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## The Moderating Effects of Teaching and Cultural Variables on the Relationship between Learning Styles and Student Engagement

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### Abstract

Student participation is essential to preventing students from dropping out of school. Participation at a high level in the classroom is defined not only by student academic achievement, but also by their background, expectations, and guidance from family, classmates, and teachers. Emotional connections with learning, teachers, schools, and peers precede student participation. In this conceptual article, the researchers will highlight the gap between what has been previously explored and what this study seeks to confirm. Student engagement has been linked to learning styles (active-reflective, visual-verbal, sequential-global, and sensing-intuitive) and teaching styles (expert style, formal authority style, role model styles, facilitator style, and delegator style). However, very little study has been undertaken to evaluate whether students' cultures influence their classroom participation. The purpose of this conceptual study is to examine the extent to which cultural background may or may not increase student classroom involvement. Five cultural components, namely power distance, masculinity, ambiguity tolerance, individualism, and long-term orientation, will be examined to determine whether or not they moderate the relationship between learning styles and student involvement.

**Keywords:** Student Engagement, Learning Styles, Teaching Styles, Culture

### Introduction

The concept that students learn differently appeared as early as 1900, when psychologists became interested in learning "modes" or styles (Sridevi, 2021). The VARK (Visual, Audio, Reading, and Kinesthetic) and Kolb learning style models are the most prevalent learning style research models at present (Goldbach et al., 2022). In a culture that values diversity, such as Malaysia, it is easy to comprehend the constant evolution of a learning approach based on student differences. Students who participate actively in class will perform better than those who do not. Janssens et al (2022) emphasized that engaged students respond to instructor enquiries and provide feedback in return. To boost student engagement during college

lectures, instructors may wish to employ a questioning procedure. Generative Learning Theory asserts that pupils learn more effectively when they are actively involved in their studies (Hogan & O'Flaherty, 2022).

Student participation is essential to preventing students from dropping out of school. Civic, university, multidisciplinary, digital, and global skills and knowledge of students are deemed essential (Leslie, 2020; Yadav et al., 2017). To comprehend why some students are beginning to drop out of school, school authorities must look beyond high-profile testing measures. Too many pupils drop out of school, and too many of those who stay describe boredom and classroom alienation. To combat low academic achievement, school dissatisfaction, and high dropout rates, researchers are increasingly appealing to the concept of student involvement. Student participation is essential to preventing students from dropping out of school. Civic, university, multidisciplinary, digital, and global skills and knowledge of students are deemed essential (Leslie, 2020; Maskell & Collins, 2017; Owusu-Agyeman & Moroeroe, 2022). To comprehend why some students are beginning to drop out of school, school authorities must look beyond high-profile testing measures. Too many pupils drop out of school, and too many of those who stay describe boredom and classroom alienation. To combat low academic achievement, school dissatisfaction, and high dropout rates, researchers are increasingly appealing to the concept of student engagement.

Student engagement is essential to preventing students from dropping out of school. Civic, university, interdisciplinary, digital, and global skills and knowledge of students are deemed essential (Maskell & Collins, 2017). To comprehend why some students are beginning to drop out of school, school leaders must look beyond high-profile testing measures. Too many students drop out of school, and too many of those who remain report boredom and school alienation. To combat low academic achievement, school dissatisfaction, and high dropout rates, researchers are increasingly looking to the concept of student engagement.

The most pressing and enduring issue for students and teachers is not low achievement, but rather student disengagement. The role of instructors is to facilitate student engagement and interaction with course materials so that students can acquire their own understanding. Instructors have colossal responsibilities because what they teach impacts and transforms the lives of children. Engaging students in an active learning process requires instructors to identify and comprehend their students' learning and teaching styles. The Cultural Context of Teaching and Learning theoretical framework is a theory that asserts the incorporation of students' culture is essential for improving their academic performance.

This theory posits that students who are typically successful in school possess values that are deemed acceptable. Those who fail to integrate, code switch, or culture switch to the school's dominant culture are more likely to fail (Owusu-Agyeman & Moroeroe, 2022). According to state accountability standards, students in high-poverty schools are still expected to achieve at a high level. This can contribute to a negative climate and culture at these schools by causing frustration and hopelessness. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of learning styles on student engagement. It will also investigate the influence of teaching methodology on the connection between learning styles and student engagement (Almutairi & White, 2018).

The study's objectives are to determine the level of student engagement at selected Malaysian public universities. In addition, this study attempts to establish a connection between learning styles (active-reflective, visual-verbal, sequential-global, and sensing-intuitive) and student engagement (authentic engagement, strategic compliance, ritual compliance, retreatism, rebellion). This study also examined the moderating effects of

teaching styles (expert style, formal authority style, role model styles, facilitator style, and delegator style) and culture on the relationship between learning styles and student engagement.

