they were classed according to high school GPA. This indicates that their learning style varies with their grades.

Table 2. ANOVA Differences on learning style.

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
A. Birth Order					
Between Groups	.543	3	.181	1.528	.211
Within Groups	14.220	120	.118		
Total	14.763	123			
B. Interest					
Between Groups	.269	3	.090	.741	.529
Within Groups	14.494	120	.121		
Total	14.763	123			
C. Course					
Between Groups	.403	2	.201	1.697	.187
Within Groups	14.360	121	.119		
Total	14.763	123			
D. GPA					
Between Groups	1.077	3	.359	3.146	.028
Within Groups	13.686	120	.114		
Total	14.763	123			
E. Monthly Income					
Between Groups	.215	2	.108	.896	.411
Within Groups	14.547	121	.120		
Total	14.763	123			

n.sp> .05 – not significant

* p< .05 – significant at 5% level

Differences in the students' academic performance.

Data in Table 3 indicates that there was no significant difference in the students' academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication when classed as either male or female . This means that regardless of sex, their academic performance in the subject was still the same.

Table 3. t-test Result on the Differences inthe Students' Academic Performance in Speech and Oral Communication

Sex	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
Male	-.24	.13	-1.917	121	.058
Female	-.24	.12	-1.978		

Results shown in Table 4 reveal that when respondents were grouped as to birth order and interest, no significant differences existed between them. This implies that birth order and interest did not affect the students' academic performance in the subject.

Table 4. ANOVA on Academic Performance in Academic Performance in Speech & Oral Communication

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
A. Birth Order					
Between Groups	1.051	3	.350	.770 ^{n.s}	.513
Within Groups	54.136	119	.455		
Total	55.187	122			
B. Interest					
Between Groups	2.766	3	.922	2.093 ^{n.s}	.105
Within Groups	52.421	119	.441		
Total	55.187	122			
C. Course					
Between Groups	7.255	2	3.628	9.082*	.000
Within Groups	47.932	120	.399		
Total	55.187	122			
D. GPA					
Between Groups	7.255	2	3.628	9.082*	.000
Within Groups	47.932	120	.399		
Total	55.187	122			
E. Monthly Income					
Between Groups	7.255	2	3.628	9.082*	.000
Within Groups	47.932	120	.399		
Total	55.187	122			

n.sp> .05 – not significant

However, findings further show that significant differences existed when respondents were categorized as to course, high school GPA and monthly family income. This means that course, high school GPA and monthly family income matter in their academic performance.

Relationship between Learning Style and Academic Performance in Speech and Oral Communication

Findings in Table 5 reveal that there was no significant relationship between learning style and academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication. This means that learning style does not affect academic performance in the subject.

Table 5. Relationship between Learning Style and Academic Performance in Eng 21

		acad_new				Total
		1	2	3	4	
Learning_new	1	1	13	37	18	69
	2	0	6	15	1	22
	3	0	11	18	3	32
Total		1	30	70	22	123

Table 6. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.741	6	.136
Likelihood Ratio	10.902	6	.091
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.827	1	.028
N of Valid Cases	123		

Conclusions

The visual learning preference of students may mean that they learn best when they can see a concrete object that would best represent the lesson or topic. Demonstrations, descriptions, listing down and the use the multi-media presentation could help a lot to enhance their academic performance.

The differences in learning style when students are classed as to their GPA imply that those academically achievers may be having more than one learning style. In the process, they may be bimodal or trimodal learners.

Students' academic performance in Speech and Oral Communication is just a "copy" of their performance in high school as reflected in their GPA. This is negativity in the development of academic performance since the students have not improved in college.

There was no significant relationship between learning style and academic performance. This means that if the students are academically achievers, they really are regardless of their learning style.

Recommendations

At the start of the classes, teachers may identify their students' learning style to possibly help them in the process. Further researches may be conducted to verify the result of the study.

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