



**English language learning style preference of UTAR students versus the teaching style preference of UTAR lecturers: A cross-sectional study**

**SYURENE BINTI MOHD SHUKRI**

**20AAB06296**

**SUPERVISOR: MS SITI UMMAIZAH BINTI MEOR MUSA**

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Syurene Binti Mohd Shukri

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

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## APPROVAL SHEET

This research paper attached hereto, entitled English language learning style preference of UTAR students versus the teaching style preference of UTAR lecturers: A cross-sectional study prepared and submitted by Syurene Binti Mohd Shukri in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) English Language is hereby accepted.

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Supervisor

Date:

Supervisor's name:

## **ABSTRACT**

The process of learning a language is an intricate interplay involving the person, their surroundings, and the language itself. Research has indicated that factors influence how individuals learn a language which include the learners' learning style and educators' teaching style. The purpose of this study is to investigate the UTAR students' and lecturers' preferred learning and teaching styles along with identifying the presence of a match between the preference of students' and lecturers' learning and teaching styles. There were 180 UTAR students and 55 UTAR lecturers who participated in this study. A Perceptual Learning Style Preferences Questionnaire (PLSPQ) adopted from Reid (1987) has been used as an assessment instrument to identify the language learning style preference of students whereas a modified version of the PLSPQ has been used to identify the language teaching style preference of lecturers. The results showed students have major preferences in the six learning styles (auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, visual, group and individual) whereas lecturers have four major teaching style preferences which are group, tactile, kinaesthetic, and auditory, whereas the remaining two teaching styles, visual and individual are minor. Thus, the findings concluded that most students' learning style preferences match lecturers' teaching style preferences. Implications and recommendations are given based on the findings.

## DECLARATION

I declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to All sources be they printed, electronic or personal.

Name : Syurene Binti Mohd Shukri

Student ID: 20AAB06296

Signed : *Syurene*

Date : 24 September 2023

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

Learning of language is a complex interrelation between the individual, environment and language (Beckner, Blythe, Bybee, Christiansen, Croft, Ellis, Holland, Ke, Larsen-Freeman, & Schoenemann, 2009). Studies have shown factors affecting learners learning a language, including external elements like the teaching style and learning environment and internal elements like learning style and learners' motivation (Tabatabaei & Mashayekhi, 2013). Among the factors, learning and teaching styles play a crucial role in this academic world. The existence of manifold learning and teaching styles exist due to learners' responses to the demonstrated teaching styles by the lecturers (Chetty, Handayani, Sahabudin, Ali, Hamzah, Rahman, & Kasim, 2019). Language learning style is the mode of learning that learners prefer (Peacock, 2001). It has brought huge attention and has been the focal point in numerous second language studies throughout the years since Reid's (1987) influential work on the topic and has claimed language learning style is a natural, habitual, and preferred method of taking and processing new knowledge. Furthermore, learners' language learning style analysis has gradually become the main issue in most of the education sector over the years (Corbett & Smith, 2012, as cited in Al-Zayed, 2017). It is extensively used to discern and distinguish students' learning style preferences, explain the way learners approach information and confront obstacles in their learning (Huang, Ka, & Teo, 2018).

Besides, teachers exist as a key role in language learning as the learners' attitude toward learning is highly affected by the teaching style which appertains to the beliefs, comportment, and chosen instructional methods of the teachers to deliver lessons to learners (Lee, 2018). However, the matter of teaching a second language has been a tough topic for researchers and

teachers alike as the teaching methods are uncertain and changeable every so often along with the development and advancement of technologies (Disalva & Vijayakumar, 2019) thus teachers are expected to always keep learning to be updated accordingly as a good learner is always a good teacher (Murray, 2021). Different teaching methods reflect different outcomes in different learning environments. Teachers might select various teaching approaches to attain short-term or long-term goals during lesson presentations. The most challenging task in teaching English as a second language is to adopt suitable teaching methods for the learners (Khalil & Semono-Eke, 2020) as the match of students' learning styles and teachers' teaching styles are significant and is not easy to achieve.

According to Peacock (2001), mismatches are common, and they can negatively influence learners' learning process, motivation and attitude. On the contrary, matching between them will stimulate and boost the efficiency of second language acquisition. As the confidence level of learners and trust in their teacher will rise and eventually will have a more positive attitude toward English language learning (Peacock, 2001). In the study of Jayanama (2018), Kolb (1984) explained that generally different people have different learning styles, and this can be explained by Reid (1995) who defined learning style as the internal characteristics of learners digesting and understanding information. Studies have found differences in individuals affect the outcome of language learning and teaching (Ellis, 2012). This has also been specifically pointed out by Sun and Teng (2017) that teachers' consciousness of students' learning styles is very crucial. If teachers were aware of learners' learning styles, they would be able to assist by planning and adapting their teaching approach and material in effective ways to fulfil learners' demands (Huang et al., 2018). In contrast, a lack of awareness of learners' learning styles will lead to improper teaching methods being applied and cause declination in learners' motivations and passion, eventually limiting the

students' learning outcomes (Oxford, 2003) and learners are likely to be blamed for it (Vu & Tran, 2020).

### **1.1 Problem Statements**

Based on the study of Suyansah and Gabda (2020), English proficiency does have an impact on the quality of learners' academic performance. Learners must brush up their level of English proficiency in order to perform well in their academics and most importantly be competent in promoting themselves so as to gain higher market opportunities and increase their employability rate. However, statistics revealed the main factor among unemployed graduates is low English command (Rajaendram, 2016) and it has also been discovered as one of the top five factors for them being unemployed (Rusli, Yunus, & Hashim, 2018). In addition, a study conducted by Shaari (2022) also reported that poor English level, especially in communication was the major reason they were not hired, and some had regretted not putting enough effort to improve their English proficiency during school days. Studies show that over 58% of final-year undergraduate students were considered limited users of English in writing whereas 77% were considered limited users in speaking, and only 20% of graduates were considered by employers to be well prepared to use English at work (Sarudin & Zubairi, 2008 as cited in Noor et al., 2017). This concern has caused the amount of jobless undergraduate students in Malaysia to rise throughout the years. The Malaysia Employers Federation executive director also pointed out that over 90% of employee respondents disclosed that improvement in their English proficiency is required in order to be employed (The Star Online, as cited in Rusli et al., 2018).

Besides, learners are commonly blamed and responsible for their poor academic performance such as poor vocabulary knowledge, incompetent listening skills, reading disabilities and so on while in fact, learners' learning differences have been disregarded and neglected (Vu and Tran, 2020). Hence, learners are not conscious of their language learning

preferences, making them unable to learn in an ideal way and improve their language level. Based on the study by Ibrahim and Ramli (2010), knowing self-learning preferences will enable learners to plan their learning in a more meaningful and effective way.

Furthermore, teachers only use their teaching preferences to conduct the lesson in the case of not realising or ignoring the importance of considering the learning style preference of their students while planning the activities and approaches (Junaid & Ismail, 2018). Eventually, the mismatch between learners' learning styles and teachers' teaching styles occurs and leads to discouragement and panic among learners as untailed and inappropriate teaching methods are used in the classroom. Therefore, it is vital for learners and teachers to realise their learning and teaching styles so as to mediate the problems.

## **1.2 Research Aim**

The study aims to improve the English language level of the students by aiding them in knowing their language learning preferences. Besides, favouring teaching methods to students is also vital in elevating their English language level. Therefore, the study also purposed the consciousness of teachers on their teaching style preferences and their awareness of the students' learning preferences. As to encourage matching and minimizing the difference between the teaching styles and learning styles of the teachers and students respectively.

## **1.3 Research Objective**

There are three research objectives formulated for this study. The research objectives are:

1. To identify the language learning style preference of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) students.
2. To investigate the language teaching style preference of the Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) lecturers.

3. To analyse the presence of matching between students' preferred language learning styles and lecturers' preferred language teaching styles at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR).

#### **1.4 Research Question**

The study looks into three questions and the three research questions are

1. What language learning styles do students of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) prefer?
2. What language teaching styles do lecturers of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) prefer?
3. Does the matching between students' preferred language learning styles and lecturers' preferred language teaching styles at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) occur?

#### **1.5 Significant of the Study**

The study might come up with an insight into the importance of matching teaching styles to learning styles in classroom settings. The study can identify and understand the ideal language learning style for UTAR students with the aim of raising their English level. Students would be also conscious of their learning style preference and have a better comprehension of study materials.

Besides, the teachers would be knowing their preferred teaching style along with being aware of the various learning style preference of the learners. This can help teachers understand how learners receive information and match their teaching styles to their students' learning styles by adopting a balanced teaching style that meets their students' learning needs and enhancing their instructional design in the teaching process.

Based on the result, discussions can be carried out among the lecturers and the heads of departments to amend the weaknesses in the program and turn up a preferable program

structure that enables the enhancement of students' learning styles. The university will also have notions and guidelines on designing flexible courses and cooperating fully with lecturers by providing the required teaching instruments to avoid limiting the teachers to teach in various methods to meet the student's needs.

The result will be helpful to future researchers, use it as a reference and keep researching and updating on the language learning and teaching styles that are preferred by the students and teachers. The increase in the data can help the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to design and come up with pragmatic and effective strategies for raising the English level of Malaysia students, for example, types of balanced teaching methods that would encourage the match between the learning style and teaching style of students and teachers.

### **1.6 Rationale of the Study**

Although there were many researchers have carried out plenty of studies such as on students' language learning styles, teachers' teaching methods and the matching between both of them but the result is inconsistent and most of the research was done in the Western context (Huang et al., 2018).

This would cause a serious phenomenon in which Malaysian students will be not aware of their language learning preferences. It should be known that each student has their own style of receiving, analysing, and applying the information. Thus, it is of the utmost significance for students to know their learning style preferences as it can influence the way learners perceive and comprehend the knowledge in the classroom (Junaid & Ismail, 2018). Furthermore, by identifying and realising their own learning styles, students will be able to discern personal strengths and weaknesses (Gilakjani, 2012).

Besides, teachers will also fail to acknowledge their teaching preferences and the learning style students prefer. Without knowing the student's learning preferences, it will be



tough for teachers to develop and adjust their teaching styles that meet the student's needs. Moreover, the advancement and altering of technologies are making the learning style of students not consistent, hence the traditional teaching method that implies the 'one-size-fits-all' approach in the lesson is not sensible anymore (Junaid & Ismail, 2018). Teachers have to be flexible, use a wider range and vary teaching styles to meet the students' styles and should get rid of assuming that they have the best teaching style (Gilakjani, 2012). Exposing the students to different types of teaching styles can also indirectly help in their learning.

Eventually, the requirement for students to perform well and attain good grades as well as successfully conduct an effective lesson by teachers, matching of both learning and teaching style should be achieved. Otherwise, negative emotions and attitudes will develop among the students, not giving interest and may subsequently give up and drop out of the class.

### **1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The scope of research focuses on UTAR students and lecturers. A total of 180 participants from different faculties and programmes will be selected and focus on their language learning style preference based on the characteristics of the visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, group and individual learning styles developed by Joy M. Reid (1987). Additionally, 55 UTAR lecturers from the Department of Language and Linguistics (DLL), Department of Modern Languages (DML) and Arts Foundation of the Centre for Foundation Studies (CFS) of Kampar and Sungai Long campus will be selected to identify their language teaching style preferences also based on the modified Reid's questionnaire.