### **Literature Review**

Engagement with learning is believed to play a significant role in the success of students in higher education (Bolliger & Martin, 2020; Gupta & Bakker, 2020). Engagement has been described in a variety of ways in the literature, but here it is considered to refer to the active engagement and deliberate effort that students devote to all facets of their learning. Student engagement has been shown to correlate with success in both online and more traditional campus-based higher education settings. Student Engagement has been established both theoretically and practically (Gupta & Bakker, 2020). Multiple studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of student engagement in fostering institutional and personal development.

The expectation is that a better understanding of the concept of student engagement will broaden and deepen administrators' and instructors' understanding of higher education development. Student engagement can be defined as the students' positive contribution to the instructional flow they receive (Almutairi & White, 2018; Asif et al., 2021; Gupta & Bakker, 2020). To the extent that students behave in a proactive manner, they initiate a process that generates more options for themselves. During instruction, students may, for instance, provide feedback, express a desire, offer suggestions or contributions, pose a question, communicate their thoughts and needs, and express a desire.

### **Learning Style**

Asif et al (2021) defines learning as a permanent change in life-induced behaviour or the transformation of experience . A person's preferred method of processing new information for efficient learning is their learning style. Students will be able to integrate their learning style into the learning process if they are able to identify their learning style. As a result, learner confidence will increase and instructor control over students will diminish. Having knowledge of a student's learning style enables instructors to tailor their lesson plans to their students' preferences.

Matching is especially important when working with new or poor students, as they are prone to frustration at this stage of their education. Dahleez et al (2021) proposes three benefits of identifying learning styles: academic, personal, and professional. Meanwhile Maxwell-Stuart & Huisman (2018) examined the effect of matching or mismatching learning and teaching styles on student achievement. There are numerous models of learning style.

The Learning Styles Model (FSLSM) contains four dimensions (Arghode et al., 2018), and each learner has a distinct preference for each of these dimensions. The FSLSM is based on trends, indicating that language learners with a strong preference for a particular behaviour may occasionally act differently. Visual, verbal, sequential, and global learning styles are distinguished by their characteristics and understanding of the whole picture (Ali et al., 2020; Maxwell-Stuart & Huisman, 2018). Global learners employ a holistic way of thinking and learn in large leaps; they are more interested in overviews and broad knowledge (Goldbach et al., 2022). Sequential learners learn in small incremental steps and, as a result, make linear learning progress; they tend to follow logical step-by-step solutions to problems (Sridevi, 2021).

### Teaching Style

Instead of attempting to accommodate multiple learning styles, instructors should strive for a balanced teaching style that does not overly favour any particular learning style. According to John Dewey's educational philosophy on the principles of good teaching, good teaching is based on learning psychology. To be effective, teaching must treat students as they are while also considering who they may become. Research demonstrates that effective teaching methods can increase student engagement, and that engaged students are successful learners (Goldbach et al., 2022; Janssens et al., 2022; Sridevi, 2021). Students' motivation and academic achievement in a subject are significantly influenced by pedagogical methods.

Many students attend classes because of the instructor's influential teaching style, whereas some instructors fail to create a conducive learning environment and deter students. There are numerous classifications for teaching styles, and each classification has merits. In this study, the researcher chose to employ Grascha's Teaching Styles to moderate the correlation between student learning styles and student engagement. Janssens et al (2022) classified teaching styles as expert style, formal authority style, role model style, facilitator style, and delegator style. Following is a detailed explanation of each teaching style.

The five teaching styles presented in Hogan & O'Flaherty (2022) model are described in terms of observable teaching characteristics that lead to the conclusion of teaching styles. The instructor supervises, motivates, and directs by demonstrating how to do things, encouraging students to examine and then imitate the instructor's method. In this style, the instructor acts as a facilitator, while students are responsible for achieving objectives for various tasks.

### Culture

As higher education has grown and continues to expand, there is evidence that demographic variables such as income, ethnicity, and family background continue to have a substantial impact on college enrolment and achievement. According to Singh & Chaudhary (2018), the fact that student enrolment rates continue to rise and that institutions continue to struggle with the fact that not all incoming students can earn a degree before leaving is a subject of extensive research. As early as elementary school, the correlation between peers and academic performance can be observed. Negative peer relationships and experiences of peer rejection have been linked to academic failure, disengagement, and high school dropout in youth. Conversely, positive experiences with peers have been linked to increased academic engagement and motivation among students (Bamber & Elezi, 2020; Karim, 2021).

This study suggests that peers may play a comparable role to administrators, parents, and teachers in adolescents' academic performance. In expressing their opinions, the Malay culture is characterised as being less expressive. Unless specifically requested, Malaysian university students tend to keep their thoughts and opinions to themselves. Malay employees are likely to emphasise relationships in co-worker communication and indirect instructions when communicating with subordinates. Similarly, Malaysian students, particularly those of Malay ethnicity, will minimise interactions with their instructors (Bamber & Elezi, 2020; Zawada, 2019).

Comparisons between the learning styles and cultures of the east and west have been the subject of extensive research. Asian families and values place a premium on the success or academic accomplishment of their children. Children in Japan and China are highly motivated by standards and the "workaholic" culture of East Asia. This investigation will employ Singh & Chaudhary (2018) six dimensions of culture. In 2010, Hofstede included indulgence versus self-restraint as the sixth dimension of culture.



