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🔓 **Research Article**

Influences, Learning Styles and Learning Preferences of Learners in Special Program in Foreign Language in Korean

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Abstract
The study explored the dominant learning styles, influential factors, and preferred learning activities and media of Grade 7 students enrolled in the Korean language program, aiming to enhance instructional material design and teaching strategies. Adopting a one-group descriptive research design, the study involved a total population of 80 students. A purposive sampling procedure was used in selecting the respondents. The study covered the scope within the second semester of the school year 2021-2022. Data collection employed two main instruments: Fleming's VARK model, which identifies learning styles (Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic), and a 20-item questionnaire adapted from Ancho (2019) to identify learning preferences. Results were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and mean. The findings reveal that the majority of respondents were visual learners, favoring activities that included reading and writing dialogues as well as the use of comic strips. These preferences suggest that visually engaging and text-rich materials are particularly effective in facilitating language acquisition. Additionally, factors such as cultural interest and relevance of Korean pop culture emerged as significant motivators for learning the language. The study underscores the importance of tailoring instructional materials to align with students' dominant learning styles and preferences. By incorporating visually stimulating and interactive media, educators can enhance engagement and improve learning outcomes. These insights provide valuable input for curriculum development, particularly in designing activity sheets and pedagogical approaches that resonate with learners' needs and interests.

Keywords: Educational Media, Korean Language, Language Learning, Learning Styles, Learning Preferences

1. INTRODUCTION

The Korean language has been bold to Filipinos. Korean pop culture has spread out and continues to capture Filipino hearts. There are more than 640 Korean language departments at universities worldwide, and there are 2,100 schools globally that teach Hangeul, or written Korean, half of them in the United States (Kim, 2009). In an exclusive interview with the Philippines News Agency, Korean Cultural Center in the Philippines (KCC), Director Lee Jincheol said what is distinct about Korean culture is its candidness, seen in K-dramas. Lee said K-dramas always deal with the everyday lives of ordinary people so that the viewers can relate. As for Lee, what makes K-pop unique is its non-exclusiveness since it embraces other cultures (Arayata, 2018).

Ancho (2019) pointed out that the trendy works contributing to the spread of the Korean Wave are entertainment-oriented genres, such as Korean dramas, K-pops, and Korean films. Korean dramas, films, songs, and even outfit styles are considered trends nowadays. It resulted in Korean influence on the world. As a representative content, K-pop is understood as a part of a global trend prevalent among youth (Jang et al., 2012).

As early as the school year 2009-2010, the Department of Education has already recognized the need to develop the foreign language skills of learners amid the increasing impact of globalization. SPFL is one

of the six special programs offered by the Department to cater to learners' multiple intelligences. Moreover, help equip them with the necessary skills to meaningfully engage in a linguistically and culturally diverse world (Department of Education, 2018). DepEd's SPFL was formalized in June 2017 under a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the Philippines and South Korea to open Korean as a foreign language in some schools. Every year, KCC holds the Philippines-Korea Cultural Festival in Manila and conducts the Korean cultural caravan in selected schools that hold Korean classes and those that offer Korean language classes.

Thus, Bukidnon National High School opens the door to its second foreign language offering, the Korean language. Based on the survey conducted on incoming Grade 7 students for 2021-2022, 80 students wanted to enroll in the Korean language program. This made the basis for the school to open another language for the program.

Hence, the Korean language is in its pilot year, the teacher had trouble delivering the Korean lessons in the present classroom situation since the program still lacks modules, strategic material, and other learning resources materials for students. Since the pandemic is still ongoing, this study seeks students' learning styles to help construct self-learning modules and other learning materials that will best fit their learning needs following the given competencies in MELCs while maintaining the highest possible quality of content delivery.

This issue led to the learning gap that kept the researcher's primary concern in conducting this study. Thus, this study will be the basis for future strategic materials and activity sheets for Korean language learning. To help bridge this gap in delivering Korean language lessons, this study was formulated.