There are a few limitations to this research. Firstly, the result might show that all of the six styles are negative learning styles for the students. The participants might not be able to understand the questions from the questionnaire as their English level may not be adequate and hinder them from giving appropriate and precise answers. Secondly, due to time constraints,

the researcher is unable to analyse large data by collecting more data from other University students to have a more precise analysis outcome. All the participants come from one University (UTAR), thus the results of the study cannot be generalised to the entire situation of Malaysian English learners. Eventually, data will be collected using the self-reporting method from the samples, which may cause issues of validity as the responders from the surveys may have a probability of not reflecting real emotions. The result might need to be refined in further research as the preferred learning style of present generation students might be different to the future generation students in the era of new technologically driven.

## **1.8 Operational Definition of Terms**

### **1.8.1 Learning Style**

According to Keefe (1979), language learning style is the combination of emotional, physiological and cognitive attributes that are comparably stable elements of learners' perception and interaction with the learning environment. Reid (1995) claimed learning style is the method applied by learners to absorb, process, and preserve new knowledge and skills in a natural and habitual manner. Besides, Dunn and Griggs (1998) stated learning style is the conduct, stance and preference used by the learners in their learning process. Naserieh and Sarab (2013) explained in the study that learning style describes the process of a person undertaking information and serves as a tool for learners dealing with obstacles during the learning process (Barmeyer, 2004). Eventually, Jaya (2019) defined learning style as the strategies that are constantly utilised by the learners to develop stimuli in the setting of learning. Hence in this research, learning style is a mechanism which affected by learners' affection and cognition to perceive, organise and retain new information intrinsically as well as to confront the difficulties in their learning.

### **1.8.2 Teaching Style**

Sternberg (1997) defined the teaching style as a favoured approach that teachers adopt which depends on different individuals or institutes to overcome problems, make decisions and conduct activities in the teaching process. It also refers to the behaviours of teachers while interacting with learners (Fischer & Fischer, 1979). Besides, Galbraith and Sanders (1987) claimed teaching style is a noticeable classroom behaviour set which relates to and shown by teachers. Brookfield (1990) stated teaching style is a term explaining teachers achieve a balance between fixed teaching guidelines and being flexible to various content. Moreover, Gayle (1994) also pointed out that teaching style is based on teachers' own personalities, beliefs and professional objectives. Eventually, Petrina (2007) along with Inayat and Ali (2020) indicated teaching style as the mode of teachers delivering the lesson and reflection of the environment they manage in the classroom. Therefore, in this research teaching style is a role that teachers prefer to play based on their behaviour, beliefs and goals while conveying information in the lesson and meanwhile ensuring the balance between the developing syllabus and having a wide range of methods to act in concert with the diverse teaching content.

### **1.8.3 Preference**

Based on Merriam-Webster (n.d.), the word "*preference*" is defined as the state of being preferred and the opportunity or power of choosing one that is preferred. According to James and Gardner (1995), learning preference is a complicated concept which bundled and depends on learners' perceptions, cognition, and retention of the information. With the reference above, teaching preference is the teaching style that hinges on the teachers' behaviour, personal conviction and interaction among the liking teaching elements. In this study, "*preference*" is used along with the words, "*learning*" and "*teaching*" to stick with the aim of the study. Therefore, "*preference*" here means the learning and teaching styles that students and teachers favour.

#### **1.8.4 Match and mismatch**

Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defines “*match*” as a thing that is similar or equal to another and is a pair that is suitably associated. However, “*mismatch*” is defined as a wrong and inappropriate match. These words are applied in the study while identifying the presence of a parallel between students’ learning styles and teachers’ teaching styles. Hence, matching and mismatching in the study refers to the extent to which students’ preferred learning styles are aligned with teachers’ preferred teaching styles.

#### **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has stated the problem statements and the objectives of the study. Besides, the significance and rationale as well as the scope and limitations of the study have also been indicated in it. Eventually, definitions of significant terms in the study: learning style, teaching style, preference, mismatch and match are also encompassed in the chapter. Moving on will be chapter two which is to indicate the literature review.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter will explain the theoretical and conceptual framework of the present study used. Moreover, literature and past studies on learning style preference, teaching style preference and mismatching between both styles are also included.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

Based on the literature, the most exhaustive learning style models such as Reid's perceptual learning style (1987), Dunn and Dunn's learning style model (1993) and VARK (1987) learning model by Neil Fleming are formulated on the work of Carl Jung's psychological types (Khalil & Sabir, 2019). According to Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, and Bjork (2008), Jung's psychological test, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test categorizes people into a number of groups and provides beneficial information in deciding on an occupation. The idea of determining the "type of person" has some imperishable demand. Subsequently, the positive outcome of the test promoted the development of type-based learning-style assessments.

Reid's perceptual learning style is used as the theoretical framework in the present research. It is classified into three levels of degree which are major level, minor level and negative level. Major level refers to the high preference of the learners. They are able to with the learning style most effectively. Minor level indicates that the learning style can also be conducted by the learners to some extent. Eventually, the negative level means the learning style does not work for the learners (Nge & Eamoraphan, 2020). Next, the six categories of major learning styles are visual, auditory, tactile, kinaesthetic, group and individual. According to Khalil and Sabir (2019), visual learners learn by looking at words in books and on the whiteboard or blackboard. They will remember and understand information better while

reading those words and they are able to learn alone with a book. Auditory learners learn from hearing words spoken and from oral explanations. They will remember information by reading aloud or moving their lips as they read. They will be benefited from hearing audio tapes, class discussions and lectures. On the other hand, tactile learners learn when they have the chance to carry out “hands-on” experiences with materials. Activities, for instance, working on experiments in a laboratory, and handling and building models are able to give them the most successful learning situation. Kinaesthetic learners learn best by experience. They can remember the information well when involved actively in physical classroom activities, field trips, and role-play. Furthermore, group learners can easily learn when they study with a minimum of one other student. They will be more successful in completing teamwork activities as they value interaction with others, and they can remember information better when working in a group. Eventually, individual learners learn well when they work alone. They will be able to think better, remember information better and make better progress when they study by themselves.

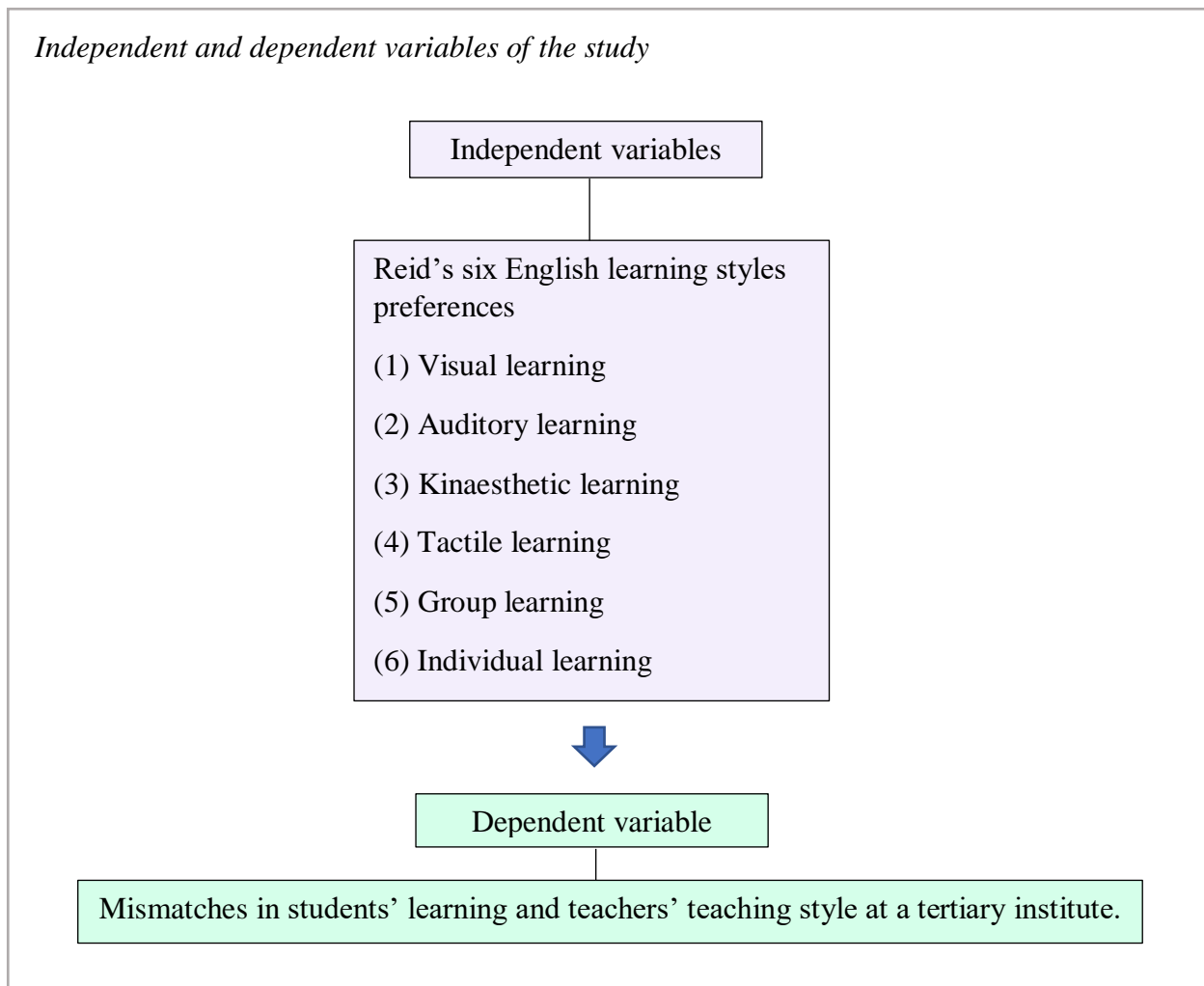
Hence, the present study will adopt the theoretical framework of Reid’s perceptual learning style to answer the questions of the study, which is to identify the preferred learning and teaching style of the students and lecturers: kinaesthetic, visual, tactile, auditory, group, and individual. Subsequently, find the presence of the matching between both styles in the students and lecturers.

## **2.2 Conceptual Framework**

Numerous researchers have agreed that the model developed by Reid (1987) is well-founded, stable and retains high validity and reliability (Sengsouliya, Soukhavong, Phonekeo, Sengsouliya, & Xaixanith, 2021). Thus, it is a vastly appropriate tool to be used to investigate learners’ learning styles and teachers’ teaching styles. Simultaneously, a match or mismatch in

the styles of both teachers and learners can be identified depending on the findings. Figure 1 shows the independent and dependent variables of the study.

**Figure 1**



### 2.3 Learning Style Preferences

Reid (1987) claimed perceptual learning style preference is a habitual trait of learners in different senses when encountering and digesting new information in the learning process. Different learners will learn in different ways. They have their own demands hence different approaches are brought about while mentioning how they absorb and process information (Dubravac & Žunić-Rizvić, 2016). The different kinds of learning style models lead learners to react differently to language learning (Tyacke, 1998). The learning style is made up of two

aspects, outcome students have a diversity of learning manners. The first aspect is the verbal image structure that guides the thoughts of the learners, whereas the second aspect illustrates how learners process information conclusively or wholistically (Banner & Rayner, 2008). Even with the presence of various learning styles. Learners need to determine their learning purpose and learning styles and self-regulate in order to perform well and achieve better outcomes. (Gokalp, 2013). Learning style is widely believed to be correlated to “how” they prefer to gain information, instead of “what” (Gokalp, 2013). According to Gordon (1998, cited in Vaseghi, Ramezani, & Gholami, 2012), learning styles affect educational systems and learning outcomes. This corresponded with Sternberg, Grigorenko, and Zhang (2008), the learning styles proponents of assessment in language teaching who consider that learning styles act as a valuable academic instrument that influences language learning and teaching by allowing individual learning styles and teaching methods to parallel.

