

## IDENTIFYING STUDENTS LEARNING STYLE PREFERENCES AT IAIN TERNATE

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### Abstract

Students are unique entities with different characteristics to be paid attention to by teachers in the teaching and learning process. Teachers can teach their students based on their unique characteristics. Students' learning style is one of the factors which will contribute toward students' success in learning. This paper is aimed to identify and prepare information about students' major perceptual learning style preferences and minor learning preferences. This research was conducted at State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Ternate towards 116 students of Shariah Department of academic year 2012/2013 who were chosen purposively as the sample of the research. The data of the research were elicited by using Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Style Preferences (PLSP). The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics by using Microsoft Excel 2007. The findings of the research show that the students' major perceptual learning style preferences were visual (mean = 40.2), and the minor perceptual learning style preferences were kinesthetic (mean = 37.0), individual (mean = 36.7), tactile (mean = 36.3), auditory (mean = 35.8), and group (mean = 33.9). The characteristics of students with visual learning style preferences are: (a) The students remember better when they read instructions; (b) The students understand better when they read instructions; (c) The students learn better by reading what the teacher writes on the writing-board; (d) The students learn better by reading than by listening to someone; and (e) The students learn more by reading textbooks than by listening to lectures.

**Keywords:** learning style; PLSP; sharia students; IAIN Ternate

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### INTRODUCTION

Successful learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia is determined by many factors, ranging from curriculum design to classroom instruction. The changing of national curriculum periodically and the shifting from teaching paradigm into learning paradigm in all levels of educational institutions are intended to optimize the learning process and to obtain the learning objective successfully. Chung (2005) argued that the present programs such as student-centered learning and self-instruction learning are among the approaches that support student needs' analysis and personalization.

Students, as one of the independent factors in education, are unique entity with distinct internal and external characteristics. The internal characteristics are, for instance, motivation, attitude, and belief, personality, learning style, and learning strategy, whereas the external characteristics are environmental factor, social background, physical differences, and past experiences. Since these characteristics are essential factors in determining the successful of language learning, they need to be optimized fully and paid more attention both by teacher and students.

To meet the students' divergent characteristics, Walqui (2000) stated that it should be created such techniques and environment which will strongly support the desire and the ability to learn a new language, second or foreign language because students come from dissimilar background with different needs and goals. However, the students do not only have different needs and goals, but they also have distinct favor on language skills to be learned, for example in EFL context in Indonesia, Jubhari (2006) stated that most of the students prefer conversation or speaking to writing and reading.

It might be asserted that students are not alike in their needs, goals and courses or skills. Moreover, they also vary in the way of perceiving, absorbing and retaining the lesson, and in solving their problems appear due to the differences of their learning styles and learning strategies in approaching a new language. Skehan (1989) stated that students as individuals vary greatly in the ways they learn a second language. He added that some learners are more analytically oriented, others are more globally oriented. Some learners are more visually oriented, others more geared to sounds.

In addition, Chung (2005) argued that among a group of learners, some learn better with pictures and

diagrams (visual learners) and some absorb knowledge faster by participation (kinesthetic learners). Some respond strongly to visual forms of information and many others prefer to learn actively and individually (Felder and Spurlin, 2005; Svinicki and Dixon, 1987).

Due to the arguments from Chung (2005), Felder and Spurlin (2005), Skehan (1989) and Svinicki and Dixon (1987) stated above, the teachers, in doing the needs analysis, need not only to seek information related to the students' needs and goals in learning English, and what is the most preferred subject, course or skill to be learned, but they are also responsible to help their students in identifying their learning styles since they interact mostly with the students.

Reid's (1987) comparative study of college students learning English as a second language (ESL) among Arabic, Spanish, Japanese, Malay, Chinese, Korean, Thai, and Indonesian students stated that Indonesian speakers appeared to be most closely related to native English speakers. She added that both groups chose auditory and kinesthetic as major learning styles, visual, tactile, and individual learning as minor styles, and group learning as a negative style.

