THE EFFECT OF LEARNING STYLES ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AMONG ADULTS WORKING GEN Y

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1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization poses challenges to the millennials in terms of underemployment, mismatch skill, lack of soft skill valued, and low language fluency due to poor performance, which reflecting through inefficiency, incapability, and unsatisfactory attitude or work task among the management or other senior employees in the workplace (Lim, 2016). Thus, developing the employee's knowledge and skills constantly helps to improve millennials' performance and enhance their positive attitude in work-related (Elqadri et al., 2015). Lim (2016) highlighted the ineffective productivity and employee's unquantifiable ability during performing job tasks due to unutilized learning skills, and information management influence poorly towards organization development. In contrast, Reilly (2012) and Hershatter and Epstein (2010) explained the organization's effectiveness boost up and produces a great impact when workplace learning among employees is address and acknowledge properly. Moayyeri and Chaudhary et al. (2015) added that the VARK model has been used by most scholars as a classical learning theory and practical mode of assessment. Developed by Neil Fleming in 1987s, the VARK model comprises of four modes: visual, auditory, read/write, and kinesthetics where some were bimodal or trimodal or tetra modal, or even quad modal of learning styles. This study utilizes two theories which are Knowles's Adult Learning Theory (Ismail, Abdul-Majid, & Musibau, 2017; Nelson, 2016) as it describes the best principles on the adult learning adaption based on behavior and cognitive or known as andragogy that are completely different with pedagogy or children learning. One more related theory is the Knowledge Management (KM) Theory (Peng et al., 2018; Caruso, 2017) that prioritizes the application and element of intangible resources like knowledgeable human capital which concerns closely towards the assets of knowledge in the organization process. This study aims to investigate the relationship and effect as well as to determine the preferred learning styles among adults working Gen Y.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study used quantitative research methods under stratified random sampling techniques that divide the population into specific characteristics (Ponto, 2015). The chosen strata within-population are from late adult Gen Y (1980-1990) and early adult Gen Y (1991-2000). The sample consists of 390 adults working Gen Y based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) who are born between the 1980s to 2000s, around the Kuala Lumpur area. The questionnaire consists of 36 close-ended questions where the initial part investigated the practiced learning method on employees during performing the task using the Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) and the second part is examined the effect of practiced learning style on performance by using the adaption of Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ The analysis was explained through Pearson correlation to identify the

relationship, while the multiple regression was used to find the effect and preferable method of learning in VARK learning style towards adults working Gen Y performance since the pre-pilot analysis shown variable reliability of above 0.8.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the three objectives of the study as mentioned above.

3.1 To Investigates the Relationship between VARK Learning Styles on the Performance of Adults Working Gen Y

Table 1: Correlation Coefficients among Variables

		Visual	Auditory	Read/ Write	Kinesthetics	Employee Performance
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	.557**	.257**	.004	.398**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.942	.000	
	N	390	390	390	390	390

Pearson correlation was performed to investigate the relationship between variables of the study. As shown in Table 1, it was found that only three types of learning styles have a significant relationship with employee performance namely (1) the visual (r=.557, p=.000); (2) auditory (r=.257, p=.000), and (3) kinesthetics (r=.398, p=0.000) respectively. Meanwhile, the read/write learning style was found to have no significant correlation with employee performance (r=.004, p=.942). Although the result appeared to be slightly different from Chaudhary et al. (2015), the findings of this study are supported by past studies. Daryoush et al. (2013) asserted that effective learning styles help to improve the ability, skills, and performance of an employee. Furthermore, Islam et al. (2011) mentioned that the visual and kinesthetic elements chosen by Gen Y employees do portrays their active collaboration and participation work styles as well as flexible work environment which is also agreed by Lin and Hsu (2017) and Githinji (2014). Kaifi et al. (2012) even added that digitalization and integrated technology do help contribute to auditory learners' performance. These three main styles do contribute to creating networking, shaping relationships, build people-oriented management among the adult working Gen Y in terms of performance, growth, and developments (Stanczyk & Pieczka, 2016; Islam et al., 2011).

