

## Learning Styles in Distance and Regular Education Students of Kashmir Division: A Comparative Study

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### Abstract

*Every individual has its own natural or habitual pattern of acquiring and processing information in learning situations. The individual learning differences that have been much explored relate to differences in personality, learning styles, strategies and concepts of learning. In this study, we aim to identify the learning styles of distance and regular education students of Kashmir Division. It was found that, maximum number of students prefer to learn by auditory learning style; highest preferred learning style by regular students is Kinaesthetic, while distance education students preferred to learn by Auditory learning styles. It was further found that highest preferred learning style by both male and female students is Auditory. These facts reveal that learning styles varies among regular and distance education students.*

**Keywords:** Learning Styles, Distance Education, Regular Education

### Introduction

Education is simply to humanize the human beings. This is crucial definition since people do not understand what education is. In fact, people see education for merely just a formal activity. They tend to ignore the basic concept of the education itself. Nor academicians and common people do forget this case. Education is not merely teaching or increasing cognition. It is more about preparing a media for the learners' cognition. All over the globe there are two correct modes of formal education, one is regular mode of education and the second is distance mode of education. As these two terms indicate that in regular education you have got to attend all regular classes and you have got to register a collection mark of attending at your school or institution, whereas on alternative hand in distance education there's no necessity of attending regular classes (Gakhar, 2007). Difference between regular education and distance education is a major thing in that day for working professionals. Distance education has been recognized as an effective alternative educational system as the conventional face-to-face system of education became inadequate to accommodate the growing needs of the society (Gee, 1990). The modern distance education system is the product of gradual process of evolution over a period of 100 years. The driving force in this long process of evolution has been the challenges to the credibility of a new system in comparison to the age-old conventional system of classroom teaching (AgeDiseth, 2011). This challenge necessitated consistent efforts to develop a non-conventional and alternative channel for imparting education with the integration of various teaching-learning activities and communication technologies. As distance education gained more and more popularity, different target groups were drawn to the system and had used varied teaching learning-programmes to cater to the needs of ever-increasing number of learners. Distance Education whether at formal or non-formal level, includes three kinds of activity on the part of the organisation that operates. They are (a) development of self Instructional Study Materials (b) teaching at a distance by comments in writing on student's work submitted and (c) counselling and general support of student's work by the same distance study media (Caspó & Hayen, 2006). Every individual has its own natural or habitual pattern of acquiring and processing information in learning situations. The common ways or patterns by which people learn are known as their

learning styles (Jemmey, 2007). Learning styles are set of cognitive, emotional and psychological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with and responds to the learning environment. Everyone has a combination of various learning styles. Some people may find that they have a dominant style of learning, with far less use of the other styles while others find that they use different styles in different circumstances. (Farks, 2003) A core concept is that individuals differ in the ways they learn. The idea of individualized learning styles was initiated in 1970s and since then has influenced education remarkably. It was recommended by the proponents of the use of learning styles in education that teachers should identify the learning styles of their students and adapt their teaching methods to best fit learning style of each student (Bernila, 2010). Although there is ample evidence for differences in individual thinking and ways of processing various types of information, few studies have reliably tested the validity of using learning styles in education. It is important that individuals should identify their learning styles. Being aware of their own pattern of learning, they can take the responsibility for their own learning. When the learner shows the conscientiousness of his/her own learning he/she attributes meaning to the process of learning, develops understanding of his/her own form of learning and becomes much more satisfied with the environment he/she interacts with. In this way, he/she will acquire constantly changing and increasing amount of information without any need for the assistance of others. Learning how to learn and grasping knowledge in a suitable manner may lessen the need for an overbearing control by teachers (Aggarwal & Suman, 2013).

**Model of learning styles:** The VAK (Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic) learning style uses the three main sensory receivers: Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic (movement) to determine the dominant learning style. It is sometimes known as VAKT (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, & Tactile). It is based on modalities—channels by which human expression can take place and is composed of a combination of perception and memory (Canfield, 1980).

VAK is derived from the accelerated learning world and seems to be about the most popular model nowadays due to its simplicity. While the research has shown a connection with modalities and learning styles, the research has [so far been unable to prove](#) the using one's learning style provides the best means for learning a task or subject. This is probably because it is more of a preference, rather than a style (Kutay, 2006).