1.1. Literature Review

1.1.1. Related Reviews and Literature

Neil Fleming's VARK model is a learning style inventory designed by Neil Fleming in 1987. In this model, Fleming developed a way to help students learn more about their preferences. It was designed to help students and others learn their individual learning preferences. VARK's learning styles are visual, auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic. VARK tells you something about yourself that you may or may not know. It can be used to understand your boss, your colleagues, your parents, your workmates, your partner, your customers, your teacher, your relatives, your clients, and yourself. It is a short, simple inventory that has been well-received because its dimensions are intuitively understood, and its applications are practical. It has helped people understand each other and assisted them to learn more effectively in many situations.

Learning styles are essential elements in the process of language learning. In fact, "when students embark on the study of an L2, they are not merely 'empty vessels' that will need to be filled by the wise words of the teacher; instead, they carry a considerable 'personal baggage' to the language course that will have a significant bearing on how learning proceeds" (Cohen, 2009: 161). Further, "styles influence how students learn, how teachers teach, and how the two interact" (Vaishnav, 2013: 1). Being aware of the students' learning styles and making the learners discover and recognize their styles is essential. Teachers and students can understand what works best for them and what could bring them better performance and success in their academic ambition (De Vita, 2001; Felder, 2005).

Since students are individuals with different capabilities, strengths, needs, and preferences, a diverse and inclusive teaching method seems required to meet each student's necessities and predilections, thus making the language course more practical for a broader range, if not for the totality, of the students. If only one teaching method is used, the students whose learning preference is opposed to that may very likely be discouraged in their learning and too uncomfortable to learn effectively (Ibidem). In fact, "in many cases what is being taught has a less impact on learners' achievement than the way materials are presented" (Abidin et al., 2011), showing that learning styles are an essential component in the learning environment.

Additionally, Wong (2015) asserted that learning difficulties could be addressed by understanding students' learning styles. Once the foreign language classroom becomes an environment where students' needs are being determined and addressed, achievement in terms of the skills involved in learning may also increase. Favorable academic outcomes for students are showcased when teachers' and students' behavior are in harmony towards realizing intended learning outcomes.

Researchers have explored various learning styles of individuals over time. Bada and Okan (2000) noted that learner skills and assumptions are central to effective teaching and learning. A typical language classroom entails numerous opportunities for students to display their interest in the language being learned. At the same time, their teacher creates an atmosphere of collaboration, cooperation, patience, and other aspects related to successful language learning. It is also imperative that teachers recognize varying student needs and learning styles in the classroom, as it eventually leads to student achievement.

Therefore, understanding learners as visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic learners and aligning the overall curriculum with these learning styles will benefit the entire classroom. By understanding the learning style of our learners, we can gain a better perspective on how to implement these learning styles into our lesson and study techniques. The teacher's teaching strategies and approaches must be compatible with the learning styles of the students. A learning style diagnosis will be given at the beginning of each class.

1.1.2. Related Studies

Some studies focus on the learning styles of students concerning achievement and other variables. For instance, the study by Cabual (2021) entitled "Learning Styles and Preferred Learning Modalities in the New Normal" examined the different learning styles (visual, auditory, read/write, & kinesthetic) and second-year college students' preferred learning modalities. The study relied on Neil Fleming's VARK model of learning. A test of difference using Chi-square was used to determine if there is a significant difference between the learning styles when grouped based on sex and their preferred learning modalities, with 199 students serving as respondents to the survey. The results show that a vast majority are "visual and read/write." The self-learning package (hardcopy of modules) and the teachers' PowerPoint presentations are the chosen learning modalities. Students' learning styles and preferred learning modalities are closely linked, but no substantial differences are classified by sex and area or major of specialization.