Rossi-Le (1989) studied 147 adult immigrants from Chinese, Laotian, Vietnamese, Spanish and other who enrolled in community college English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. The result of study showed that perceptual learning styles preferences were influenced by factors in the learners' background, particularly native language. In conclusion, she affirmed that the dominant learning style preferences for the sample were tactile and kinesthetic.

Jones' (1998) study by applying Reid's perceptual learning style preferences questionnaire argued that students generally had three major learning styles (kinesthetic, tactile, group), two minor learning styles (visual, auditory) and one negative style (individual).

In Indonesian context, especially in Makassar, Husain (2000) studied 31 students at FBSS UNM Ujung Pandang which were grouped into visual-directory, visual-sosializer, visual-relator, visual-thinker, auditory-relator and auditory-thinker. She pointed out that all groups had the same achievement; however the visual-relator group had lower achievement than others. Even so, she suggested that by matching teaching style with students' learning and personality styles can produce good learning achievement. A decade later, Jamulia (2010) did a similar research on students' learning style by applying Reid's PLSP at English Department Students in Ternate. Through this research, he supported the earlier findings, that the major perceptual learning styles preferences of English Department Students in Ternate are visual (mean=39.70), kinesthetic (mean=39.07), and tactile (mean=37.88).

Peacock (2001) studied the correlation between learning and teaching style based on Reid's hypotheses. He suggested that a mismatch between teaching and learning styles can cause learning failure, frustration and demotivation. He also found that learners favored kinesthetic and auditory and disfavored individual and group styles, while teachers favored kinesthetic, group and auditory styles.

Park (2002) investigated the learning styles of English learners among Armenian, Hmong, Korean, Mexican, and Vietnamese in secondary schools in California. The results of this study stated that all the ethnic groups were major on kinesthetic and minor on tactile learning style, all of them appeared to be visual learners, and then Hmong, Mexican and Vietnamese students preferred group learning while Armenian and Korean students did not.

Palappu (2007) studied the effect of learning styles on learning to 22 Caucasian aged of 20-25 years by using Index of Learning Styles. The study was aimed to determine whether the visual/verbal learning styles affected the learning of the learners. The finding of this study suggested that the learners' grades had significant statistical difference between visual and verbal learners. The visual learners (M=164.267) achieved higher scores than the verbal learners (M=115.714).

Renou (2008) on his study "A study of Perceptual Learning Styles and Achievement in a University-level Foreign Language Course" suggested that "it seems reasonable to claim that if we teach in the three sensory modes --auditory, visual and tactile, we would help our students retain and retrieve far more information than they would if we exposed them to only one sensory mode of learning."

Liu and Tseng (2009) studied 361 nontraditional EFL students by applying Reid's perceptual learning style preference questionnaire. The findings which emerged from this study may be somewhat contrary to earlier similar study done by Reid in which adult college level students preferred kinesthetic (activity) learning style first and followed by auditory learning style. Most of the students in this study preferred the auditory style of learning while individual study and visual styles (reading) were the least preferred style.

Mulalic, et al. (2009) attempted to determine the learning styles of the students, and the differences in learning styles of the students according to the gender and ethnicity of 160 students (53.8% male) and (46.3% female) at Universiti Tenaga Nasional with ethnicity composition of the samples was 56 Malays (35.0%), 52 Chinese (32.5%) and 52 Indian (32.5%). The results of the study revealed that the students' preferred learning style was kinesthetic. They express minor preferences for visual, auditory and group learning. In addition, students expressed negative preferences toward individual and tactile learning styles. Understanding the students learning styles, on the other hands, will help the teachers to match their teaching style, and be able to prepare and present their learning materials fitting to the students learning

styles. Fox (1993) stated that by identifying students' learning styles, teachers could apply appropriate teaching technique and match their teaching style which will maximize the learning and even educational opportunity.

Based on a synthesis of the previous studies and the problems laid in the background, this research was conducted based on the research questions as follows:

1. What are the major perceptual learning styles preferences of the first year students at IAIN Ternate?
2. What are the minor perceptual learning styles preferences of the first year students at IAIN Ternate?