### **Need and Importance**

Learning preferences have been indirectly linked to students' success in both regular and distance education. Student performance may be related to learning preferences, or styles as learners. Most students have a preferred way to learn. Some learn best by listening, some have to observe every step, while others have to do it to learn it. The fact is that individuals need all three modalities to truly commit information to memory: visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic. It is important to understand learning styles to ensure that teachers are instructing according to the learner's style and not the teachers. A teacher who instructs only according to his own style makes learning more difficult for the learner. Teachers should know about learning styles to be able to help learners identify their personal learning styles. This knowledge will help learners to build self-confidence and to learn to manage their own learning. Even though students have their own preferred learning styles, it is useful to be aware of other styles and how to strengthen weaker styles. Using

various learning styles will help strengthen learning experiences. Students may also self-select into or away from distance learning classes based on their learning preferences. As a result, student success in distance learning classes may ultimately depend on understanding the learning style. Since more online courses will invariably be offered in the future, some assurance must be provided to the institution, the faculty and the students, that distance education will meet expectations for a quality education. Not only will students expect an education that is at equal in quality as that provided by traditional offerings, they will expect a student-centered learning environment, designed to meet their individual needs. There have been few studies on the relationship of learning styles to student success in a distance learning environment, and none that the author studied a comparative study of learning styles in distance and regular education students. The purpose of this study was to compare the student learning styles in distance and regular education students of Kashmir Division. A better understanding of the relationship between learning styles and cognitive abilities will allow educators to optimise the classroom experience for students.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To study the learning styles in students of Kashmir Division.
2. To compare learning styles in distance and regular education students of Kashmir Division.
3. To compare learning styles in distance and regular education students in respect to their gender.
4. To compare learning styles among students in respect to their gender and mode of learning.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

1. There is no significant deference between distance and regular education students in their learning styles.
2. There is no significant deference between male and female distance education students in their learning styles.
3. There is no significant deference between male and female regular education students in their learning styles.
4. There is no significant deference in learning styles among students in respect to their gender and mode of learning.

### **Method and Sample**

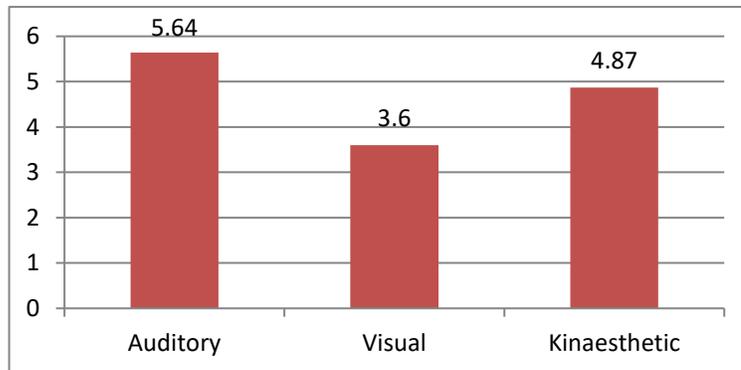
Descriptive survey method was used by the investigator to collect the relevant information for the research. In the present study the sample consisted of 120 college students (60 Regular and 60 Distance Education) selected through stratified random sampling technique. Whereas, for the data collection, a self-report inventory developed by Chislett Victoria (2005) was used by investigator.

**Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

The first objective of the present investigation was to study the preferred learning style in college students

Descriptive Statistics					
Learning Styles	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Auditory	120	1.00	9.00	5.64	2.25
Visual	120	1.00	7.00	3.60	1.76
Kinaesthetic	120	1.00	8.00	4.87	2.24

**Fig 1**  
**Graphical Representation of Mean Differences**



As indicated in Table 1 and Fig 1, the mean scores of auditory learning styles is 5.64, whereas Kinaesthetic learning style is 4.87 and visual learning style is 3.60. The higher mean score of the auditory learning styles reveals that the maximum number of students preferred to learn by auditory learning styles (Verma & Sharma, 1987).