A study on learning Korean as a foreign language has been examined by Ancho (2019) is entitled, "Learning Korean as a Foreign Language: The Case of a Teacher Education Institution in the Philippines." The participants of this study were 30 graduate students in a teacher education institution in Manila, Philippines. The study employed a qualitative research design through content analysis with a 10-item instrument focused on Korean language satisfaction and preferences. The study results revealed that while most respondents preferred group activities and a positive attitude toward doing homework, listening and speaking were also the two primary skills seen as favorable to acquiring the language. The study's findings give significant input into developing instructional materials, overall classroom management strategies, and efficient and effective approaches toward foreign language learning for graduate students. The popularity of Korean culture could also be tapped because learning Korean culture, history, and society can also contribute to the success in learning the Korean language.

Moreover, in a study entitled 'Learning Styles and Students' Achievement in Science,' what is being taught has less impact on learners' achievement than how materials are presented. In other words, learning styles make an essential component of how the teacher will demonstrate the knowledge for the students to understand what is being taught easily. (Busilaoco et al., 2014). In another study, Rezaeinejad (2015) evaluated the Learning Styles and Their Relationship with Educational Achievement among Iranian High School Students. He found out that knowing the students' learning styles will help the teacher deliver the lesson so that students can cope easily, make diverse teaching strategies, and lead to their educational achievement.

Bada and Okan (2000) study on "Students' Language Preference" surveyed 23 teachers working in the same Department with 230 ELT students who were also asked to express their views regarding the extent of their awareness of their students' learning preferences. The data for this study were collected through a 13-item questionnaire adapted from Brindley (1984). The questionnaire had two versions; Version 1 was designed for students, and Version 2 was for teachers. Data were analyzed through a chi-square frequency analysis to define the significance of the gathered results. A t-test was also conducted to observe a correlation between teachers' and students' responses. The findings revealed significant results suggesting a need for closer cooperation between students and teachers regarding how learning activities

should be arranged and implemented in the classroom. Furthermore, students expressed their views in favor of more outside classroom activities that will help them gain proficiency.

Additionally, a study entitled "The Influences of K-POP Fandom on Increasing Cultural Contact" by Jand and Song (2017) assessed the meanings of fan activities promoting K-pop and Korean culture based on local cultural spirit, tolerance, and reciprocity in the Philippines. The study aims to emphasize K-pop fans' participatory behaviors to rethink the Korean Wave's value and increase cultural contacts. This research uses the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method with exploratory and open-ended questions, face-to-face interviews, and three rounds of email interviews. The FGD was conducted in Manila, Philippines, in February 2015, and the six participants of the FGD research were in the ages of 20s. Each local partner recruited the FGD research participants without any condition. The in-depth interview was conducted with the three administrators of the PKCI and the one active K-pop fan in its partner organization. Then, the two times of email interviews were followed with the interviewees.

Based on the analysis of the results, the Philippine Kpop Convention, Inc. (PKCI) showed the positive possibilities of participatory fan cultures. The PKCI acts as a cultural mediator for voluntarily introducing the Korean Wave and Korean culture to local people. The activities are not simply responses to the support from its partner organization, the Korean Cultural Center. These activities are caused by the K-pop fans' interest in exploring K-pop, Korean values, and Korean culture. The PKCI fandom is representative of bottom-up fan activism and keeps bridging social capitals through various activities. The PKCI fandom has also been contributing to increasing cultural contacts in Korea. Out of all, K-pop fandom must be a voluntary act for developing the familiarity and favorability of the K-pop, Korean Wave, and Korean culture. The interest in K-pop often encourages K-pop fans actively to participate and invite their friends and family members to encounter Korean culture.

Moreover, Wiseman (2012) conducted a case study on literacy instruction due to low reading skills. Understanding this statement and seeking to teach in a manner with which all students can be successful, active participants in lessons, Wiseman identified interactive read-aloud to be an effective strategy that increases student engagement and literacy skills. Interactive read-aloud provides all students with the opportunity to be challenged and to extend their thinking and understanding of reading. During his nine-month qualitative study, data were collected during morning meetings, read-aloud, and writing times. Field notes focused on teacher instruction, student interaction, and responses to read-aloud by a student participant. Wiseman used the case study data to determine that read-aloud is an effective teaching strategy to increase student understanding and engagement in literacy.