Therefore, it is vital for learners to identify their learning styles. As it is the key element that determines their language learning outcomes (Oxford, 2003). Accurate identification of learners’ learning style preferences should be highly taken into concern when selecting teaching approaches to allow teachers to productively help the learners by planning and regulating teaching strategies that meet the learner’s demands. On the other hand, without realising the learning styles of learners, teachers are prone to use the approaches in which they are confident and believe, consequently adopting ineffective teaching strategies that cause lowering students’ enthusiasm for learning and limit the students’ language achievements (Oxford, 2003). Besides, the anxiety of the learners can be minimized if they know about their learning style and express their preferences to teachers (Ehrman and Oxford, 1990). Reid (1995) also asserts students will be allowed to dominate their learning and maximize their learning potential with the condition that students comprehend the concept of learning styles. Likewise stated by Svinicki (1999), learners tend to get better results if they are involved in



their educational journey. Furthermore, the study by Ibrahim and Ramli (2010) stated that knowing the preference for self-learning will enable learners to plan their learning in a way they like and make it more meaningful and effective. Furthermore, one's learning attitude and behaviour is also influenced by their learning style (Junaid & Ismail, 2018) and it is discovered that those who are conscious of their learning style preferences are more successful since this knowledge eases decision-making in a roundabout way that gives rise to effective ways of learning (Oxford, 2003). Moreover, knowing own learning styles is similar to the saying that one becomes aware of their strong and weak preferences of learning styles. They will have the opportunity to make capital out of their preferred learning styles meanwhile strengthening their less-preferred learning styles (Neo & Ng, 2020).

## **2.4 Teaching Style Preference**

Teaching styles refer to the educators' behaviour, beliefs as well as chosen instructional methods and tools while they are having lessons with the students (Chetty et al., 2019). A general proposition, educational and guidance approaches are also considered as teaching styles. There are five main teaching styles claimed by Grasha (1996, as cited in Gafoor & Babu, 2012) which include, formal authority, facilitator, expert, personal model and delegator. Formal authority educators emphasise conducting a comprehensible class together with solid expectations whereas facilitator-style educators concentrate on the interaction between teachers and students. Moving on, educators of expert style refer to teachers who possess ample knowledge, information and skills that are demanded and beneficial to the students, whereas personal model means students are encouraged to learn by observing and imitating the teachers' approaches. Lastly, delegator educators focus on making students independent learners.

Teaching and learning are the two sides of a coin (Gafoor & Babu, 2012). The most agreeable standard for measuring good teaching is the weight of knowledge that learners have

gained in the lesson; those who learned more will make a good impression on the teachers and rate a higher standing. Besides, learners will come across greater contentment when their favoured learning style is used as a basis in the teaching approach (Gafoor & Babu, 2012). According to Gilakjani (2012) teachers are inclined to practice their own teaching style preferences and use them in the class to reinforce the learning. As many teachers have been successful in their learning journey, thus, they will go along with the way they were best taught or learned. They even emulate the teaching styles of their idol teachers. This has caused the phenomenon where teachers' preferred teaching styles may not reflect the students' preferred learning styles. Hawk and Shah (2007) claimed that a multi-sensory approach is the best way to teach the English language as having a consolidated or one-size-fits-all teaching approach does not result in effective learning as students tend to learn differently. 21st-century learners have different needs and preferences when it comes to learning environments. They have specific learning preferences and styles based on their technical experience and educational background (Bennett, Maton, & Kervin, 2008). Technology is constantly how students interact with information and changing the way they learn. Thus, lessons that practice the unified approach to teaching will no longer seem to be practical (Junaid & Ismail, 2018). Hence, if a learner is doing poorly or excelling in academics, it may be more acceptable to consider the educational system and the fault lies with instruction being inadequately tailored to one's learning style (Pashler et al., 2008) rather than blame the learners.

It is important for the educator to recognise the needs and abilities of learners, develop student-centred lessons and be flexible, and prepare to widen the range of teaching strategies for students with different learning preferences (Wang, 2007). Awareness helps teachers create effective lesson plans and meaningful classroom activities in order to grab learners' attention and fit their needs for successful learning (Muniandy & Shuib, 2016). According to Ibrahim and Ramli (2010), knowing the goals of learning styles and strategies in the learning

environment enables teachers to ultimately develop learners' confidence, self-assurance and enthusiasm. Besides, researchers hypothesize that if teachers are conscious of learners' preferred learning styles, they will effectively tailor teaching plans to meet learners' needs (Sadeghi, Kasim, Tan, & Abdullah, 2012). However, according to (Junaid & Ismail, 2018), teachers sometimes may be unaware that their own teaching style preferences vary from students' learning style preferences. A good teacher needs to keep in mind that there are many factors that play crucial roles in affecting students' learning style preferences which result in students learning differently. Therefore, it is significant for teachers to take the responsibility to multiply their teaching styles in order to fit the learners' learning styles, preventing them from getting unmotivated and bored during the lesson. Despite that, teachers should sometimes push students out of their comfort zones so they can practice and experience unprecedented learning styles.

## **2.5 Matching and Mismatching between Learning and Teaching Styles**

According to Brown (1994), the compatibility of the teaching and learning style modalities fosters learners' momentum to succeed in their academic field. When teachers' learning styles coincide with students' learning styles, they typically flourish and acquire more information (O'Brien, 1989). Studies abound and highlighted the advantages of compatible styles. For example, Sabeh, Bahous, Bacha, & Nabhani (2011) suggested that students generally get motivated to learn and excel in the classroom when learning and teaching styles are congruent. Furthermore, Li and Qing (2006) indicate when a teacher employs proper teaching techniques and pedagogies for students, positive attitudes and behaviour toward language learning will be developed.

Mismatches between learning and teaching styles can lead to disappointment and underperformance among students (Chetty et al., 2019). Additionally, the serious discrepancy

will demotivate the students from contributing their maximum cooperation and involvement during the learning session (Junaid & Ismail, 2018). While instructors will be overwhelmed by poor attendance, low test results, inattentive or dismissive classes and withdrawals, they might excessively judge students or start to wonder about their own ability as a teacher. On the other hand, students will likely be sluggish and inactive in class, do poorly on tests, get disheartened, and possibly posit that they are bad at the subject, eventually losing hope and giving up (Felder & Henriques, 1995). Moreover, Shah and Ismail (2012) stated that mismatch may have an undesired impact on students' abilities and competencies to master the language. As a result, teachers are necessary to be aware of their students' learning styles and adapt their teaching approaches to adhere to students' demands and most importantly enable students to profit optimum benefits from their learning.

## **2.6 Review of the Past Studies**

This section will discuss the past studies conducted in International and Malaysian Educational contexts. In each of the studies of both contexts, the topics include the learning style preference of students, the teaching style preference of teachers and also the mismatch of learning style and teaching style.

### **2.6.1 Past Studies with International Backgrounds**

A thorough study into the learning style preferences of English language non-native speakers (NNSs) enrolled in American colleges was carried out by Reid (1987). The findings demonstrate kinaesthetic and tactile learning styles were preferred by the learners. In addition, the study revealed that dependent variables such as linguistic background, age and gender are massively influencing the major learning perception of the learners.

Based on Peacock's (2001) study on 206 EFL students and 46 EFL teachers at a Hong Kong tertiary institute, it was disclosed that most students preferred kinaesthetic and auditory

styles and were not in favour of the group and individual styles, whereas teachers favoured kinaesthetic, auditory and group and disfavoured tactile and individual styles. Thus, the finding shows a mismatch between teaching and learning styles. His research supported the idea that every learner has a unique learning style, as well as forte and shortcomings. Additionally, learners will undergo incompetence, disillusionment, and demotivation when the information fails to present align with the learners' learning styles.

According to the study by Akbarzadeh and Fatemipour (2014) on 183 EFL English major students and 10 of their teachers, findings revealed that tactile was the preferred learning style of the students, however, there is no major teaching style preference for the teaching. The study also disclosed that tactile preference was a trifling teaching method to the teachers despite it being the main learning preference of the students. This is because they insist on teaching based on the course requirement and tend to ignore the learning style preferred by the students, hence matching between the styles could even exist.

Furthermore, in the study of Alnujaidi (2019), an investigation of 130 EFL students and 102 EFL teachers on their preferred learning styles and teaching styles was conducted in several Saudi Arabia universities. Results showed that the students favour sensing, visual, active, and sequential learning styles, whereas teachers favour abstract, verbal, passive, and global teaching styles. Obviously, the study revealed a mismatch between the learning and teaching styles. The study also highlighted both the learning styles of students and teaching styles of their own should be known by the teachers. Every single demand of the students should be taken into account while selecting the pedagogical approaches and instructional methodologies. Additionally, teachers must diversify their teaching methods and give more control to their students such as involving them in the activities planning.

Eventually, the study by Sengsouliya et al. (2021) investigating 204 students' learning styles and 5 teachers' teaching styles in Vietnam showed that most of the students possessed multiple learning styles. Among the learning styles, their major learning styles are kinaesthetic, group, and audio, negative for visual style. However, teachers are concentrated more on visual style. Thus, the result showed a conspicuous mismatch between the learning and teaching styles.

### **2.6.2 Past Studies within the Malaysian Educational Context**

Research carried out by Ibrahim and Ramli (2010) revealed the learning style of 50 University Technology Malaysia (UTM) students and the teaching style of lecturers. The most preferred learning style of the students is kinaesthetic whereas lecturers preferred the visual teaching style. Only six students match their learning styles with their lecturers' teaching styles as most students experience lethargy and are not interested in the class. Thus, the study recommended broadening the teaching scope and matching lecturers' teaching styles with learners' learning styles to secure an effective teaching and fruitful learning process.

Furthermore, the findings of Ahmad's (2011) investigation on the 252 Low English Proficiency students showed that all six learning styles were claimed as their negative style, none was preferred by the students and the result was not affected by gender. This extraordinary outcome is due to a lack of motivation among the students and teachers should act on it only then the students' learning preferences can be known for the analysis of the matching between students' learning styles and teachers' teaching styles. Moreover, knowing the teachers' teaching styles alone would not be helpful and matching between the styles will never be achieved.

Besides, in the 2018 Lee's study examining the learning style preference of 588 engineering students and the teaching style preference of 10 Technical Communication

lecturers in the ESP classroom, the findings revealed that students' preferred learning style was visual but had balanced preferences for other learning styles while the teacher preferred student-centred teaching approach. The findings showed matching learning and teaching approaches between the students and teachers as the study highlighted the balanced learning style that students preferred means teachers vary the activity based on the students' demands and this teaching style is equal to student-centred teaching.