Hopefully, this research can give the significance both academically and practically. Academically, the results or findings of this research will enrich the literature about learning styles preferences specifically related to Reid's Perceptual Learning Style Preferences. On the other sides, practically, this research will give a great contribution towards teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia. Firstly, it will give information about students' learning styles, so that the teachers could match their teaching styles with students learning styles. Secondly, through the matching of teaching-learning styles, the teachers will select the proper materials, tasks, and activities used in the classroom. Next, it will support both the teachers and the students with good strategies used by good learners so learning can be accelerated in order to achieve learning objective. Finally, the findings of this research will provide the evidence and information for the teachers and administrators about learning condition at IAIN Ternate.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Definition of Learning Style

Learning style has been defined differently by experts and researchers in ESL/EFL learning. However, the literature on learning styles uses the terms learning style, cognitive style, personality type, sensory preference, modality, and others rather loosely and often interchangeably (Ehrman, Leaver and Oxford. 2003).

Keefe (1979 as cited from Brown, 1994) proposes that learning style may be defined as the "cognitive, affective, and psychological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment". Meanwhile, Dunn & Griggs (1988 as cited from Bachetti, 2003) defined that learning style is the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others.

In addition, Dunn, et al. (1993 as cited from Dunn, et al., 2009) defined learning styles as the way individuals begin to concentrate on, process, internalize, and retain new and difficult information. On the contrary, Brown (1994) defined learning style as "a term that refers to consistent and rather enduring

tendencies or preference within an individual. Similar to Dunn, et al., Felder & Henriques (1995) define learning styles as "the ways in which an individual characteristically acquires, retain, and retrieves information".

Grasha (1996 as cited from Diaz & Carnal, 1999) defined learning styles as "personal qualities that influence a student's ability to acquire information, to interact with peers and the teacher, and otherwise participate in learning experiences." Similar to Dunn, et al. and Felder & Henriques, Reid (2002 as cited from Hong, 2007) defines learning style as individual's natural, habitual, and preferred ways of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills.

Referring to the above definitions, in general, learning style can be concluded into three characteristics, namely (1) the way of absorbing, retaining, recalling, and retrieving information; (2) learning style is a set of characteristics and personal qualities that influence learners' ability to acquire information, interact with and respond to learning environment; and (3) learning style is consistent and stable indicators.

What is noticeable in all the definitions stated above is that language learners differ from one learner to another, that is a learner in learning English may prefer seeing and hearing to speaking and being actively involved in the activities. Another learner may, in contrast, be more interested in having an outstanding part in classroom activities and being actively engaged in classroom debates. Therefore, language learners do not learn all in the same way.

### Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Style Preferences

Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Styles Preferences are measured by applying her Perceptual Learning Style Preferences Questionnaire (PLSPQ), where language learners' styles are divided into six cubes of styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group, and individual.

**Visual** learners are most comfortable with pictures, images and graphs while studying and retaining information.

**Auditory** learners learn best when hearing the information and, perhaps, listening to the lecture. Thus, the learner needs to express verbally what he/she learns, solve problems by talking about them and discusses the material in the class.

**Kinesthetic** learners prefer active participation experiences, for example drama, role-play or moving around. Such students learn best by experience and by being involved physically in classroom experiences. A combination of stimuli, for example an audio tape combined with an activity helps learner understand new material.

**Tactile** learners prefer hands on work, for example, handling materials or taking notes. Working on an experiment in the laboratory is the best way for such students to learn new material. Writing notes or instruction can help such learners to remember

information easily and physical involvement in the class pays major role in their retention of the information.

**Group** learners prefer studying with others. Group studying make them feel comfortable and it is best way for them to acquire knowledge. Students also value class interaction and class work with other students, and they remember information when they work with two or three classmates. The stimulation of group work will help such learner to understand new information better.

**Individual** learners prefer studying alone and they learn best independently. Such students learn new material best when reading it themselves. Progress and achievement is best visible when they learn alone.

## METHOD

This research is categorized as survey research. The survey method is the technique of gathering data by asking questions to people who are thought to have desired information. It is the field that studies the sampling of individuals from a population with a view towards making statistical inferences about the population using the sample.