Thus, the study's outcome can help anchor and create activities where students can learn at their preference. This also can give positive actions to have meaningful and need-based activity materials available for the curriculum. So, to create such material and other related activities for Korean language learning, factors that influence learning the language and students' preferences should be investigated.

1.2. Research Questions

This study was formed to assess the learning preferences of Grade 7 Special Program of Foreign Language students of Bukidnon National High School in learning the Korean language for the school year 2021-2022.

The following questions formed the basis of this study:

1. What are the factors that influence the students to take Korean language studies?
2. What is the learning style of the students?
3. What is the most preferred way of learning the Korean language and culture in the new normal setting?
4. What are the most preferred learning activity and forms of media in learning the Korean language in the new normal setting?

1.3. Scope and Limitation

This study was conducted to determine the factors and learning preferences of the Grade 7 Special Program in Foreign Language – Korean. The data collection was conducted on 100% of the total population of the SPFL- Korean enrollees of Bukidnon National High School, for the school year 2021-2022.

The conduct of the study commenced within the third grading period. The study was done through the utilization of questionnaires to the students as a survey and reference. This study focuses only on the factors that influence them enrolling in the program, a way of learning, preferred media usage, and learning activity.

Also, the study does not cover other factors that are not considered and relevant to the factors that influence their enrolling in the program and the preferred learning avenue. Another possible limitation was the inevitable presence of bias and reluctance on the part of the respondents in answering the questionnaire. Although the researchers assured confidentiality of the data, it was observed that some of the respondents did not answer truthfully all the questions presented. Consequently, it could affect the result of the intervention.

2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the sampling, research design, and data collection of the study.

2.1. Sampling

A purposive sampling procedure was used in selecting the respondents in this study. According to Lee (2011), purposive sampling is an acceptable kind of sampling for special situations. It uses the judgment of an expert in selecting cases, or it selects cases with a specific purpose in mind. Purposive sampling is used most often when a difficult-to-reach population needs to be measured, and this suffices the gathering of sample data since we are not delivering face-to-face classes. Thus, this technique was employed to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the variables for the study. The school has 34 Grade 7 sections; however, the researchers focus only on the two (2) SPFL- Korean classes with a total of 80 students who were used as respondents of the study.

2.2. Data Collection

A formal communication procedure was done before the conduct of the study. A permission letter to the school principal and a letter of consent to the student-respondents of Bukidnon National High School was given to the persons involved. The study covered the scope within the second semester of the school year 2021-2022.

The study employed a one-group descriptive research design to cater to the four research questions that determined the factors and learning preferences of Grade 7 Special Program of Foreign Language students in learning the Korean language. Numerical data with frequency, percentage and mean were used to analyze the results. This design also helped the researchers to identify the learning preferences that will be the basis for constructing the learning materials for the Korean language as one of the main goals and visions of this study.

Fleming's VARK model consisting of 16-item questions was adopted and used for testing the participants' learning styles. A 7-item instrument highlighted the factors that influence the participants in enrolling in the program, and a 20- item instrument also dealt with the preferred way and media of learning Korean as a foreign language was adapted from Ancho (2019).

The instrument was structured in a modified Likert scale. A 5-point scale, ranging from "very much interested," through "somewhat interested," "neutral," to "not very interested" to "not at all interested." Participants were instructed to respond to their degree of agreement with the statements contained in the instrument.

The research instrument was given to the respondents in the schedule of their module distribution and was returned on the following schedule of the retrieval. The questionnaires were collected, and all responses were recorded accordingly.

To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, informed consent was given to the participants. The information sheet includes the research title, author's names and designation, a brief introduction, aims, participant selection, and voluntary participation in the study. It is indicated that they can choose to participate or not; and that the data from their participation were kept with the utmost confidentiality. The respondents reflected their signature on the agreement to the provisions.

