

# **ARE THERE ANY DIFFERENCES OF LEARNING ORIENTATION BETWEEN LEVEL 1 AND LEVEL 4 NURSING STUDENTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** The aim of this research is to identify the differences of learning orientation between level 1 and level 4 nursing students. **Method:** Data were collected using Inventory of Learning Styles (ILS) questioners which involved two students as respondents, level 1 and level 4 nursing students. The data were calculated based on scoring key in each sub component, and were compared with standard of psychology students. **Result:** The result showed that there were differences of learning orientation between level 1 and level 4 nursing students particularly in components personally interested, certificate directed, vocation directed, and ambivalent. One of reasons behind of this is level 1 nursing students get transition from senior high school into college while level 4 nursing students are settler, and can adapt with learning process in college. **Conclusion:** It will be better if every student has change to screen their learning orientation by completing ILS questioners, so it will help students to focus on their learning process on the other hand, students' learning orientation will help teacher to facilitate students achieving the competencies.

*Keywords: learning orientation, nursing students*

## INTRODUCTION

Orientation and motivation seem to be two words that very important for everyone when they do some activities. According to Oxford learner's pocket dictionary (2008), the meaning of orientation is "the type of aims or interests that a person or an organization has" while motivation is defined as "the reason why somebody does something or behaves in a particular way". Based on that, both orientation and motivation can be affected by inner and outer factors or are known by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Furthermore, Omrod (2009) defined motivation as "an internal state that arouses someone to action, pushes someone in particular directions, and keeps someone engaged in certain activities".

Hence, motivation is needed for students when they joined education especially in higher education. Since in this place students will be prepared with theories, new ideas, innovative technologies and critical thinking in order to help them to be professionals and entrepreneurs so later they will be able to work and earn money for their live. Thus they have to know what are their purposes joining higher education. Is there any reason rather than pass the exam or gain the skills? Or they only follow the rule from their parents that they must continue their study in higher education? The reasons or motivation behind the student's joining in education is called learning orientation (Ras, et.al, 2002).

Every student has their own learning orientation; it depends on intrinsic and extrinsic factor affecting them. For instance: a study conducted by Jeffrey (2009) stated that there were at least three students' learning orientations which most of students choose industrious pragmatist as their learning orientation while cognitive voyaging and multimedia collaboration were on the second and third place respectively. Students who have industrious pragmatist must learn skills as many as they can since skillful students will be more occupied than student with minimum skills. They could be more result oriented than students with cognitive voyaging orientation who more concern on process.

Accordingly, to know students' learning orientation is very important for teacher since it can direct them to facilitate their students to reach their destination or to lead their student when they have wrong learning orientation. Not only for teachers but also students can get many advantages when they realize their learning orientation, for instance: join the learning process with no doubt because they know exactly what their objectives are. That is Vermunt (1998) who developed ILS which has four learning components: processing strategies, regulation strategies, learning orientation, and mental model of learning; each learning component which has sub components is represented by several questions from total 120 questions. This is very useful for students to find their learning styles in order to help them more productive in their learning process.

Therefore, this study uses ILS as a tool to investigate students' learning orientation since the aim of this study is to know the differences of learning orientation between level 1 and level 4 nursing student. Difference of level can give effect for learning orientation since in previous study resulted that older students prefer to have industrious pragmatist as their learning orientation while younger students more comfort to have multimedia collaboration. (Jeffrey, 2009). However, this study focused on learning orientation on ILS by Vermunt which has five sub components: personally interested, certificate directed, self-test directed vocation directed, and ambivalent.

## METHOD

Data were collected using ILS questioners which involved two students as subjects who have different level. Both students were female which one student in level 1 while another in level 4; both subjects were chosen randomly in their class and have same preference in nursing science. Furthermore, level 1 student is student in first semester who graduated from senior high school and does not have any experiences about learning in higher education, while level 4 student is student in seventh semester who has experiences in

teaching learning process in higher education at least three years; she also has experiences joining internship stage in hospital for several subjects.

Before filling the questioners, both subjects got explanation that the data were given would be analyzed to identify the differences of learning orientation between level 1 and level 4 nursing student, and personal identity would be kept or anonymous. During the process, subjects can come to ask for help or explanation related to the questioners. After agreement, the questioners were filled and returned without serious difficulties.

Next, data were calculated based on scoring key in each sub component by Vermunt, and were compared with standard of psychology students. This standard was chosen since psychology is more similar in science with nursing than social science.

## RESULT

Both two subjects have several differences, not only in level but also in age and experiences in learning process. Table 1 will serve basic information about subjects

**Table 1**  
**Characteristics of subjects**

	<b>Respondent 1</b>	<b>Respondent 2</b>
Age	18 years	21 years
Sex	Female	Female
Level	Level 1/1st semester (graduated from senior high school)	Level 4/7th semester
Experience in learning process	No experience (mostly teacher center in senior high school)	3 year with student centered learning

Scores of the two subjects were variative, and it is focused in learning orientation since the aim of this study is to know the differences of learning orientation between level 1 and level 4 students. Table 2 gives information about ILS scoring of two respondents in detail.