This research is a descriptive, namely an effort to know or to understand the value of an independent variable or more variables without making a comparison or association with other variables (Sugiono, 2003).

The research was conducted at State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Ternate, which specifically addressed to the first year students of academic year 2012/2013. IAIN Ternate has four departments, *Tarbiyah* (Education and Teacher Training), *Sharia* (Law and Jurisprudence), *Adab* (Civilization and Humanity), and *Usuluddin* (Theology). However, this research only focuses on the students of Sharia Department which grouped into five classes: Muamalah A, Muamalah B, Ahwal al-Syakhshiyah, Islamic Banking A, Islamic Banking B, and Islamic Banking C. The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling or judgmental sampling. The Shariah Department students were chosen as the sample since the researcher teach in this department so it is easy to meet the students everyday. However, not all students were participated in this research, only those who are active or attend the class who consider as the sample in this research. The total sample of this research was 116 students (female=77, male=39) as presented in the following table.

Table 1: Respondents of the Study

| Respondent           | Male | Female | Total |
|----------------------|------|--------|-------|
| Muamalah A           | 4    | 11     | 15    |
| Muamalah B           | 7    | 13     | 20    |
| Ahwal al-Syakhshiyah | 19   | 6      | 25    |
| Islamic Banking A    | 2    | 18     | 20    |
| Islamic Banking B    | 4    | 18     | 22    |
| Islamic Banking C    | 3    | 11     | 14    |
| Total                | 39   | 77     | 116   |

The researcher, in order to obtain the data in this research, applied Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Styles Preferences Questionnaire (PLSPQ) developed particularly for learners of foreign language. This questionnaire was used to elicit the data about students' learning styles.

PLSPQ consists of 30 self-report questions distributed into *visual* learning style (question 6, 10, 12, 24, and 29), *auditory* learning style (question 1, 7, 9, 17, and 20), *kinesthetic* learning style (question 2, 8, 15, 19, and 26), *tactile* learning style (question 11, 14, 16, 22, and 25), *group* learning style (question 3, 4, 5, 21, and 23) and *individual* learning style (question 13, 18, 27, 28, and 30).

The subjects or respondents were expected to indicate how much they agree with each item on a scale from 1 to 5 when they learn English. Each number notes certain measurement such as: (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) undecided or neutral, (2) disagree, and (1) strongly disagree. Score of self-report questions were classified into *major* (range 38–50); *minor* (range 25–37) and *negligible or negative* (range 0–24) for each learning styles preferences.

The students' responses to the PLSP questionnaire were analyzed into descriptive statistic to measure the frequencies, percentages, means and average. The result of statistic calculation then being interpreted and explained to gain the conclusion.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data of perceptual learning styles preferences were obtained through the distribution of Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Styles Preferences Questionnaire (PLSPQ). This 30 question questionnaire is using Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree), which used to elicit the data about *visual learning style* (question 6, 10, 12, 24, and 29), *auditory learning style* (question 1, 7, 9, 17, and 20), *kinesthetic learning style* (question 2, 8, 15, 19, and 26), *tactile learning style* (question 11, 14, 16, 22, and 25), *group learning style* (question 3, 4, 5, 21, and 23), and *individual learning style* (question 13, 18, 27, 28, and 30).

The sum of each category of perceptual learning style preferences (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group and individual) was then multiplied by two, and

the result of the multiplication was classified into *major* (range 38–50); *minor* (range 25–37) and *negligible or negative* (range 0–24).

In the following, it will be presented the mean scores of all perceptual learning styles preferences (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group and individual). Based on the result of mean scores of

each perceptual learning style preferences, it is clearly can be said that the first year students of academic year 2012/2013 at IAIN Ternate are major on visual learning style (mean= 42,2), and minor on kinesthetic (mean= 37,0), individual (mean= 36,7), tactile (mean= 36,3), auditory (mean= 35,8), and group learning style (mean= 33,9).

