

## Chapter 8

# INVESTIGATING THE LEARNING STYLES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TERMS OF SOME VARIABLES

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### INTRODUCTION

Education has a key role in society's progress. The individual continues the process of obtaining information from the day he/she is born until the day he/she dies. The learning process is considered one of the most important processes in an individual's life. The situation of teaching or learning is dependent on the learning styles of learners. Learning styles are defined by various theorists and educationists in different ways. The concept of learning style helps us to understand how the learners learn because they differ from each other in terms of learning. Many psychologists have tried to explain this concept in various ways (Bhat & Govil, 2014, p.1). According to Keefe (1979), learning styles are the cognitive, affective, and psychological behavioral characteristics that learners use as determinants that are somewhat unchanged in the way they perceive, interact, and react in the learning environment (Veznedaroğlu & Özgür, 2005, p.4). Individual's preferred ways they use to process information is defined as learning styles by Kolb (Bhat & Govil, 2014, p.1). According to Jonassen and Grabowsk (1993), learning styles include the preferences of the learner in different educational and teaching activities. These are the general trends preferred in the processing of information in different ways (Veznedaroğlu & Özgür, 2005, p.4). Grasha (1996), defined learning styles as "personal qualities that influence a student's ability to acquire information to interact with peers and teachers, and otherwise to take part in learning experiences" (Bhat & Govil, 2014, p.1). Felder and Silverman (1988), claim that learning styles are characteristic strengths and preferences in the process of receiving, holding, and processing information (Veznedaroğlu & Özgür, 2005, p.4). On the basis of these definitions, it can be said that learning style is the way an individual prefers in acquiring, retaining, and retrieving information (Bhat & Govil, 2014, p.1).

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trainings. Thus, they will be able to perform a more qualified teaching service throughout their teaching careers.

In most classes, teachers mainly use traditional teaching methods such as lecturing. They often read written material, and students listen to them. Most students learn better in a visual learning style, which means that they will not understand as much without a visual presentation. Teachers should be aware of the learning styles methods, and they should respond to various requests from students. While some students prefer the visual learning style the others could prefer the verbal learning style. Teachers should take into account the different learning styles of the students while teaching.

Starting with the 2005-2006 academic year in Turkey, a new program was introduced in primary education and it was clearly emphasized that the basic approach in these programs was a constructivist approach. Constructivism is an approach centered on the student in the teaching-learning process. Today, mathematics, science, language teaching and social sciences programs are prepared on the basis of a constructivist approach, and teachers are asked to organize classroom educational environments according to this approach (Arslan, 2007). The data collected in this study consisted of students who were trained in this program. Therefore, it was seen from the results of the study that the most preferred learning style is an active learning style. In the constructivist approach, it is important for students to be active and learn by living. As a result of this study, which was done to determine whether the constructivist approach changed and influenced the learning styles of the students, it was revealed that the students were now left with learning based on listening and thinking. Instead of this, they are learning by doing and experiencing.

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