Eventually, the study by Neo and Ng (2020) involved 35 students and a teacher in a foreign language classroom in Malaysia revealed that students prefer kinaesthetic and auditory learning styles whereas the teacher prefers kinaesthetic and tactile styles. The result also shows that most students' learning styles match the teacher's styles. Although the findings showed there is no significant difference between language achievement and the matching of learning and teaching style, it is still crucial for the match to exist as it has a significant effect on maintaining the motivation of students towards learning and their academic attainment.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

In short, this chapter has mentioned Reid's perceptual learning style model as the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework of the present study. Besides, pieces of literature that further defined and indicated the significance of learning style preference, teaching style preference along with match and mismatch between both preference styles are included. Other than that, international and Malaysian Educational background studies are also encompassed in the chapter. Proceeding part will be the third chapter, writing about the research methodology.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the methodology of the study. The research design, selected sample, and sampling technique will be mentioned. Besides, the instrument that is adopted is included. Eventually, the procedure of data collection and planning for data analysis are stated in the chapter.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study is a cross-sectional survey design and applies the quantitative research method. Zangirolami-Raimundo, Echeimberg, and Leone (2018) stated that cross-sectional studies are the observation of variables that will be shown in a single moment, making the researcher observe the phenomena directly. Quantitative research is an organised investigation that involves numerical data collection, specific statistical implementation and computing or arithmetic techniques (Adedoyin, 2020). According to Apuke (2017), quantitative research requires a large and randomly selected group of studies and the type of data collected are numbers and statistics. This indicates that the survey data collected has to be on a big scale as it deals with statistics more. Creswell (2012) added that the ability to use numerical trends and relationships between variables to address research issues is one of the distinctive features of quantitative research. Therefore, it is appropriate for the present researcher to apply this research design to achieve the aims of the study as indicated previously were to reveal the language learning style preference and language teaching style preference among the students and lecturers respectively as well as identify the presence of matching between the students' learning and teachers' teaching styles.

#### **3.2 Sample and Sampling Technique**



Both students and lecturers are the samples of the study. A total of 180 students of UTAR were chosen from various faculties and programmes in UTAR as well as 55 lecturers of UTAR lecturers from the Department of Language and Linguistics (DLL) of the Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FAS), Department of Modern Languages (DML) of the Faculty of Creative Industries and Arts Foundation of the Centre for Foundation Studies (CFS) of Kampar and Sungai Long campus. The study samples were chosen by using snowball sampling, a convenience sampling method. According to Naderifar, Goli and Ghaljaie (2017), this method is efficient for reaching people who would be very hard to encounter. A few samples were chosen and asked to recruit others among their acquaintances. The sampling ceased when the data was saturated. Furthermore, this method saves the time of the research on sampling and allows the researcher to interact with the other samples more efficiently as they know the initial samples and are connected with the researcher.

### **3.3 Instrumentation**

Questionnaire was employed as the instrument of the study. There were two sets of questionnaires, one was the Perceptual Learning Style Preferences Questionnaire (PLSPQ) by Reid (1987) to identify the language learning style preference of students (1987) and another was the Teacher Style Questionnaire (TSQ), a similar questionnaire which modified from PLSPQ to identify the language teaching style preference of lecturers. This emulated Peacock's (2001) study of modifying Reid's PLSPQ to collect data on teachers' teaching style preferences. Similar questionnaires were used for determining the learning style and teaching style preference to enable the identification of a matching presence between the preferred learning and teaching styles. The present researcher decided to choose Reid's PLSPQ because the result obtained with this instrument applies to language teachers and has a strong practical bent (Zou, 2006). Both questionnaires consisted of two sections which were Section A and B. Section A was to obtain the demographic data from the samples. The information needed for

students was gender, age faculty and year of study whereas information from teachers was the prior three similar to students. While section B in both questionnaires encompassed 30 statements with 5 statements arranged at random for each dimension of perceptual learning or teaching style preference, which comprised visual, kinaesthetic, tactile, auditory, tactile, individual and group styles. For instance, the sixth statement is: “I learn better by reading what the teacher writes on the chalkboard” is for visual learning style, whereas the seventh statement is: “When someone tells me how to do something in class, I learn it better” is for auditory learning style. The questionnaire used a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3), and strongly agree (4). The reason this questionnaire deviated from the traditional 5-option Likert scale was to prevent respondents from taking a neutral stance. The samples were asked to do a self-reporting on their preferred styles by rating the 30 statements. The difference in both students’ and lecturers’ questionnaires was that questions in the lecturers’ questionnaire were modified. The modified statements were adapted from the study by Neo and Ng (2020) as well as the reliability of the instrument. The study tested using Cronbach’s alpha in the 16 version of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the instrument’s reading was at 0.80, indicating that the questionnaire is reliable. Eventually, consent from the samples was obtained before they participated in the study by giving them the ethical clearance form of the research that indicated the purpose of the study, assuring that their identity was kept confidential and answers would only be used for research purposes.

### **3.4 Data collection procedure**

The two questionnaires (PLSPQ and TSQ) were administered to the students and lecturers in Google form. The soft copies of questionnaires were distributed via the inbox feature of Microsoft Teams to the students and lecturers to make sure that they were aware of the questionnaire being sent to them. They were also encouraged to ask for clarification if they encountered any doubts in comprehending the instructions and statements in the questionnaire.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

Descriptive statistics was employed in the study and the data collected was analysed for frequency, percentage and mean using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Based on the rating of the samples on a 4-point rating scale in the questionnaires, the numbers for corresponding learning and teaching styles were summed to obtain a total score. Then, the sum was multiplied by 2 and the mean was calculated to identify the students' learning style preferences and the lecturers' teaching style preferences. The style(s) that score between 28-40 considered the major of learning or teaching style, 15-27 indicated minor, the style that learners can still use well, or teachers do not apply constantly and 0-14 represented negligible meant learners struggle to learn when using the style or teachers would apply the style occasionally. The frequency, percentage and rank regarding both preference styles were calculated and shown in tables. After categorising students' and lecturers' learning and teaching style preferences into major, minor and negligible, the presence of matching in students' learning style preference and lecturers' teaching style preference was analysed. For instance, if both students and teachers have the same learning and teaching style as their major preferences, it is considered a match between the styles.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In short, the chapter indicated that the study used a cross-sectional survey and quantitative research method as the research design. Besides, there was a total of 180 students and 55 lecturers participating in the research. The instruments employed were the questionnaire (PLSPQ) adapted from Reid (1987) to identify students' preferred learning styles and the questionnaire (TSQ) which was modified from Reid's PLSPQ to identify the lecturers' preferred teaching styles. Eventually, descriptive statistics was employed in the study to determine the preferred language learning and language teaching styles of students and

lecturers and the presence of matching between the two styles. The next chapter will be discussing the findings of the study.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings and Analysis**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter highlights the result findings of the data collected from the quantitative questionnaire approach. The result of the study would answer the RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3. The analysis would illustrate the obtained data by using tables and charts. The data encompasses respondents' demographic data collected from the questionnaire, which encompasses age, gender, faculty and year of study. A total of 180 foundation and undergraduate students along with 55 lecturers of UTAR participated in the study by answering the questionnaire to identify their English language learning and teaching style preferences and to analyse the presence of the matching style of both respondents by comparing their preference styles. The survey was conducted using Google Forms. Then, the collected data was downloaded as Microsoft Excel and analysed using SPSS.

#### **4.1 Questionnaire**

This section will indicate the data obtained from questionnaires as tables and charts. Section A of the respondents' questionnaires will be presented in the first and second sections. The prior will be the students' demographic data which contain gender, age, faculty and year of study, whereas the latter will be the lecturers' demographic data which include the same elements as students except the year of study. The next section will show section B of the students' questionnaire which is the calculated and analysed mean of students' language learning style preference. Based on the mean result, the six learning styles (auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, visual, individual and group) will be categorised into three different categories (major, minor, negligible) and ranked accordingly. Eventually, section B of the

lecturers' questionnaire which determines their language teaching style preference will be analysed and displayed similarly to the previous section as the fourth section.

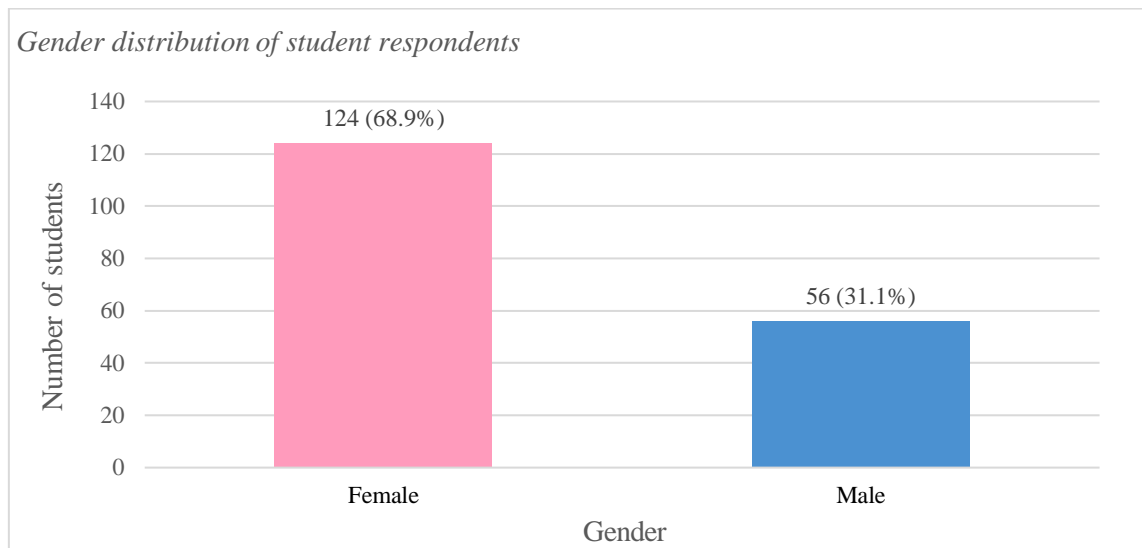
#### 4.1.1 Students' Demographic Data

**Table 1**

*Gender distribution of student respondents*

Demographic data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender:		
Female	124	68.9
Male	56	31.1
Total	180	100

**Figure 2**



*Note: Gender frequency and percentage of 180 student respondents*

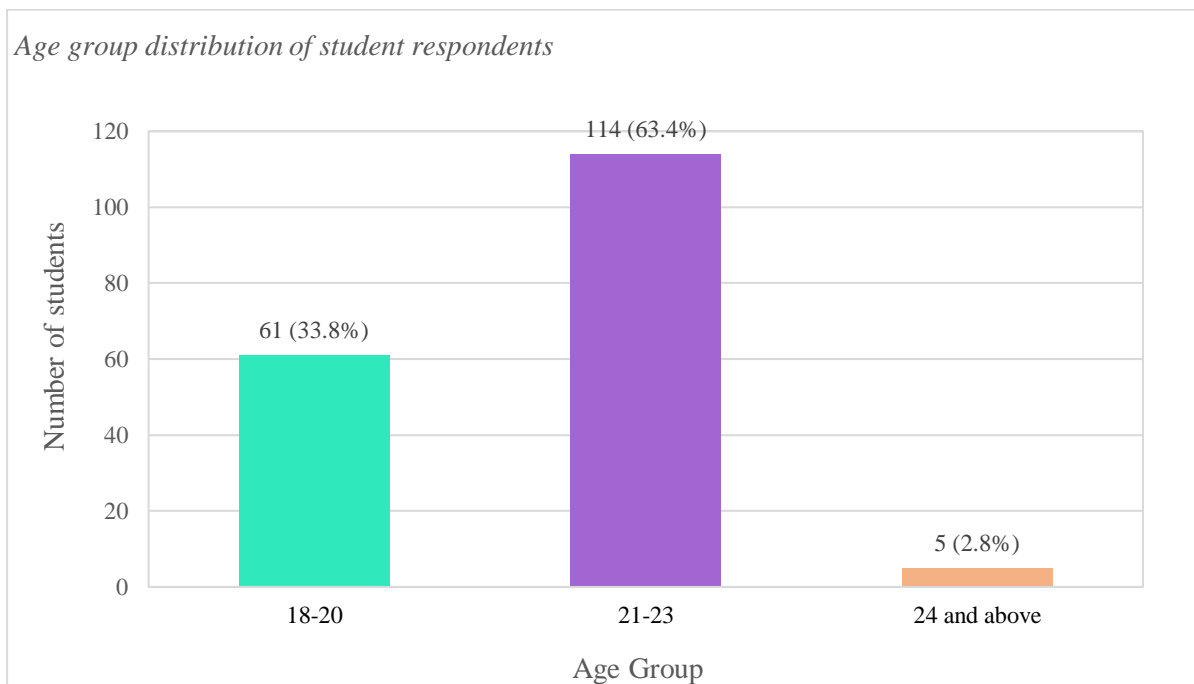
Table 1 and Figure 2 obviously show that the majority of respondents involved were female as compared to the male respondents. There were 124 (68.9%) female respondents and 56 (31.1%) male respondents among the 180 respondents.

