

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**LEARNING STYLE PREFERENCES OF
UNDERGRADUATE PHARMACY STUDENTS IN
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA PUNCAK ALAM**

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ABSTRACT

Learning style is the way of how an individual approach a learning situation. The lack of knowledge and understanding on the learning styles preferences of pharmacy students can lead to serious problems in the education system. This study aimed to assess the learning styles preferences of pharmacy students, to compare the learning styles preferences among year 1, 2, 3 and 4 pharmacy students and to determine the demographics variables that significantly influenced the learning styles preferences of pharmacy students. A 24-item self-report survey instrument which consists of 2 sections was administered. Section 1 consists of socio-demographic items and Section 2 consisted of the validated Pharmacists' Inventory of Learning Styles (PILS). The result indicated that majority of the students which represented by 189 out of 469 students (40.3%) chose *assimilator* as their dominant learning style. This was followed by *converger* as the secondary learning style preferred by 119 out of 469 students (5.4%). There was no significant difference in learning styles preferences among year 1, year 2, year 3 and year 4 undergraduate pharmacy students. There were also no significant associations found between the demographic variables and learning style preferences. As learning is not static but is able to change from time to time, it is possible for learners to adapt different learning style to improve their learning style. Since, *assimilator* and *converger* learner are more interested in concept and idea rather than social issues, they should be exposed to learning activities that encourage them to interact with people. As a conclusion, a variety of teaching method should be implemented in pharmacy education to compliment all learning styles and to provide a fair environment for all type of learners.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Studies

Pharmacy education has a very important role in determining the quality of pharmacists that will work for the community in the future. It has the ability of transforming the profession towards patient-centered profession (Hassali et al., 2014). However, the four-year pharmacy course can be challenging for some students as the courses prepared for undergraduates are expected to cover all area of pharmaceutical sciences (Wong, 2001). In addition, the wide topics coverage and limited time in class could reduce the effectiveness of teaching-learning interaction (Aziz et al., 2012) and thus influencing the learning styles preferences of students. Learning style can be better understood as *“manner in which individuals choose to or are inclined to approach a learning situation”* (Cassidy, 2004). Other definition for learning styles includes *“the characteristic cognitive, effective and psychosocial behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicator of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment”* (Romanelli, Bird & Ryan, 2009).

Learning styles preferences may be different from one individual to another based on their personality. Based on a study conducted by Shuck and Phillips (1999) on pharmacy