2.3. Data Analysis

The data were gathered systematically. The results of the learning style assessment were collected and tabled according to the frequency of choices. The data gathered from the research instrument were also collected and computed as to the selected variables.

Fleming's VARK model scoring chart was used in analyzing the learning style of students. On the other hand, in getting the factors that influence the students to take the Korean language, data were collected through the checklist and were analyzed through frequency and mean. Qualitative descriptions of means were interpreted as shown in Table 1. The scale ranges from 1 to 5 which describes from not preferred to highly preferred.

Table 1. Level of Preference Scale (Bringula, 2012)

Scale	Mean Range	Qualitative Interpretation
5	4.51 – 5.00	Highly Preferred
4	3.51 – 4.50	Preferred
3	2.51 – 3.50	Moderately Preferred
2	1.51 – 2.50	Slightly Preferred
1	1.00 – 1.50	Not Preferred

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the presentation and discussion of the data gathered from the respondents of the study. The discussions are presented based on the sequence of the research problems.

It is shown in the Table 2 that 59 (73.75%) out of 80 respondents chose that they were interested to learn Korean Language and Culture which led to being the highest factor that influenced them in enrolling in the language.

Table 2 shows the list of factors that influence the students in taking Korean language studies.

**Table 2.** Factors that Influence the Students in Taking Korean Language

Factors that influence students in taking Korean language studies	f	Percentage
I am interested to learn Korean Language and Culture.	59	73.75
I want to learn the language for future employment.	31	38.75
It is my parents' decision to enroll me in a Korean class.	18	22.5
I am a fan of Korean Drama and Korean pop culture.	56	70.00
I enrolled because my friend is in the same class.	28	35.00
I want to watch K-drama without subtitles.	42	52.5
I enrolled in a Korean class for academic purposes (Exchange student, Specialization)	18	22.5

This was followed by being a fan of Korean drama and Korean Pop culture as a factor with 56 (70.00%), wanted to watch K-drama without subtitles with 42 (52.5%), and learning the language for future employment with 31 (38.75%), enrolling because of a friend in the same class with 28 (35.00%), parents' decision to enroll in a Korean class and enrolling Korean class for academic purposes with 18 (22.5%) respondents.

The results display a big interest in learning the Korean language since most of the respondents were also a fan of Korean drama and culture. The invasion of the Korean entertainment industry contributed to this factor. Vividly, it could be seen in particular how Korean entertainment nowadays gains fame among Filipino people. Their culture and entertainment choices have been loved by many.

Further, the study conforms to the finding of Sornsuwannasri (2020) showing that the motivation affecting Korean language learning is their interest and self-motivation; secondly, the most expectation after graduation from institutes is the ability to understand Korean songs/series/variety programs; and gender from the Korean-wave pop culture affects motivation to learn Korean language.

Table 2 presents the total percentage of learning styles of the respondents. The four learning styles were taken from the VARK model.
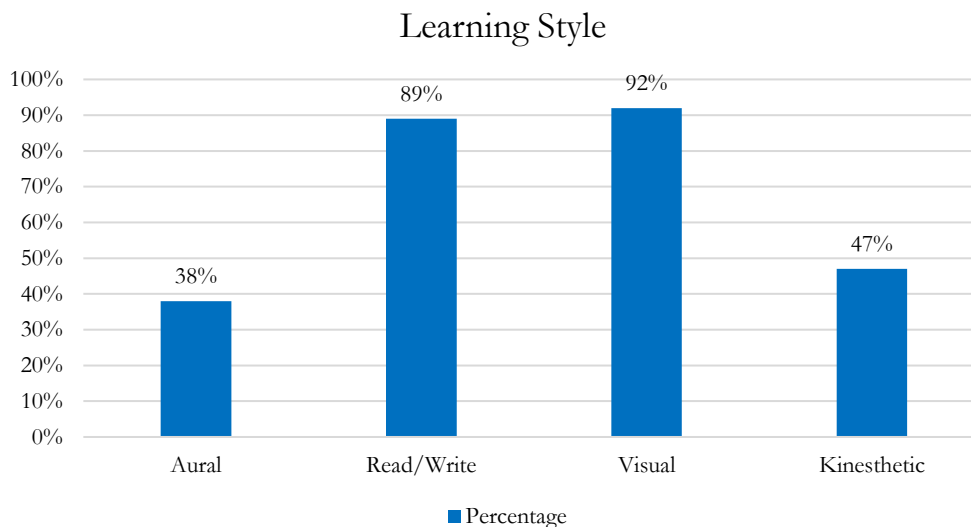
Figure 1. Learning Styles