**Table 2**

*Age group distribution of student respondents*

Demographic data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age:		
18-20	61	33.8
21-23	114	63.4
24 and above	5	2.8
Total	180	100

**Figure 3**



*Note: Age group frequency and percentage of 180 student respondents*

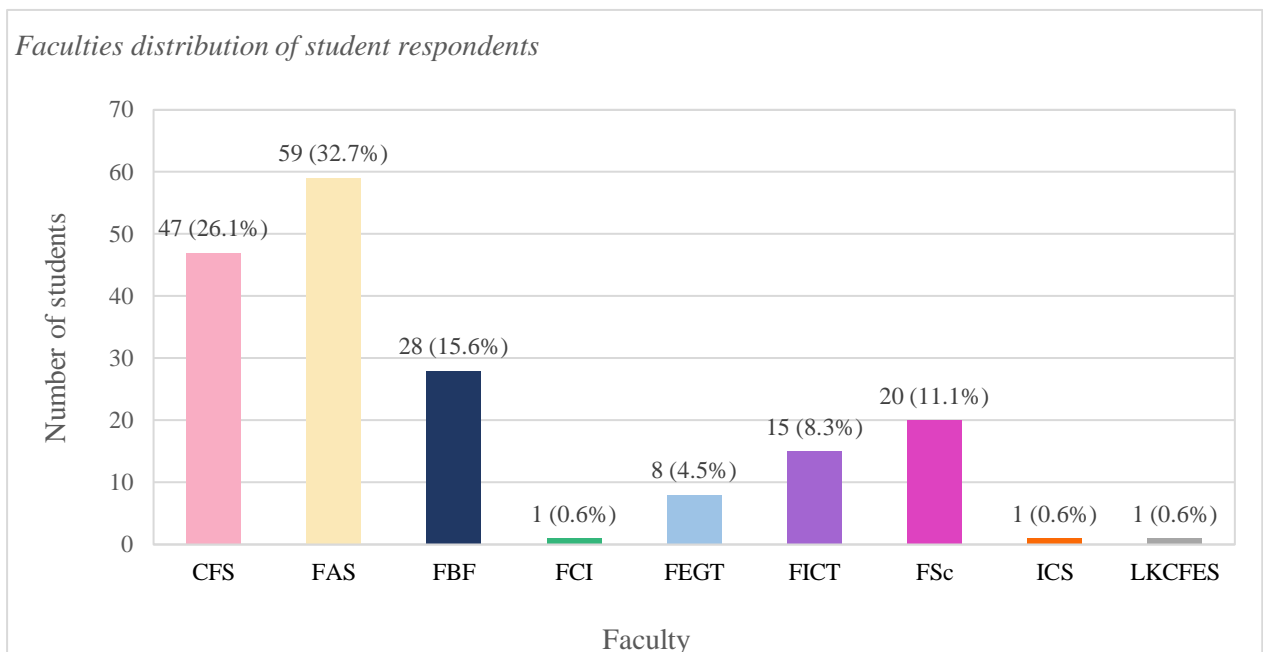
Data in Table 2 and Figure 3 display the majority of the respondents 114 (63.4%) fall under the age group of 21-23 years old, whereas 61 (33.8%) are under the age group of 18-20 and the remaining 5 (2.8%) respondents are in the age of 24 and above.

**Table 3**

*Faculties distribution of student respondents*

Demographic data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Faculty		
Centre for Foundation Studies (CFS)	47	26.1
Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FAS)	59	32.7
Faculty of Business and Finance (FBF)	28	15.6
Faculty of Creative Industries (FCI)	1	0.6
Faculty of Engineering & Green Technology (FEGT)	8	4.5
Faculty of Information and Communication Technology (FICT)	15	8.3
Faculty of Science (FSc)	20	11.1
Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS)	1	0.6
Lee Kong Chian Faculty of Engineering and Science (LKCFES)	1	0.6
Total	180	100

**Figure 4**



*Note: Faculties frequency and percentage of 180 student respondents*



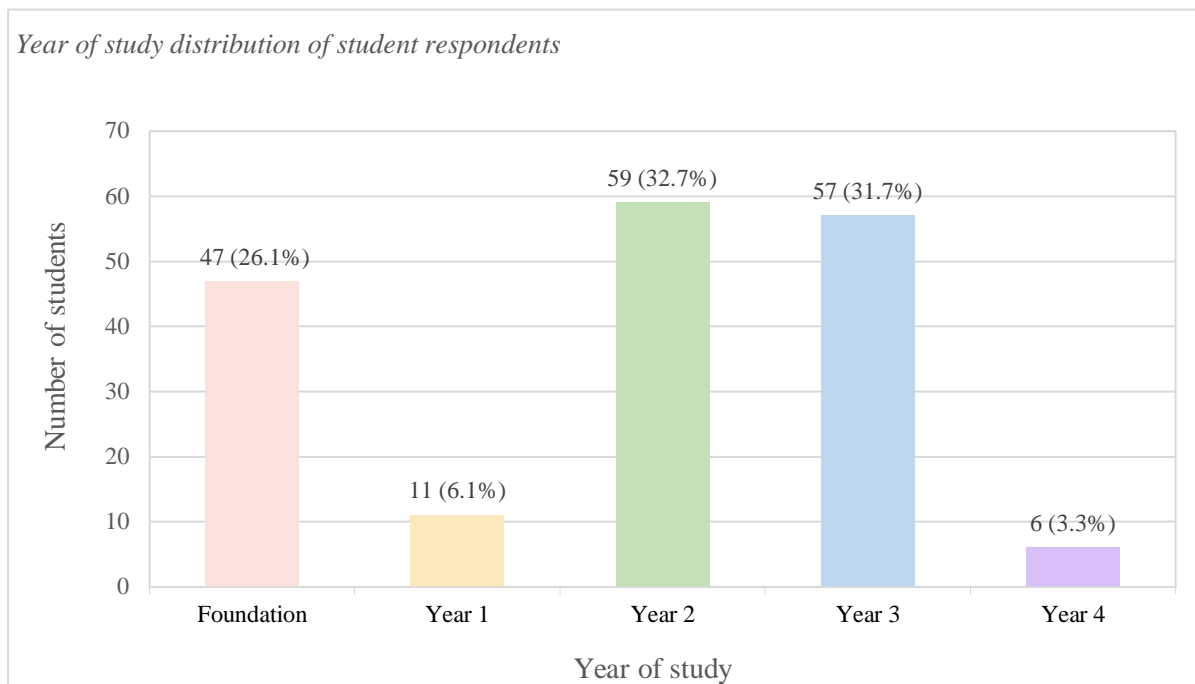
Based on the data from Table 3 and Figure 4, there are eight faculties involved in the study which include the Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FAS), Faculty of Business and Finance (FBF), Faculty of Creative Industries (FCI), Faculty of Engineering and Green Technology (FEGT), Faculty of Information and Communication Technology (FICT), Faculty of Science (FSc), Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS) and Lee Kong Chian Faculty of Engineering and Science (LKCFES) as well as students from the Centre for Foundation Studies. Students from the Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FAS) comprised most of the data with 59 respondents (32.7%) followed by students from the Centre for Foundation Studies (CFS) with 47 respondents (26.1%) and students from the Faculty of Business and Finance (FBF) with 28 respondents (15.6%). Moving on, there are 20 respondents (11.1%) from the Faculty of Science (FSc), 15 respondents (8.3%) from the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology (FICT) and 8 respondents (4.5%) from the Faculty of Engineering and Green Technology (FEGT). Eventually, each of the remaining three faculties, the Faculty of Creative Industries (FCI), Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS) and Lee Kong Chian Faculty of Engineering and Science (LKCFES) have a respondent (0.6%).

**Table 4**

*Year of study distribution of student respondents*

Demographic data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Year of Study		
Foundation	47	26.1
Year 1	11	6.1
Year 2	59	32.7
Year 3	57	31.7
Year 4	6	3.3
Total	180	100

**Figure 5**



*Note: Years of study frequency and percentage of 180 student respondents*

According to Table 4 and Figure 5, Year 2 students show the highest number of respondents which has a total of 59 respondents (32.7%), followed by Year 3 students with a total of 57 respondents (31.7%) and foundation students with a total number of 47 respondents (26.1%). Eventually, Year 1 and Year 4 students have the lower number of respondents with 11 (6.1%) and 6 (3.3%).