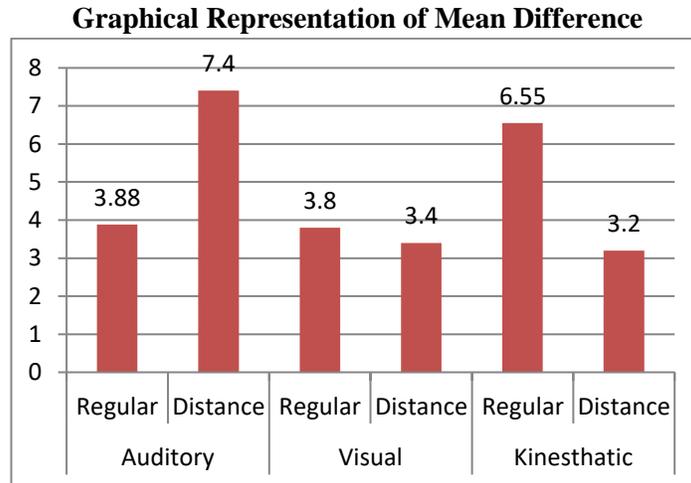
The second objective of the present study was to compare learning styles in distance and regular education students.

**Comparison of Learning Styles among Regular and Distance Students**

**Table 2**

	comparison	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Auditory	Regular	60	3.88	1.77
	Distance	60	7.40	.924
Visual	Regular	60	3.80	1.86
	Distance	60	3.40	1.63
Kinesthetic	Regular	60	6.55	1.11
	Distance	60	3.20	1.79

**Fig 2**



The table 2 and fig 2 reveals that the learning styles of Regular and Distance education students. It was found that highest preferred learning style by regular students is Kinaesthetic (Mean score 6.55), while distance education students preferred to learn by Auditory learning style (Mean score 7.04)

**The corresponding hypothesis for this objective was:** there is no significant difference between the learning styles in distance and regular education students of Kashmir Division.

**Table 3**

Variable	N	t value	Sig.
<b>Auditory</b>	60	13.60	0.00
<b>Visual</b>	60	1.24	0.21
<b>Kinaesthetic</b>	60	12.30	0.00

The table shows 3 shows the significance of difference on auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles among regular and distance education students, whereas insignificant difference was observed on visual learning style. The t value for auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles comes out to be 13.60 and 12.30 respectively, which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that there is significant difference between the mean achievement scores of auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles. Whereas, t value for visual learning style comes out to be 1.24, which shows no significant difference between regular and distance education students on visual learning style.

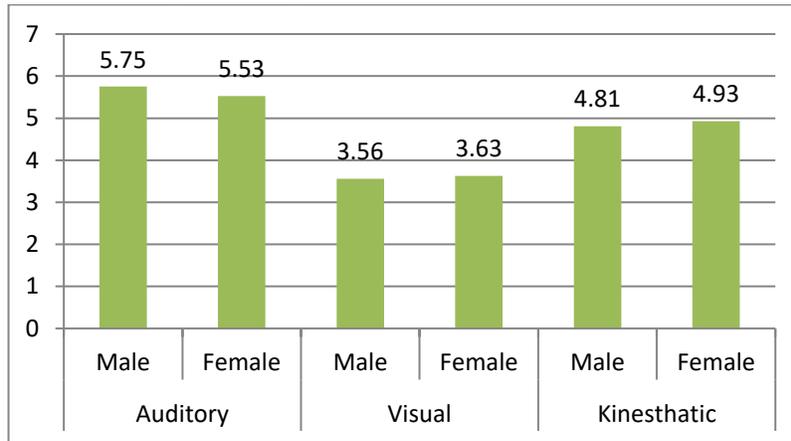
**The third objective of the present study was to compare learning styles in distance and regular education students in respect to their gender**

**Comparison on Male and Female Difference**

**Table 4**

Learning Style	Comparison	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Auditory</b>	Male	60	5.75	2.15
	Female	60	5.53	2.36
<b>Visual</b>	Male	60	3.56	1.75
	Female	60	3.63	1.77
<b>Kinesthetic</b>	Male	60	4.81	2.21
	Female	60	4.93	2.29

**Fig 4**  
**Graphical Representation of Mean Difference**



The table 4 and fig 4 shows the learning styles of Regular and Distance education students. It was found that highest preferred learning style by male students is Auditory (Mean score 5.75), while female education students also preferred to learn by Auditory learning styles (Mean score 5.53).