The results show in figure 1 that majority of the respondents are visual learners with 73 (92%), read and write 71 (89%), kinesthetic 38 (47%), and there are 30 (38%) who are aural learners.

The study's findings reveal that the students' group was mostly "visual", and the rest are distributed to the other three learning styles. Felder & Solomon (2007) explained that visual learners remember best what they see pictures, diagrams, flow charts, timelines, films, and demonstrations. They tend to find diagrams, sketches, schematics, photographs, flow charts, or any other visual representation of course material that is primarily verbal very useful to learn. They use concept maps listing key points, enclosing them in boxes or circles, and drawing lines between concepts to show connections.

Thus, learning styles make an essential component of how the teacher will demonstrate the knowledge for the students to understand what is being taught easily. (Busilaoco et al., 2014). Similarly, the study is in accord with the findings of Rezaeinejad (2015) as he evaluated the Learning Styles and Its Relationship with Educational Achievement among Iranian High School Students. He found out that knowing the students' learning styles will help the teacher deliver the lesson so that students can cope easily, make diverse teaching strategies, and lead to their educational achievement.

Significantly, teachers must cater to the needs of visual students by creating appropriate instructional materials, as they learn best when they can see what they are studying. The teacher's teaching strategies and approaches must be compatible with the learning styles of the students. When students read, they can see and visualize the characters which could help them memorize and master the language.

Table 3 presents preferences of learning in terms of macro skills in a language class. It shows the variables, the mean, the standard deviation, and its interpretation.

Table 3. Preferred Way of Learning

Preference	M	SD	Description
Reading	4.52	0.80	Highly Preferred
Writing	4.03	1.15	Preferred
Speaking	3.23	1.57	Moderately Preferred
Listening	2.71	1.76	Moderately Preferred

The result in Table 3 shows most of the respondents highly preferred reading which has a mean of 4.52. On the other hand, the skill of listening resulted with a mean of 2.71 and speaking for 3.23 which describe as moderately preferred by the respondents.

The result of the study conveys a reason which probably the respondents take that reading and writing are the first step skills to master a language before being able to speak the language spontaneously. The need to master first the basics resulted in their choice of the preferred way of Korean language learning. Given this statistic, it would be helpful to design activities that highlight these skills in the classroom. When planning activities are related to these, practical applications might also be considered.

The result of the present study agrees with the study of Wiseman (2012) showing that after the nine-month qualitative study the data were collected during morning meetings, read-aloud, and writing times. Field notes focused on teacher instruction, student interaction, and responses to read-aloud by a student participant. Wiseman used the case study data to determine that read-aloud is an effective teaching strategy to increase student understanding and engagement in literacy.

It suggests that reading as language practice and learning plays a vital role to keep the learning as easy to master along with understanding. In reading characters and words, it walks not only speaking aloud the content but also filling in the understanding and mastery of language learning. Thus, in reading, one can speak, remember, and comprehend.

Table 4 presents specific preferences of the respondents when it comes to studying and learning the Korean language and culture in the new normal setting. It shows the variables, the mean, the standard deviation, and its interpretation.