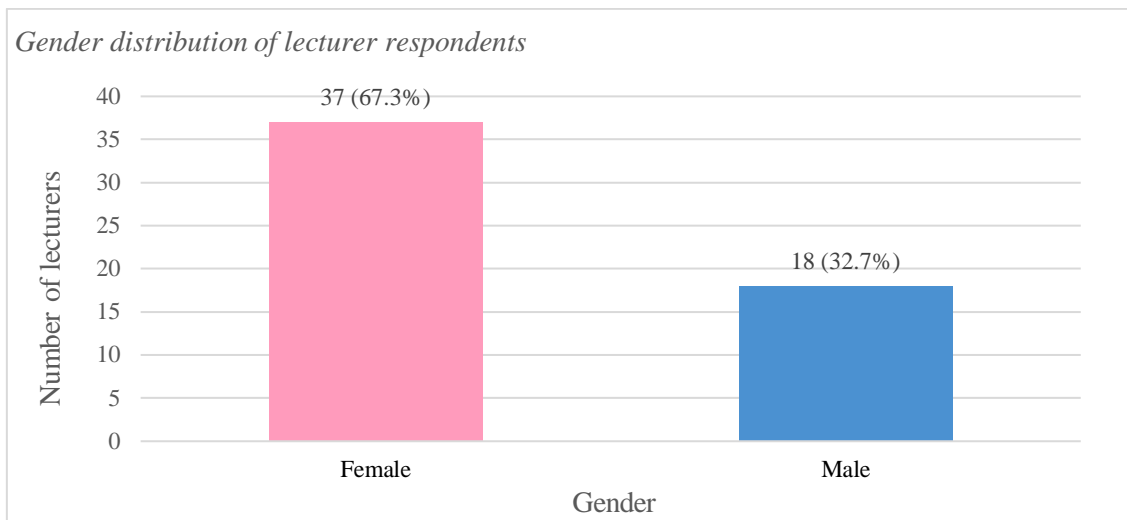
#### **4.1.2 Lecturers' Demographic Data**

**Table 5**

*Gender distribution of lecturer respondents*

Demographic data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender:		
Female	37	67.3
Male	18	32.7
Total	55	100

**Figure 6**



*Note: Gender frequency and percentage of 55 lecture respondents*

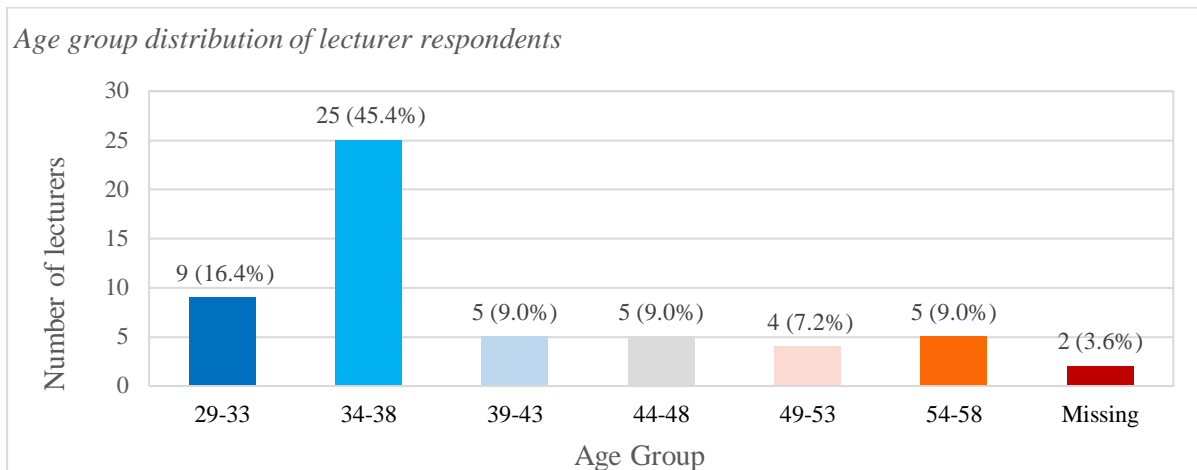
Table 5 and Figure 6 make it abundantly evident that there was a greater number of female respondents than male respondents in this study. Among the 55 respondents, 37 (67.3%) were female and 18 (32.7%) were male.

**Table 6**

*Age group distribution of lecturer respondents*

Demographic data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age:		
29-33	9	16.4
34-38	25	45.4
39-43	5	9.0
44-48	5	9.0
49-53	4	7.2
54-58	5	9.0
Missing	2	3.6
Total	55	100

**Figure 7**



*Note: Age group frequency and percentage of 55 lecturer respondents*

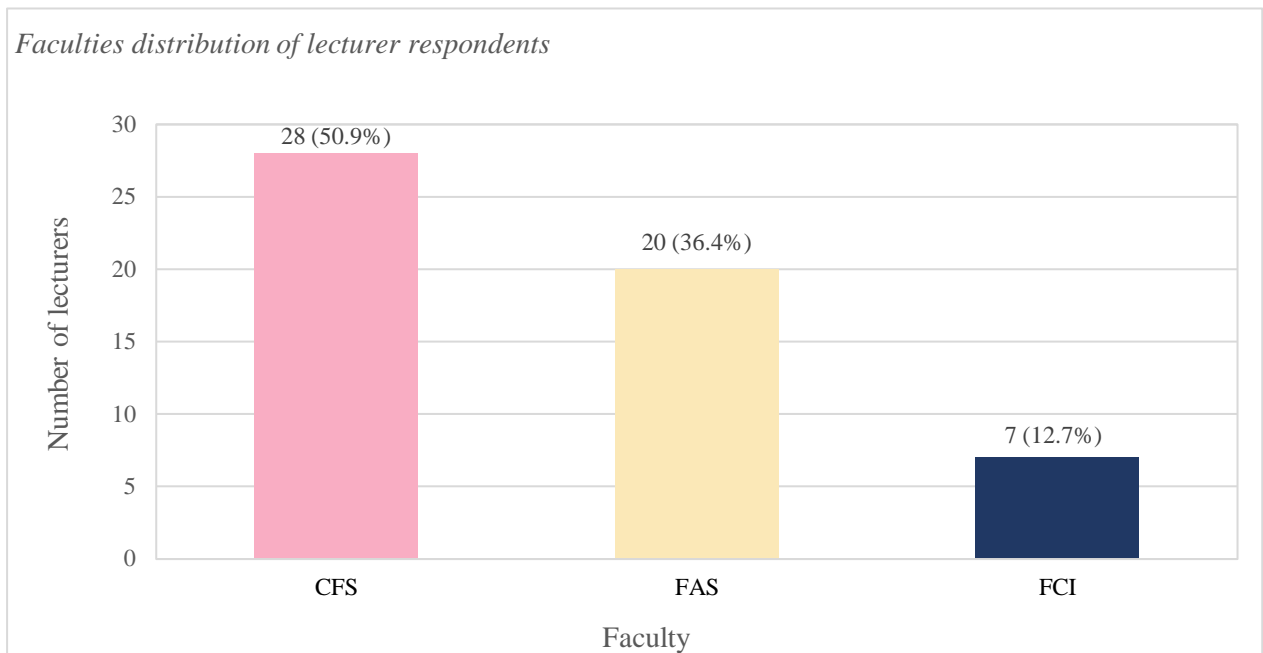
According to data in Table 6 and Figure 7, the majority of the respondents, 25 (45.4 %), are between the ages of 34 and 38, followed by 9 (16.4 %) respondents who are between the ages of 29 and 33. Furthermore, ages between 39 and 43, 44 and 48, plus 54 and 58 have the same number of respondents, 5 (9.0%). Eventually, there are 4 (7.2%) respondents aged between 49 and 53 along with 2 (3.6%) missing data on the age identified in the questionnaire.

**Table 7**

*Faculties distribution of lecturer respondents*

Demographic data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Faculty		
Centre for Foundation Studies (CFS) - Foundation in Arts	28	50.9
Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FAS) - Department of Language and Linguistics	20	36.4
Faculty of Creative Industries (FCI) - Department of Modern Languages	7	12.7
Total	55	100

**Figure 8**



*Note: Faculties frequency and percentage of 55 lecturer respondents*

Based on the data from Table 7 and Figure 8, lecturers from the Arts Foundation of the Centre for Foundation Studies (CFS) make up half the number of respondents, 28 lecturers (50.9%) followed by lecturers from the Department of Language and Linguistics (DLL) of Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FAS) with 20 lecturers (36.4%) and eventually 7 lecturers (12.7%) from the Department of Modern Language (DML) of Faculty of Creative Industry (FCI).

#### **4.1.3 Students' Learning Styles Preference**

**Table 8**

*Overall means of the learning style preference investigated*

Learning Style Preferences	Mean	Standard Deviation	Category	Ranking
Visual	30.39	4.22	Major	4
Group	30.00	5.18	Major	5
Tactile	30.51	4.78	Major	3

Kinaesthetic	30.86	4.52	Major	2
Auditory	31.48	3.87	Major	1
Individual	29.48	5.68	Major	6

Major learning style preference(s) = 28 to 40

Minor learning style preference(s) = 15 to 27

Negligible learning style preference(s) = 0 to 14

As shown in Table 8, the result indicated that students have a major preference for every six of the learning styles as each of the means is between 28 and 40. The auditory learning style ranks first as the most preferred learning style of the students with the greatest mean of 31.48, followed by kinaesthetic with a mean of 30.86, and tactile with a mean of 30.51. Next, the visual learning style falls under ranking 4 with a mean of 30.39, the group learning style ranks 5th with a mean of 30.00 and eventually, the individual learning style is on the final rank with a mean of 29.48.

#### 4.1.4 Lecturers' Teaching Styles Preference

**Table 9**

*Overall means of the teaching style preference investigated*

Teaching Style Preferences	Mean	Standard Deviation	Result	Ranking
Visual	27.85	3.12	Minor	5
Group	31.67	4.57	Major	2
Tactile	31.67	3.90	Major	1
Kinaesthetic	31.27	3.86	Major	3
Auditory	28.84	3.90	Major	4
Individual	22.91	4.11	Minor	6

Major teaching style preference(s) = 28 to 40

Minor teaching style preference(s) = 15 to 27

Negligible teaching style preference(s) = 0 to 14

In accordance with Table 9, the results revealed that lecturers have multiple major and minor perceptual teaching style preferences. Precisely, the lecturers have 4 major teaching styles which include tactile, group, kinaesthetic and auditory together with 2 minor teaching styles which encompass visual and individual. With a mean score of 31.67, the tactile and group teaching styles stand out as the most preferred teaching styles, but due to tactile having a lower standard deviation compared to the group, tactile headlines the list of lecturers' favourite teaching styles. Subsequently, kinaesthetic ranks at 3 with a mean of 31.27 and auditory ranks at 4 with a mean of 28.84. Eventually, visual ranks at 5 with a mean of 27.85 and individual ranks last with a mean of 22.91.

#### **4.2 Matching between students' learning style preferences and lecturers' teaching style preferences**

As seen in Tables 8 and 9, the results reveal that both students and teachers favour a variety of learning and teaching styles. In terms of style matching, the results can be inferred that the majority of the teaching styles are compatible with learning styles, notwithstanding not all of them. Specific parallels and discrepancies are noticeable. The similarities of both students and lecturers are the individual style ranked last of their preferences. Moreover, the results denote that both respondents share four major learning and teaching style preferences, namely the group, tactile, kinaesthetic and auditory. On the other hand, the incompatibility of the two teaching style preferences with the learning style preferences indicates the difference between the respondents. Students have visual and individual styles as major learning style preferences, but both styles are lecturers' minor teaching style preferences.

### 4.3 Summary of Findings

There were 180 students and 55 lecturers who participated in the survey. The findings from the questionnaire show that many of the respondents who participated in the survey either students or lecturers are female. The percentage of female respondents for both student and lecturer questionnaires is 68.9% and 67.3% which exceeds half of the total number of its respondents.

Next, the age group for student respondents is in the range of 18 – 24 and above. Among the age groups, 21 to 23 years old students record to have the highest percentage, 63.4%. On the other hand, the age range for the lecturers is between 29 to 58. The age group of 34-38 lecturers has the highest number of percentages, 45.4%.

Moving on, based on the analysis, most of the students are from the Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FAS), with a percentage of 32.7%. As for the lecturer respondents, 28 respondents which is half (50.9%) are the lecturers of the Centre for Foundation Studies (CFS).

Besides, the student respondents range from foundation to degree Year 4 and data shows that year 2 students have the greater number of respondents (59), with a percentage of 32.7.