Tabel 2: The mean of each perceptual learning style preferences

|                   | N   | X-Min | X-Max | ΣX   | Mean |
|-------------------|-----|-------|-------|------|------|
| Visual Style      | 116 | 28    | 50    | 4666 | 40.2 |
| Auditory Style    | 116 | 26    | 48    | 4156 | 35.8 |
| Kinesthetic Style | 116 | 20    | 48    | 4290 | 37.0 |
| Tactile Style     | 116 | 20    | 50    | 4208 | 36.3 |
| Group Style       | 116 | 14    | 48    | 3938 | 33.9 |
| Individual Style  | 116 | 22    | 50    | 4254 | 36.7 |

As structured on the PLSP questionnaire, that all perceptual learning styles preferences are constituted by five questions or statements, and these statements are the representation of the characteristics of each perceptual learning style. Therefore, it is important to know to what extent the degree of each statement of the major perceptual learning styles preference (visual learning style), and of the minor perceptual learning styles preferences (kinesthetic, individual, tactile, auditory, and group

learning style) preferred by the first year students of IAIN Ternate, in academic year 2012/2013.

The following criteria in table 3 were adapted from Muhidin and Abdurahman (2007:146), which can be used to give the explanation concerning to the degree of each statement on the preferred language learning styles. The mean score of each statement was consulted to the criteria in order to know the degree of each statement preferred by the first year students of IAIN Ternate, in academic year 2012/2013.

Table 3: The Description Analysis Criteria

| Score Category Range | Description Analysis |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1.00 – 1.79          | Strongly Low         |
| 1.80 – 2.59          | Low                  |
| 2.60 – 3.39          | Sufficient           |
| 3.40 – 4.19          | High                 |
| 4.20 – 5.00          | Strongly High        |

1. *The description of visual learning style statement*  
The visual learning style was the major preferred learning style of the first year students at IAIN Ternate. The following table presents the mean score of the statements on visual learning style. In addition,

the mean score of each variable was corresponded to the table of Description Analysis Criteria above to determine the degree of each statement on visual learning style.

Table 4: The description of visual learning style statements

| Statements on Visual Learning Style                                      | N   | ΣX  | Mean |
|--|-----|-----|------|
| (1) I learn better by reading what the teacher writes on the chalkboard. | 116 | 479 | 4.13 |
| (2) When I read instructions, I remember them better.                    | 116 | 514 | 4.43 |
| (3) I understand better when I read instructions.                        | 116 | 512 | 4.41 |
| (4) I learn better by reading than by listening to someone.              | 116 | 468 | 4.03 |
| (5) I learn more by reading textbooks than by listening to lectures.     | 116 | 441 | 3.80 |

Due to the mean score of each statement corresponded to the Description Analysis Criteria table, it shows that among the five statements in visual learning style, the visual learner students were

strongly high on statement 2, “*When I read instructions, I remember them better*” and statement 3, “*I understand better when I read instructions*”, while the statement 1, 4 and 5 were preferred at high level.

2. *The description of kinesthetic learning style statement*

The kinesthetic learning style was the minor preferred learning style of students at IAIN Ternate. The table 5

below presents the mean scores of kinesthetic learning style statements preferred by the first year students of IAIN Ternate.

Table 5: The description of kinesthetic learning style statements

| Statements on Kinesthetic Learning Style                                | N   | $\Sigma X$ | Mean |
|---|-----|------------|------|
| (1) I prefer to learn by doing something in class.                      | 116 | 385        | 3.32 |
| (2) When I do things in class, I learn better.                          | 116 | 431        | 3.72 |
| (3) I enjoy learning in class by doing experiments.                     | 116 | 481        | 4.15 |
| (4) I understand things better in class when I participate in role.     | 116 | 428        | 3.69 |
| (5) I learn best in class when I can participate in related activities. | 116 | 490        | 4.22 |

The data of mean scores in table 10 above, it shows that the characteristics of kinesthetic learners were strongly high on statement 5, "I learn best in class when I can participate in related activities".

3. *The description of individual learning style statement*

The table 6 below presents the mean scores of individual learning style statements preferred by the first year students of IAIN Ternate.