Table 4. Preferred Learning Activity

Preference	M	SD	Description
Games	4.75	0.56	Highly Preferred
Role Play	4.61	0.68	Highly Preferred
Conversation with other classmates	4.18	1.00	Preferred
Reading and Writing Dialogue			
Writing Diary	4.9	0.38	Highly Preferred
Songs	3.6	1.04	Preferred
Poetry	3.73	0.92	Preferred
Monologue	2.81	1.19	Moderately Preferred
	3.48	1.11	Moderately Preferred

The result shows in Table 4 that the respondents highly preferred learning activities are reading and writing dialogue with a mean of 4.9, followed by games with 4.75 and role play for 4.61. Additionally, conversation with other classmates, writing diary and songs were still on the list of preference. In contrast, respondents find poetry and monologue as the least preferred among the list of preferred learning activity.

The result implies that respondents were most interested and found to be motivated to learn the language if the activities are more on reading and writing dialogues. This skill can help them build their speaking skills and understanding of Korean when they can practice and master reading and writing.

This result conforms to the findings of Ancho (2019) showing that vocabulary learning is also believed to be effective when done by writing or saying new words repeatedly. The findings of the study give significant input into the development of instructional materials, overall classroom management strategies, and efficient and effective approaches toward foreign language learning which favor reading and writing activities.

Table 5. Preferred Media in Learning Korean Language

Preference	M	SD	Description
TV/ Video/ Films	3.73	1.27	Preferred
Radio/ Audio	2.07	1.29	Slightly Preferred
Comic Strips	4.58	0.77	Highly Preferred
Pictures/ Posters/ Flash cards	3.68	1.00	Preferred
Books	3.76	0.93	Preferred
Slides/ PPT	3.05	1.11	Moderately Preferred
Mobile App	3.41	1.30	Moderately Preferred
Self-learning Modules	4.12	0.95	Preferred

Table 5 shows the preferred media in learning the Korean language. Thus, the results reveal the majority of the respondents highly preferred comic strips with a mean of 4.58. Furthermore, among the listed media in learning Korean, radio, or audio media with a mean of 2.07 were found to be the least preferred by the respondents.

This result means that most of the students are likely to learn and understand the language if there are some pictures and words that they can see. Since it was found that most of the respondents were visual learners, it is significantly clear that they prefer media that contains characters and pictures for easy and guided learning.

The results confirm that most students chose the hard copy of the materials and activity sheets in learning Korean language in the new normal setting. It is suggested that they will be able to learn at their speed and in their own time with the materials provided by their respective teachers. Since the majority of them and visual learners, they wanted to have materials with pictures or visuals on them. On the contrary, they are more likely to avoid participating in virtual/online classes due to their lack of access to the technology, such as a laptop/desktop, smartphone, or Android phone.

The findings of this study oppose the result of the study of Ancho (2019) entitled "Learning Korean as a Foreign Language: The case of a Teacher Education Institution in the Philippines" where he found out that audio and video materials were still preferred in class. TV/video/films with Korean-related content topped the preferences. The most preferred content included Korean pop culture icons and topics that could surely capture students' interests since they are also exposed to these even outside the classroom. He also pointed out that there are many materials online related to the Korean language, ranging from movies, songs, and TV shows which could be utilized in class. While using these resources would require great preparation and time management for the foreign language teacher to compile and present in class, the impact could be favorable once it captures students' level of interest and suitability for the lesson.

4. BROADER IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

4.1. Theoretical Implications

4.1.1. Contribution to Learning Styles Research

The identification of visual learning as the dominant style among Korean language learners aligns with existing theories about the role of sensory modalities in education. By specifically focusing on Korean as a foreign language, this study adds depth to the literature on language acquisition and learning preferences, showcasing the need to explore culturally and linguistically diverse learner populations.

4.1.2. Interplay Between Motivation and Learning Preferences

The influence of cultural interest, such as Korean dramas and pop culture, underlines the interplay between external motivation and internal learning preferences. This aligns with socio-cultural theories of language learning, emphasizing that students' personal and cultural interests significantly shape their learning approaches.