Furthermore, data indicates that the overall mean for all of the student respondents falls under the major learning style preference category. This implies that the students have major preferences in each of the learning styles, which encompass visual, group, tactile, kinaesthetic, auditory and individual. To disclose the most to the least favoured major learning style, the means and standard deviations are analysed for the ranking. The result shows that auditory ranks first, followed by kinaesthetic, tactile, visual, group and individual. Moreover, the overall mean shows that lecturers have four major teaching style preferences which are group, tactile, kinaesthetic and auditory, whereas the remaining two teaching styles, visual and individual are



minor. Similar to the above, the means and standard deviations are analysed to rank the most to the least favoured major and minor teaching styles. The outcome indicates that tactile ranks first and is subsequently followed by group, kinaesthetic, auditory, visual, and individual.

Eventually, the findings reveal that most of the learning and teaching styles are compatible. Students and lecturers have individual styles as their least preferred style and share four major preference styles, which comprise tactile, group, auditory and kinaesthetic. In terms of differences, they are incongruent in two preferred styles, where students take the minor teaching style of lecturers as one of their major preference styles.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has shown the data of the research from the students' and lecturers' questionnaires. The findings of the research would answer the three research questions. The data covers the student and lecturer respondents' demographic information. Tables and charts are used to display the analysed data. Data shows many of the respondents who participated in the survey either students or lecturers are female. Student respondents between the ages of 21-23 and lecturer respondents between the ages of 34-38 have the highest percentage. Besides, most of the students and lecturers are from the Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FAS) and the Centre for Foundation Studies (CFS) respectively. Additionally, among the students, year 2 has the greater number of respondents. Eventually, the result of the research questionnaires shows that students have major preferences in each of the learning styles, whereas lecturers have four major teaching style preferences which are group, tactile, kinaesthetic, and auditory, whereas the remaining two teaching styles, visual and individual are minor. Concerning styles compatibility, it can be concluded that albeit not all, students' learning style preferences and lecturers' teaching style preferences match in the majority.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter highlights the discussion of research findings, implications, recommendations on enhancing future research, limitations of current research and conclusion of the overall research. According to the data analyses in the previous chapter, the auditory style is the most preferred learning style for students, while the tactile style is the most preferred teaching style for lecturers.

#### **5.1 Discussion**

There are three objectives in this study. The first objective is to identify the language learning style preference of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) students. The following objectives are to investigate the language teaching style preference of the Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) lecturers and to analyse the presence of matching between students' preferred language learning styles and lecturers' preferred language teaching styles at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). The three objectives were met based on the data presented aforementioned.

##### **5.1.1 Discussion on Data Collected on Research Objective 1**

Based on Table 10, the findings show that students have various major learning style preferences. This result supports the claims made by Reid (1987), Mulalis, Shah, & Ahmad (2009), Sabeih et al. (2011), Dubravac & Žunić-Rizvić (2016), Sengsouliya et al. (2021) and Alhourani (2021) which indicate that ESL learners enjoy a variety of learning styles. According to Cohen and Henry (2020), the fact that each student has to focus on several learning tasks

according to their language learning approach could constitute a potential reason for their tendency to have many major perceptual preferences.

**Table 10**

*Overall means of the student's learning style preference investigated*

Learning Style Preferences	Ranking	Mean	Standard Deviation	Category
Auditory	1	31.48	3.87	Major
Kinaesthetic	2	30.86	4.52	Major
Tactile	3	30.51	4.78	Major
Visual	4	30.39	4.22	Major
Group	5	30.00	5.18	Major
Individual	6	29.48	5.68	Major

Table 10 above also reveals that the overall mean for all student respondents falls under the major learning style preference category. This points to the fact that each learning style, comprising visual, group, tactile, kinaesthetic, auditory, and individual, possesses a strong preference among the students. This finding goes against another research by Ahmad (2011) where the result showed that none of the six learning styles were chosen by the students as each was their negative approach. This exceptional result is attributable to the shortfall of students in enthusiasm for language learning.

Moving on, Table 10 shows the major and the most preferred learning style of students is auditory. It ranks first with a mean of 31.48 and a standard deviation of 3.87. This result is aligned with several previous studies. For instance, Sabeh et al. (2011), Al-Zayed (2017), Jayanama (2017) and Alhourani (2021) found that the majority of the EFL students were auditory learners. Additionally, ESL students in Muniandy and Shuib's (2016) research also revealed auditory as their major preferred learning style. This indicates that they learn more

effectively by hearing and verbal communication, making them skilled at remembering what they hear as they take up knowledge via auditory expression. To optimize their learning, they benefit from group discussions, recording lectures, and reading aloud. Moreover, engaging in verbal explanations, recitations, and discussions with people enhances their comprehension and retention of information (Kayalar & Kayalar, 2017). However, the findings go against the study by Dubravac and Žunić-Rizvić (2016) showed that auditory is the minor learning preference of the students. Furthermore, research by Ibrahim and Ramli (2010) also showed contrasting results where the auditory style was claimed as the least preferred learning style of UTM ESL students and had a favour preference for the kinaesthetic style. This outcome may be attributable to their technical degree in Living Skills, which emphasises practical learning in areas such as electrical work, mechanical and welding. Moreover, the result is also opposed to research by Junaid and Ismail (2018) where similar research obtained that UTHM ESL students preferred the kinaesthetic style most and the auditory style only ranked 5th preferred. This might be due to active "hands-on" learning being their best learning method. They learn best when they are actively engaged with the materials.

Besides, Table 10 shows kinaesthetic as another major preference, ranked 2nd in students' preferences for learning style with a mean of 30.86 and a standard deviation of 4.52. This finding is consistent with the studies of Dubravac and Žunić-Rizvić (2016) as well as Khan, Arif, and Yousuf (2019) where a majority of the EFL students have a major preference for learning style in kinaesthetic. A study by Muniandy and Shuib (2016) also found that kinaesthetic is one of the major learning preferences of ESL students. However, studies by Isa, Omar, Fatzel and Ghazali (2021) along with Khalil and Sabir (2019) show opposing results where the kinaesthetic style was claimed as the most preferred learning style of students. Overall, it can be indicated that these students prefer hands-on involvement and interactive instruction. They retain information by engaging in actual learning activities.

Furthermore, Table 10 also shows tactile as one of the students' major learning preferences and is ranked 3rd with a mean of 30.51 and a standard deviation of 4.78. The result has the same outcome as the research by Sabeh et al. (2011), Dubravac and Žunić-Rizvić (2016) as well as Junaid and Ismail (2018) where tactile is the EFL and ESL students' major learning style preference. This implies that students learn best by doing hands-on activities and by experimenting and manipulating things. Despite that, the studies from Sengsouliya et al. (2021) along with Neo and Ng (2020) have averse results where tactile revealed as the minor learning style preference of the students. Additionally, the research findings by Akbarzadeha and Fatemipour as well as Vu and Tran (2020) revealed that the EFL and ESL students respectively have tactile as their most preferred learning style.

Table 10 further shows students have a major preference for the visual learning style with a mean of 30.39, a standard deviation of 4.22 and ranked 4th among the styles. The finding is compatible with the studies by Munandy and Shuib (2016) and Alhourani (2021) where visual is the major learning style of ESL and EFL students. It means that they pick up information from visual sources, such as written instructions, books, images, films, and lecture slides. However, this finding goes against the studies by Dubravac and Žunić-Rizvić (2016), Vu and Tran (2020), Neo and Ng (2020) together with Sengsouliya et al. (2021) where visual was claimed as the minor learning style preference of ESL and EFL students. Moreover, studies results by Lee (2018) and Khan et al. (2019) showed differences where visual is the most preferred learning style for ESL and EFL students.

As shown in Table 10, the students also have the group style as their major preferred learning style with a mean of 30.00, a standard deviation of 5.18 and ranked 5th among the styles. This result is aligned with the research by Junaid and Ismail (2018), Nge and Eamoraphan (2020) along with Sengsouliya et al. (2021) where the ESL and EFL students also have group style as their major preferred learning style. This can explain that students

accomplish greater outcomes when they collaborate with others and learn better through group study. Yet, this major preference for the group learning method contrasts with the findings of Dubravac and Žunić-Rizvić (2016) as well as Neo and Ng (2020) which found that students indicated the group learning approach as a minor.

Eventually, Table 10 displays individual style as the least preferred major learning style of students. It ranks last with a mean of 29.48 and a standard deviation of 5.68. This finding is supported by Dubravac and Žunić-Rizvić (2016) which showed that individual is the major learning preference of the students, but this particular finding differs from Vu and Tran's (2020) and Khalil and Sabir's (2019) studies where individual is the minor learning style of students. Besides, past studies conducted by Sengsouliya et al. (2019) as well as Nge and Eamoraphan (2020) had similar outcomes to the current study where results revealed that the majority of the EFL students have individual as their least preferred learning style. Moreover, in another research by Vu and Tran (2020) together with Muniandy and Shuib (2016) ESL students similarly identified individual style as their least favourite learning modality. The potential reason might be students rarely get the opportunity to work alone during classroom activities since they are frequently required to work in pairs or groups. In addition, as the studies aforementioned are from Asian countries, the individual style being the least favoured learning style might be because Asian students are likely to be reliant on their peers when learning (Nge & Eamoraphan, 2020).

### **5.1.2 Discussion on Data Collected on Research Objective 2**

According to the data in Table 11, lecturers have major preferences for tactile, group, kinaesthetic, and auditory teaching styles, which also appear to fall within the top four.

#### **Table 11**

*Overall means of the lecturer's teaching style preference investigated*

Teaching Style Preferences	Ranking	Mean	Standard Deviation	Result
Tactile	1	31.67	3.90	Major
Group	2	31.67	4.57	Major
Kinaesthetic	3	31.27	3.86	Major
Auditory	4	28.84	3.90	Major
Visual	5	27.85	3.12	Minor
Individual	6	22.91	4.11	Minor

Table 11 above shows tactile is ranked 1st to be the most preferred teaching style of lecturers with a mean of 31.67 and a standard deviation of 3.90. A major preference for tactile teaching style is also reported by Sabeh et al. (2011) as well as Neo and Ng (2020). This is because results showed that incorporating tactile activities helped teachers teach more easily since it helped students learn and retain information better. However, findings by some past studies are against the current study. For instance, research by Alhourani (2021) revealed tactile as a minor preferred of the lecturers' teaching style, while the findings by Peacock (2001) claimed the tactile teaching style is not preferred by the lecturers. Additionally, findings by Akbarzadeha and Fatemipour (2014) particularly mentioned the tactile teaching style is a trifling teaching method and showed that its lecturer respondents had no preferred major teaching style.

In Table 11, group teaching style is shown as another major teaching method which ranked 2nd with a mean of 31.67 and a standard deviation of 4.57. This finding is supported by the results of Peacock (2001) where teachers also preferred group teaching style. The finding indicates that teachers prefer a student-centric teaching style where the teacher plays the role of an observer and divides students to work in a group. Yet, the studies outcomes by Sabeh (2011) and Alhourani (2021) were against the current findings where results presented group teaching style as not preferred and negligible by the teacher. The reason given by Alhourani's

study (2021) for disfavoured group teaching approach was students would squander time chit-chatting with one another and some could nod off during the group discussion. Besides, this could also be due to the traditional teaching approach, where teachers emphasise classroom lectures and memorisation of rote material, therefore group work and collaborative learning are not prioritised.