Among these five dimensions, the educational relevance of uncertainty avoidance was determined. Because choices are typically made under conditions of uncertainty, it may affect motivation or preference. Students from countries with a high propensity to avoid uncertainty, such as Chinese students, are more likely to attribute their success to luck and circumstance, whereas American students attribute their success to their own efforts. The model of achievement and motivation for East Asian students differed from that of students from Australia, England, the Netherlands, and the United States. Zawada (2019) discovered that Japanese students exhibited greater tenacity out of remorse for poor performance. Students in the West are more motivated by positive events, such as success, and praise had a significant impact on their motivation. Cultures of the investigated subjects in terms of learning and engagement may produce contradictory results, requiring caution in the application of the various findings.

### Methodology and Proposition

This study's analysis will be quantitative, as the findings will be statistically evaluated to determine the moderating effects of teaching style on engagement with public universities. The study's population represents the number of students enrolled in Comprehensive, Public University in Malaysia. The area will be divided into six (6) geographical regions: Northern Region, Central Region, Southern Region, East Coast, Sabah, and UNIMAS. A pilot study are be conducted to test the actual study's instrument. The questionnaire is divided into four sections: A, B, C, and D. Experts will test both the internal and external validity of the research to determine whether it measures both research objectives and questions.

According to Bamber & Elezi (2020) corrective adjustments must be made to a pilot study before the actual data collection is conducted. The collected data will be analysed using Version 23 of the Social Sciences statistical package (SPSS). The greater the coefficient, and the closer the reliability coefficient is to 1, the better. Between 0.5 and 0.6 reliability is acceptable for social and scientific research. Nunnally (1979) recommended a minimum of 0.7.

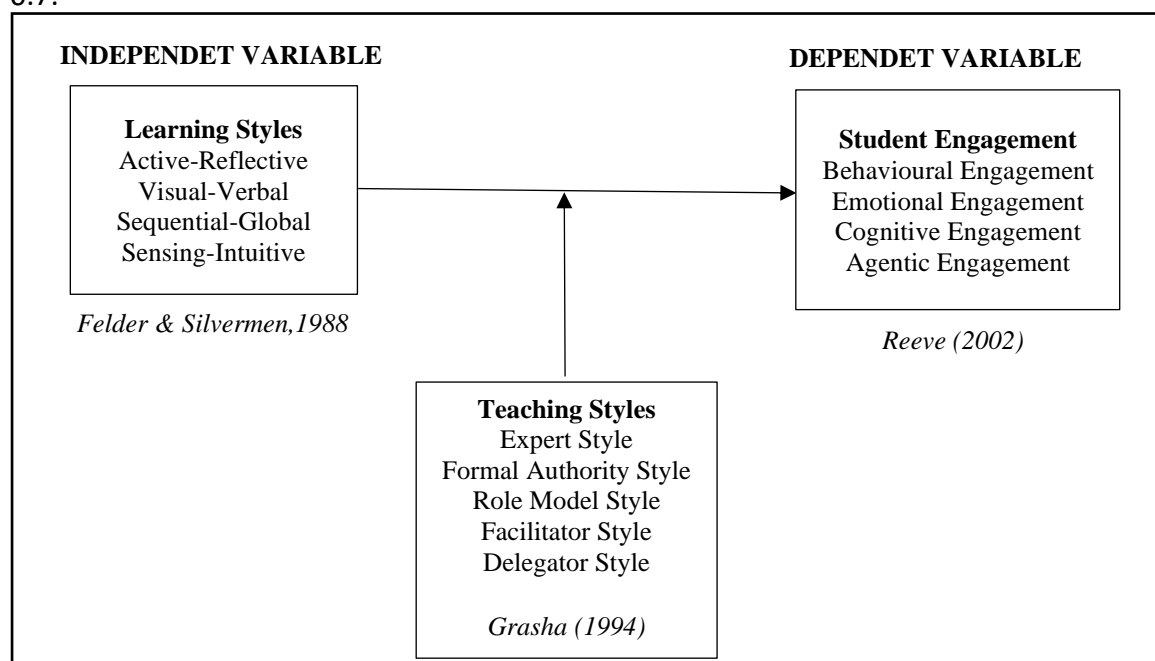


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

## Conclusion

Teaching and learning styles are a fascinating phenomenon that has significantly altered the way in which we interact and communicate with students. The extent to which its utilisation can boost students' engagement experiences in an academic setting has generated scholarly interest. According to the current research, a good teaching style and learning style as a learning technique has the ability to significantly improve students' academic attainment and performance since it enables students to be more cognitively engaged. This research implies that teaching and learning styles can be blended into classroom activities for the benefit of students. However, interactive teaching styles that integrate student participation into course delivery are challenging, as the success of such integration depends on a number of variables, such as students' perceptions of the tool's utility. Educators and policymakers may therefore choose to do rigorous research on the efficacy of integrating an interactive teaching and learning style into students' learning activities.

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