Table 6: The description of individual learning style statements

| Statements on Individual Learning Style           | N   | $\Sigma X$ | Mean |
|---|-----|------------|------|
| (1) When I study alone, I remember things better. | 116 | 493        | 4.25 |
| (2) When I work alone, I learn better.            | 116 | 477        | 4.11 |
| (3) In class, I work better when I work alone.    | 116 | 452        | 3.90 |
| (4) I prefer working on projects by myself.       | 116 | 381        | 3.28 |
| (5) I prefer to work by myself.                   | 116 | 440        | 3.79 |

The data of mean scores in table 6 above, it shows that the characteristics of individual learners were strongly high on statement 1, "When I study alone, I remember things better".

4. *Description analysis of tactile learning styles statements*

The table 7 below presents the mean scores of tactile learning style statements preferred by the first year students of IAIN Ternate.

Table 7: The description of tactile learning style statements

| Statements on Tactile Learning Style                               | N   | $\Sigma X$ | Mean        |
|--|-----|------------|-------------|
| (1) I learn more when I can make a model of something.             | 116 | 472        | 4.07        |
| (2) I learn more when I make something for a class project.        | 116 | 441        | 3.80        |
| (3) I learn better when I make drawings as I study.                | 116 | 378        | 3.26        |
| (4) When I build something, I remember what I have learned better. | 116 | 499        | <b>4.30</b> |
| (5) I enjoy making something for a class project.                  | 116 | 402        | 3.47        |

The data of mean scores in table 7 above, it shows that the characteristics of tactile learners were strongly high on statement 4, "When I build something, I remember what I have learned better".

5. *Description analysis of auditory learning styles statements*

The table 8 below presents the mean scores of auditory learning style statements preferred by the first year students of IAIN Ternate.

Table 8: The description of auditory learning style statements

| Statements on Auditory Learning Style                                       | N   | $\Sigma X$ | Mean |
|---|-----|------------|------|
| (1) When the teacher tells me the instructions, I understand better.        | 116 | 527        | 4.54 |
| (2) When someone tells me how to do something in class, I learn better.     | 116 | 438        | 3.78 |
| (3) I remember things I have heard in class better than things I have read. | 116 | 407        | 3.51 |
| (4) I learn better in class when the teacher gives a lecture.               | 116 | 430        | 3.71 |
| (5) I learn better in class when I listen to someone.                       | 116 | 330        | 2.84 |

The data of mean scores in table 8 above, it shows that the characteristics of auditory learners were strongly high on statement 1, "When the teacher tells me the instructions, I understand better".

#### 6. Description analysis of group learning styles statements

The table 9 below presents the mean scores of group learning style statements preferred by the first year students of IAIN Ternate.

Table 9: The description of group learning style statements

| Statements on Group Learning Style                                 | N   | ΣX  | Mean |
|--|-----|-----|------|
| (1) I get more work done when I work with others.                  | 116 | 379 | 2.27 |
| (2) I learn more when I study with a group.                        | 116 | 392 | 3.38 |
| (3) In class, I learn best when I work with others.                | 116 | 389 | 3.35 |
| (4) I enjoy working on an assignment with two or three classmates. | 116 | 441 | 3.80 |
| (5) I prefer to study with others.                                 | 116 | 424 | 3.66 |

The data of mean scores in table 9 above show that the students of IAIN Ternate do not learn strongly high on this style. If the students have to be grouped, it must be limited into small group (two or three classmates) as shown on statement 4, "I enjoy working on an assignment with two or three classmates". This statement was reported high according to the table of *The Description Analysis Criteria* (Table 3).

The result of data analysis of reported questionnaire of PLSP on the previous section shows that the data which meet the **major** range requirement (range 38-50) are **visual learning style** (mean = 40.2). Meanwhile, the **minor** perceptual learning styles preferences are **kinesthetic** (mean=37.0), **individual** (mean=36.7), **tactile** (mean=36.3), **auditory** (mean=35.8), and **group** learning style (mean=33.9).