Furthermore, Table 11 shows that lecturers have a major preference for the kinaesthetic teaching style. It ranked 3rd among the styles with a mean of 31.27 and a standard deviation of 3.86. Research carried out by Peacock (2001), Sabeih et al. (2011) together with Neo and Ng (2020) analogously reported a preference for the kinaesthetic teaching method among the teacher respondents. This shows that teachers prefer to use kinaesthetic activities such as role-plays and games while teaching. The potential reason for the outcomes is teachers find that employing kinaesthetic tasks to illustrate concepts is simpler and meanwhile can improve students' listening and speaking skills through kinaesthetic activities. However, the finding is in contrast to the study by Alhourani (2021) which claimed kinaesthetic styles as a minor teaching style.

Table 11 also reveals auditory style as one of the major teaching styles of the lecturers. It ranked 4th with a mean of 28.84 and a standard deviation of 3.90. The finding is aligned with the research by Peacock (2001) and Saswandi (2014) where auditory is the preferred teaching style of the teachers. Teachers use auditory means that they are inclined to speaking and listening activities. Moreover, the current study which included Chinese lecturer responses may correspond similarly with Peacock's (2001) study which discovered that Chinese educators prefer the auditory teaching approach. However, the study by Sabah et al. (2011) and Alhourani (2021) showed opposite findings where Middle Eastern teachers had contrasting preferences with Asian teachers. Teachers from the studies disfavoured the auditory teaching style, while



the latter research claimed the auditory style to be negligible. This disparity could be attributed to cultural distinctions which have to be further explored in future research.

Besides, Table 4 presents that lecturers have two minor teaching style preferences which comprise visual and individual. This implies that lecturers have less favour for both teaching styles. They would employ both methods, nevertheless not all at once. The first minor teaching preference is visual, ranked 5th with a mean of 27.85 and a standard deviation of 3.12. However, this result is against the findings of several studies. For instance, teachers in studies by Ibrahim and Ramli (2010), Sabeh et al. (2011), Saswandi (2014), Khan and Inamullah (2018) and Sengsouliya et al. (2021) claimed visual style as their preferred teaching approach. In addition, the study by Alhourani (2021) showed visual teaching style as the major preference of the educator. This was explained by the teacher who favoured using the board in the class to show written instruction, graphics and tables because the pupils lacked oral comprehension skills meanwhile the technique was effective in offering assistance to students to become comfortable with new terms and their spelling.

Eventually, the second minor preference style is the individual teaching style which ranked 6th with a mean of 22.91 and a standard deviation of 4.11, equal to the least preference of lecturers among the teaching styles. This result is identical to the study by Peacock (2001) where the individual style was also the least preferred by the lecturers. However, the current finding is opposed to the studies by Sabeh et al. (2011) and Alhourani (2021) where the individual teaching style is preferred by the educator respondents. The study by Alhourani (2021) explained that this was because students will diligently work through their independent efforts to achieve flying-colours results.

### **5.1.3 Discussion on Data Collected on Research Objective 3**

As presented in Tables 10 and 11 respectively, the research findings demonstrate that both students and teachers favour various kinds of learning and teaching approaches. Concerning style compatibility despite the exceptions, students' and teachers' preferences for learning and teaching styles are matched in the majority. Both student and lecturer respondents of the current study are matched on the four major preference styles, which include tactile, group, auditory and kinaesthetic. This finding is aligned with the study by Neo and Ng (2020) where the ultimate outcome also showed a majority match in students' and teachers' learning and teaching styles. Both student and lecturer respondents have the match in kinaesthetic style as a major preference while visual, group and individual style as minor preferences. This result was due to the teacher's rich teaching background and conscious choice of style in light of what she thought to be her pupils' preferences may have contributed to the majority match of preferences between the students and the teacher. Furthermore, the teacher added that the discrepancy between the teaching and learning styles would made her uneasy. However, the present study goes against the research by Peacock (2001), Akbarzadeh and Fatemipour (2014), Karabuga (2015), Shim and Shur (2018) as well as Sengsouliya et al. (2021) where the findings eventually showed a mismatch between the students' learning and teachers' teaching styles. The study by Akbarzadeh and Fatemipour (2014) stated that the mismatch was because teachers preferred to educate following the course characteristics rather than tailor their teaching methods to match students' learning preferences. Moreover, the study by Shim and Shur (2018) also mentioned that contrasting perceptions, conventional thoughts, and teachers' previous experiences with learning were the reasons that led to mismatches.

#### **5.1.4 Summary of Discussion**

Based on Table 10, the discussion revolves around the analysis of students' learning style preferences. The findings indicate that students have various major learning style preferences, with the auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, visual, group and individual styles being ranked in that

order, supporting claims made by previous researchers that ESL learners exhibit varied learning styles. Notably, the auditory learning style emerges as the most preferred, with students excelling in auditory-based learning, such as verbal communication and group discussions. Kinaesthetic and tactile learning styles also hold significant preferences, indicating a penchant for hands-on and interactive learning methods. Visual learning style, while ranking fourth, still represents a major preference among students who acquire information through visual sources. Group learning style is the fifth major preference, reflecting the benefits of collaborative learning, although results vary. Lastly, individual learning style is the least preferred, possibly due to limited opportunities for solitary work in Asian educational contexts. Overall, the complexity and variations in these preferences underscore the importance of accommodating diverse learning styles in educational settings.

Furthermore, data analysis in Table 11 reveals that lecturers display four major preferences with tactile teaching style ranking as their most preferred method, followed closely by group, kinaesthetic, and auditory teaching styles along with two minor preferences, visual and individual ranked in order. Tactile teaching's popularity is consistent with findings from previous studies, emphasizing its effectiveness in enhancing student learning and retention through hands-on activities. However, some past research contradicts these results, suggesting variations in lecturer preferences. Group teaching style ranks second, reflecting a teacher-centric approach that encourages group work, although not all studies align with this preference. The kinaesthetic teaching style ranks third, emphasizing the use of physical activities like role-plays and games for concept illustration. The auditory teaching style ranks fourth, with teachers favouring speaking and listening activities. Cultural differences might explain variations in preferences. Lastly, visual and individual teaching styles are less favoured, ranking fifth and sixth, respectively, indicating that lecturers occasionally use these methods but not as frequently as the top four styles. Overall, these findings highlight the diversity of

teaching style preferences among educators and the need to accommodate these variations in educational practices.

Eventually, the research findings from Tables 10 and 11 illustrate that both students and teachers exhibit preferences for various learning and teaching styles. Despite some exceptions, there is a substantial alignment in the major style preferences of students and lecturers. Both groups tend to favour tactile, group, auditory, and kinaesthetic styles. This concordance supports the idea of a shared preference for these styles. Notably, both students and lecturers have kinaesthetic as a major preference, while visual, group, and individual styles are considered minor. This matching of preferences may be attributed to teachers' informed choices based on their teaching experience and understanding of students' preferences. However, these findings contrast with previous studies that reported mismatches between students' learning styles and teachers' teaching styles. Reasons for these mismatches in previous studies include teachers' adherence to course characteristics rather than adapting to students' preferences and differences in perceptions and past learning experiences.

## **5.2 Implications**

Acknowledging how learning styles affect students' learning is a vital first step in integrating and utilising this knowledge. In order to develop this understanding, educators and students should evaluate their learning styles before the commencement of the course. It isn't necessary to be thorough but can be a survey simply for their classes. They can determine their preferred and disfavoured teaching and learning styles through this approach.

Furthermore, this knowledge is useful in selecting and implementing more effective teaching strategies and materials. Additionally, this would avoid the mismatch of teaching and learning styles between teachers and students. This is significant as according to the research by Peacock (2021), 72% of student respondents expressed dissatisfaction or discouragement

when was learned that their learning styles were in contrast with their teacher's teaching style. Additionally, 76% of student respondents claimed that this difference eventually would have negative consequences on students' language learning.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

In future research endeavours, it is strongly recommended to include both interviews and observation as complementary research methods. This is to provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' learning and lecturers' teaching style preferences. For instance, interviews allow in-depth exploration of students' and lecturers' experiences, and attitudes, providing valuable qualitative data on their learning and teaching style perceptions. On the other hand, observations offer an objective and context-rich view of students' and lecturers' behaviour and interactions in real-life settings. By combining these methods, researchers can gain a more holistic and nuanced insight, plus enhance the validity and reliability of findings, thereby leading to a more robust and insightful research finding.

Besides, future research is suggested to widen the scope of the respondents by including students and lecturers from multiple universities. Expanding the participant pool can significantly enrich the research findings and enhance the study's external validity. Moreover, a study of the variables impacting teaching and learning styles can also become more thorough and sophisticated by including participants from a variety of universities. Collaborating with multiple universities can foster knowledge sharing among academics, ultimately benefiting the broader educational community.

Furthermore, future research might look into factors like age, gender, language proficiency, motivation, and academic achievement level of students. This is to recognize how these factors interact to affect and shape students' preferred styles of learning. Moreover, as education

continually evolves, it becomes imperative to delve deeper into the complex interplay between various factors that can affect how students prefer to learn.

Eventually, it is recommended that similar future studies be conducted over a longer period of time. Longer research periods allow for more extensive data collection. This can result in a richer dataset, providing a deeper understanding and leading to more comprehensive findings.

#### **5.4 Limitations**

The current research is unable to evaluate vast amounts of data by gathering more data from other university students to produce a more precise result due to limited time. Therefore, since all of the respondents are from UTAR, the results of this study cannot be generalized.

Besides, the issue of non-responsiveness among respondents was encountered during the data collection through questionnaires. This led to additional resources and time required for follow-up attempts, which may not always be feasible within the study's constraints. Additionally, the effort of the researcher to overcome non-responsiveness, such as repeated contact attempts, incentives, or other strategies might influence response rates and potentially introduce bias.

Eventually, the current study also came across respondents not understanding the questions in the questionnaire. Although doubted questions had been answered, their comprehension of the questions to what extent was unknown. This may introduce measurement error into the study, potentially leading to inaccurate findings as their responses may not accurately reflect their true attitudes, experiences, or opinions. Moreover, respondents who are uncertain about the questions may guess their answers or provide socially desirable responses rather than admitting their lack of understanding. This response bias can distort the data and affect the validity of the results.

## 5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this survey is to investigate the UTAR students' and lecturers' preferred learning and teaching styles. Based on respondents' learning and teaching preference findings, the presence of a match between their learning and teaching styles is identified. Results of the study revealed that students have major preferences in the six learning styles, whereas lecturers have four major teaching style preferences which are group, tactile, kinaesthetic, and auditory, whereas the remaining two teaching styles, visual and individual are minor. As aforementioned, it can be concluded that most students' learning style preferences match lecturers' teaching style preferences.

The study further emphasises that acknowledging the impact of learning styles on students' learning is essential thus both educators and students should assess their teaching and learning styles primitively to identify preferences and mismatches. This knowledge can inform teachers in the selection of effective teaching strategies as well as prevent students' dissatisfaction and negative consequences.

It is recommended that future research should use interviews and observations, include participants from multiple universities, investigate factors like age, gender, language proficiency, motivation, and academic achievement, and conduct longer studies for comprehensive findings.

Eventually, the present study has limitations in generalisability because it exclusively concentrates on one university. Furthermore, challenges related to unresponsive participants lead to additional resources and time necessitated as well as potential measurement errors stemming from participants' misinterpretation of questionnaire items. These limitations have to be overcome as they potentially impact the validity and accuracy of the study's findings.

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