**The corresponding hypothesis for this objective was:** there is no significant difference between learning styles in distance and regular education students in respect to their gender.

**Table 5**

Variable	N	t value	Sig.
Auditory	60	0.52	0.60
Visual	60	0.20	0.83
Kinesthetic	60	0.28	0.77

The table shows 5 shows the no significance of difference on auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learning styles among male and female students. The t value for auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learning styles comes out to be 0.52, 0.20 and 0.28 respectively, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that there is no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learning styles of male and female students.

**The fourth objective of the present study was to compare learning styles among students in respect to their gender and mode of learning**

**Table 6**

Learning Style		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Auditory	Male Regular edu.	30	4.10	1.72
	Male Distance edu.	30	3.66	1.82
	Female Regular edu	30	7.40	.93
	Female Distance edu.	30	7.40	.93
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>5.64</b>	<b>2.25</b>

<b>Visual</b>	Male Regular edu	30	3.73	1.87
	Male Distance edu.	30	3.86	1.88
	Female Regular edu	30	3.40	1.65
	Female Distance edu.	30	3.40	1.65
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>1.76</b>
<b>Kinesthetic</b>	Male Regular edu	30	6.43	1.13
	Male Distance edu.	30	6.66	1.09
	Female Regular edu	30	3.20	1.80
	Female Distance edu.	30	3.20	1.80
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>4.87</b>	<b>2.24</b>

In order to know the significant difference among the Auditory, Visual and Kinaesthetic learning styles in respect to gender and mode of learning, one-way ANOVA was used. The results are shown in table 7.

**Table 7**

<b>ANOVA</b>						
		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Auditory</b>	Between Groups	373.825	3	124.608	61.833	.000
	Within Groups	233.767	116	2.015		
	Total	607.592	119			
<b>Visual</b>	Between Groups	5.067	3	1.689	.539	.657
	Within Groups	363.733	116	3.136		
	Total	368.800	119			
<b>Kinesthetic</b>	Between Groups	337.492	3	112.497	49.878	.000
	Within Groups	261.633	116	2.255		
	Total	599.125	119			

According to table 6 it depicts that, 'f' value was calculated for auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learning styles in respect to gender and mode of learning, which comes to be 61.83, 0.53 and 49.87 respectively. Which is significant for auditory and kinaesthetic, whereas as not significant for visual learning style.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study are presented as under.

1. It was found that higher mean score of the auditory learning styles revealed the maximum numbers of students prefer to learn by auditory learning style.
2. It was found that highest preferred learning style by regular students is Kinaesthetic (Mean score 6.55), while distance education students preferred to learn by Auditory learning style (Mean score 7.04)
3. The significance of difference on auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles was found among regular and distance education students, whereas insignificant difference was observed on visual learning style.
4. It was found that highest preferred learning style by male students is Auditory (Mean score 5.75), while female education students also preferred to learn by Auditory learning style (Mean score 5.53).
5. No significance of difference on auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learning styles was found among male and female students.
6. The 'f' value was calculated for auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learning styles in respect to gender and mode of learning, which comes to be 61.83, 0.53 and 49.87 respectively. Which is significant for auditory and kinaesthetic, whereas as not significant for visual learning style.

### **Educational Implications**

Educators must recognize three broad learning styles in students- visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Each style refers to a preferred way of receiving and processing information in order to learn. When you help your students to learn, you probably favour teaching methods that suit your own learning style. That's because those approaches work for you and you believe them to be the most effective. Taking a moment to discover and understand regular students learning styles, as well as distance education students, can quickly turn hard work into plain sailing. The following description must be considered while teaching regular and distance education students.

#### **Visual learners:**

1. Enjoy reading, note making, images, charts, diagrams and watching demonstrations
2. Will talk about what things looked like, rather than what was said
3. Don't like listening to long explanations, talks or lectures

#### **Auditory learners:**

1. Like listening to explanations, speaking and learning by repeating out loud or mnemonics
2. Will recall what someone said, rather than what they did or how they looked
3. Are often distracted by noise and need quiet, although some like background music

#### **Kinesthetic learners:**

1. Like to learn while doing, touching, writing things down, building or using objects
2. Enjoy learning by themselves and taking things apart to see how they work
3. Don't like sitting still to study and do better with fidget toys, a bouncy seat or moving around

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