The finding on perceptual learning styles preferences on this research do not corresponds to the previous similar research on learning styles field done worldwide which applied Reid's (1987) PLSPQ. Mulalic, et al. (2009) stated that students at University Tenaga Nasional preferred kinesthetic learning style. Peacock (2001) found that learners favored kinesthetic and auditory learning style. Jones (1998) proved that kinesthetic, tactile and group are major preferred learning styles. It was also reported that students have more than one preferred learning style preferences (Jones, 1998; Peacock, 2001;), even with the latest research done in Ternate, that students are major on more than one learning style preferences, namely: *visual* (39.70), *kinesthetic* (39.07), and *tactile* (37.88), while the minor learning style preferences are auditory (36.24), individual (35.91), and group (34.09) (Jamulia, 2010; 2011; 2012). However, in general sense, the findings of this research support Reid's statement (1987 cited from Oxford, 2003:4) that students from Asian cultures, for instance, were often highly visual, with Koreans being the most visual.

#### 1. The characteristics of major (visual) learning style

Although the students of IAIN Ternate were major in visual learning style, they are not strongly high on all statements or indicators of visual learning style

preferences. The followings are the characteristics of visual learning style preferences of the students at IAIN Ternate, based on the order of the mean score of each statement in visual learning style:

- The students remember better when they read instructions.
- The students understand better when they read instructions.
- The students learn better by reading what the teacher writes on the writing-board.
- The students learn better by reading than by listening to someone.
- The students learn more by reading textbooks than by listening to lectures.

Oxford (2003) stated that visual students like to read and obtain a great deal from visual stimulation. For them, lectures, conversations, and oral directions without any visual backup can be very confusing. Therefore to meet the visual learners of the first year students of IAIN Ternate, the teacher should: (1) adjusted the learning materials into "manual instruction" which describe the lesson into step by step, since they are better in understanding and remembering by reading the instruction; (2) write down the summary or key concepts on the writing-board or display the summary and key concept with power point presentation; (3) prepare the students with the copy of learning materials, since they will learn more through reading activities than listen to the lecture.

#### 2. The characteristics of minor learning styles

The findings of this research show that the students are major only on visual learning style preferences and they are minor on other learning styles: kinesthetic, individual, tactile, auditory, and group learning style. However, this does not prevent them to learn in these learning styles. The following are the reported characteristics of the conditions where the students can learn strongly high through their minor learning styles.

- The students learn best in class when they can participate in related activities.
- The students remember things better when they study alone.

- c. The students remember what they have learned better when they build something.
- d. The students understand better when the teacher tells them the instruction.
- e. The students assignment with two or three classmates.

## CONCLUSIONS

The major perceptual learning styles preference of the first year students of IAIN Ternate is **visual learning style** (mean=40.2), while the minor learning style preferences are **kinesthetic** (mean=37.0), **individual** (mean=36.7), **tactile** (mean=36.3), **auditory** (mean=35.8), and **group** learning style (mean=33.9).

Generally, students with visual major learning style preferences learn well from *seeing the words* in books, on the chalkboard, and in work-books. They remember and understand information and instructions better if they read them. They do not need as much oral explanation as an auditory learner, and they can often learn alone, with a book. The students should take notes of lectures and oral directions if they want to remember the information.

Although the first year students of IAIN Ternate in majority have visual learning style preferences, they can still learn better from the following conditions according to their minor learning style preferences: a) The students learn best in class when they can participate in related activities; b) The students remember things better when they study alone; c) The students remember what they have learned better when they build something; d) The students understand better when the teacher tells them the instruction; and e) The students assignment with two or three classmates.

The visual students like to read and obtain a great deal from visual stimulation. For them, lectures, conversations, and oral directions without any visual backup can be very confusing. Therefore to meet the visual learners of the first year students of IAIN Ternate, the teacher should: (1) adjusted the learning materials into "manual instruction" which describe the lesson into step by step, since they are better in understanding and remembering by reading the instruction; (2) write down the summary or key concepts on the writing-board or display the summary and key concept with power point presentation; (3) prepare the students with the copy of learning materials, since they will learn more through reading activities than listen to the lecture.

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