**Table 2**  
**Result of the ILS**

<b>Components/ subcomponents</b>	<b>Level 1 student</b>		<b>Level 4 student</b>	
	Score	Level	Score	Level
<b>1. Processing strategies</b>				
a. Deep processing	37	3	49	5
b. Stepwise Processing	39	5	40	5
c. Concrete processing	10	2	25	5
<b>2. Regulation strategies</b>				
a. Self-regulation	31	4	52	5
b. External regulation	47	5	41	5
c. Lack of regulation	24	5	14	3
<b>3. Learning orientation</b>				
a. Personally interested	13	1	19	4
b. Certificate directed	10	1	18	4
c. Self-test directed	22	5	18	4
d. Vocation directed	20	3	24	5
e. Ambivalent	16	5	5	1
<b>4. Mental models of learning</b>				
a. Construction of knowledge	22	1	13	1
b. Intake of knowledge	28	3	37	5
c. Use of knowledge	34	5	37	5
d. Stimulating education	32	5	18	2
e. Cooperation	16	2	33	5

Score is score of subjects in each subcomponent based on scoring key of the ILS, and level is comparing the score of subjects with psychology students which is served in the ILS standard. Level 1 means low or less than 15% of sum score of psychology students and level 5 means high or more than 50% of sum score of psychology students (Vermunt, 1998).

It can be seen from learning orientation component with its sub components that most of sub components are different in level except self-directed test. For instance, personally interested and

certificate directed of level 4 student is higher than level 1 student; it is four and one respectively. On the other hand, the range of level in vocation directed between level 4 and level 1 students is not too wide, only two point. In contrast, level 1 student more ambivalent than level 4 student which is shown by level five and one, respectively.

## DISCUSSION

In fact, result showed that there were differences of learning orientation between level 1 and level 4 nursing students particularly in sub components personally interested, certificate directed, vocation directed, and ambivalent. One of arguments under this finding is level 1 student is in the transition era between senior high school and university including learning process. It could be big differences in learning environment and the way of learning in university rather than in senior high school; it is shocked her so it effects her learning orientation. Other reasons are student in level 1 does not have clear aim why she joined nursing as her choice or what her life could be if she joined in nursing program so no wonder if her ambivalence is bigger than level 4 student.

Based on study conducted by Jeffrey (2009), older students had industrious orientation instead younger students who choose multimedia collaboration as their learning orientation. It was because older students or students in higher level orientated their study for working world. They were looking for the way how to get job as quick as possible, how to be competent employees by applying their skill and theory which were got in college since a competent employee would get high salary.

On the other hand, younger students were enjoying their roles as a college students instead senior high school students since in college they faced many different things including learning process. For instance: in senior high school, they were more passive in learning process, and most of their activities were listening to their teacher while in college or university they must be active to achieve their

competencies; information technology (IT) started to be favorite in this time since most of their teachers used IT to deliver their topic or encouraged them to find the references in e-book or e-journal by using internet. Thus, it was not amazed if younger students prefer to pick multimedia collaboration as their learning orientation.

Even though difference in learning orientation is normal condition for every student but it must be an agreement between students and teachers that the learning orientation in higher education is to achieve the competencies in all subjects; it means that students will be competent graduates when all competencies are achieved. In order to gain that, teacher must be creative to create a motivating learning and teaching process, to develop a conducive environment for students so they will comfort and enjoy the learning process. According to Omrod (2009), in productive classroom, students can tune in and study more effective especially when they are motivated to know their intrinsic motivation in learning than extrinsic. It is said that there are many ways to build a productive classroom, for example: by using instructional technique which attracts students to join learning process or giving feedback for students' achievement in order to encourage students to do the same or better thing in the future.

Furthermore, the same idea came from Ten Cate (2004) which stated that teacher must help students to pass the transition from external guidance (guidance from teachers) through shared guidance (together between students and teachers) to internal guidance (by students themselves). In other words, teachers have responsibility to facilitate students to be competence by creating a good method which help students to have internal guidance or learn by themselves even when they graduate from university, or it is called long life learning.

However, the result of this study cannot be generalized since the number of subjects was limited. For that reason, it is better to conduct further research by involving more subjects. Besides the number of subjects, the suggestions for next research are conducting cohort research to

investigate that do experiences in learning process in higher education affect the learning orientation or not by conducting series of observation to students when they are in level 1 until they are in level 4.

### CONCLUSION

All in all, learning orientation is important for each student to help them focus on learning process; teachers as facilitators also must know the students' learning orientation in order to help them achieve their objectives in learning process. Based on the result of this study, there are differences of learning orientation between student level 1 and student level 4. Thus it is important for teachers to create a motivating learning process to help students achieve their competencies and be competent graduates.

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