3.2 To Examine the Effect of Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic Learning Styles on the Performance of Adults Working Gen Y

Table 2: Regression between Variables

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for β	
	β	Std. Error	β			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	1.778	.198		8.985	.000	1.389	2.167
VISUAL	.346	.027	.552	12.870	.000	.293	.398
AUDITORY	-.014	.026	-.023	-.540	.590	-.065	.037
READ/WRITE	.037	.021	.066	1.728	.085	-.005	.079
KINESTHETICS	.231	.023	.384	10.083	.000	.186	.277

a. Dependent Variable: EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

The multiple regression test was performed to examine VARK components on employee performance. As shown in Table 2, it was found that only visual (β=0.552, p<0.05) and kinesthetics (β=0.384, p<0.05) have a significant effect and influence on employee performance. Meanwhile, auditory (β=-.023, p>0.05) and read/write (β=0.066, p>0.05) have no significant effect and influence on employee performance. As supported by Pradhan and Jena (2016), both visual and kinesthetic learning styles applied by an adult working Gen Y in most of the work tasks help to stimulate the learning structure, adapt interpersonal connection, and enhanced the capability to handle crisis or uncertainty. Other scholars as well enlighten the same statement where the areas of performances differences can be utilized and demonstrate the higher teamwork spirit through the acknowledgment of the most practiced learning style by an adult working Gen Y (Shem & Ngussa, 2017; Hafeez & Akbar, 2015). Furthermore, the job category and working experience may contribute to the practiced learning style such as visual and kinesthetic that highly convey towards the performance-oriented in terms of self-development, self-efficacy, and skills compatibility (Bosman & Schulze, 2018; Balasubramanian & Anouncia, 2018).

3.3   To Determine the Most Preferred Learning Styles among Adults Working Gen Y

Table 3: Coefficient Value on Preferable Learning Style

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for β	
	β	Std. Error	β			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	1.778	.198		8.985	.000	1.389	2.167
VISUAL	.346	.027	.552	12.870	.000	.293	.398
KINESTHETICS	.231	.023	.384	10.083	.000	.186	.277
READ/WRITE	.037	.021	.066	1.728	.085	-.005	.079
AUDITORY	-.014	.026	-.023	-.540	.590	-.065	.037

a. Dependent Variable: EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Multiple regression analysis was used to observe closely the preferred learning style of working adult Gen Y and each variable was ranked by the highest value of Beta and significant to the lowest value. It was found the visual learning style (β=0.552, p<0.05) is the most preferred learning style among adults working Gen Y followed by the kinesthetics learning style (β=0.384, p<0.05). The other two learning styles namely read/write and auditory is not preferred by adults working Gen Y. Through the visual method, the employees tend to learn better through images, charts, color graphics as well as graphs that function much better when having the team learning, or brainstorming session. Most of the scholars agreed that every detail and gesture on interactive graphics, colorful information or images, and creative brainstorming session can imply for these attention-grabber learners to enjoy and create fresh participation of learning style which currently can benefit from effective digital learning like Google Meets, video conferences and so on (Syofyan & Siwi, 2018; Ismail & Leow, 2016). All the mentioned elements are highly presented through visual stimuli that can practically generate the analytical thinking skills, establish productive strategies, and enhance the cognitive reflects (Chai, Amin, Saad, & Malik, 2017; Raiyn, 2016) which contribute to empowering the rebuild, recall and reimplemented of knowledge transfer during performing in work task (Smuts & Scholtz, 2020; Ling, Basit, & Hassan, 2017).

4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this study, researchers faced few limitations such as the scope of study which involves only one learning model, the research design used in the study, narrow sample size, and the involvement of specific generation respondents. Proven to mention that Learning styles do correlate with employee performance where positive and negative relationships between the employees and organization, can be seen through success or failure of the learning styles that have been practiced by the employees respectively has been resulted in this study which most of the learning style such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetics were directly influence and affect the employee performance. By expanding the models used in the research analysis such as the Kolb Experiential Model, Felder-Silverman Model, and Honey Mumford Model could broaden the overview and provide a better as well as thorough analysis finding as each model represent a specific focus application (Fralick, 2011). In practicing towards more precise and in-depth analysis, longitudinal is one of the proper methods for future research, in escalating the research into productive findings, as it can detect the changes in development or characteristics of target populations over some periods. Sampling area also can be executed in selected private or public organizations in providing more greater findings and analyze in a better scope on the learning style preferences among the employee, management as well as the other stakeholders related (Stanczyk & Pieczka, 2016). In addition, comparison between generations such as Gen Z is much more suggested to be explored as it provides broad and better insights about the preferrable method of learning style.

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