4.1.3. Enhancing the VARK Model

The study's findings suggest the need for contextual adaptations of the VARK model. While the visual dominance observed confirms its validity, the preferences for specific media like comic strips offer nuanced insights that could refine the application of this model to foreign language education.

4.2. Practical Implications

4.2.1. Curriculum Design and Pedagogy

The findings emphasize the importance of designing instructional materials that cater to visual learners. Language educators could incorporate elements like comic strips, diagrams, and visual aids into lesson plans to enhance engagement and comprehension. Activities such as role-playing and dialogue writing could also be prioritized to support skill development.

4.2.2. Development of Learning Resources

Given the preference for reading and writing-focused activities, educators and material developers should create resources emphasizing these skills. Textbooks, self-learning modules, and visual guides tailored to Korean language learners can address the specific needs identified in the study.

4.2.3. Integrating Korean Culture into Learning

The respondents' strong interest in Korean culture highlights the value of culturally relevant content in language education. Teachers could incorporate lessons around K-drama dialogues, song lyrics, or traditional Korean stories to maintain interest and foster deeper cultural understanding.

4.3. Implications for Related Areas

4.3.1. Cross-Cultural Comparisons

The preference patterns observed among Filipino learners suggest potential for comparative studies with learners from other countries. This could provide insights into whether visual learning styles and cultural influences are universal or context-specific in foreign language acquisition.

4.3.2. Impact of Media on Language Learning

The study highlights the pivotal role of media in language education, particularly visual media. Future research could explore the effectiveness of emerging technologies, such as augmented reality (AR) or interactive e-learning platforms, in supporting visual learners in language classes.

4.3.3. Equity in Access to Educational Resources

The finding that students avoid virtual/online classes due to lack of access to technology raises concerns about equity in education. This calls for research on affordable and accessible teaching tools, especially in remote or underprivileged areas, to support language learning in the new normal.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study highlights the importance of understanding students' learning styles, preferences, and motivations in the context of learning the Korean language and culture. The findings reveal that the interest in Korean culture, including dramas, songs, and pop culture, is the most significant factor driving students to enroll in the program. This underscores the broader influence of the Korean Wave (Hallyu) on global education trends, particularly in fostering cultural appreciation and language learning.

The study also confirms that most respondents are visual learners who prefer instructional materials that allow them to see and interact with content, such as comic strips, reading and writing dialogues, and visually engaging materials. These preferences emphasize the need for educators to design instructional strategies and materials that align with students' dominant learning styles while also addressing the diverse needs of auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic learners.

Furthermore, the findings underscore the role of practical, culturally relevant activities, such as games and peer interactions, in creating engaging learning environments. This aligns with research suggesting that experiential and culturally embedded approaches to language learning enhance student engagement and comprehension.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions and recommendations were formulated: First, the interest in learning the Korean language and culture is seen to be the highest factor as listed. The popularity and invasion of Korean drama, songs, etc., push the respondents to enroll and learn the language for reasons.

Determining the learning styles offered great help in crafting materials to suffice the learning needs of the students. Since it resulted that most of the respondents were visual learners, teachers should adhere to the need and select or create materials and activity sheets that would help the students learn the language at their best pace. Teachers must cater to visual students' needs by creating suitable instructional materials since learning is best attained when they see what they are studying. Other learning styles must also be addressed. The auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic students must also be given due importance. The teachers also need to have a variety of activities to respond to their student's specific needs. There should be equity and equality in attending to the interests, conditions, and levels of abilities, particularly during this time of the pandemic. Moreover, there is a strong relationship between the learning styles and the student's preferred learning modalities, as revealed in the results.

Furthermore, the study found that reading is the highly preferred way of the respondents in learning the Korean language and culture. The results suggest that designing instructional materials should reflect relevance to the topic and opportunities for everyday applications. Once students can realize how each topic could be concretized, this would help them appreciate the discussion and develop a grasp of the topic.

Lastly, this study revealed that reading and writing dialogue together with comic strips were seen to be the most preferred learning activity and form of media in the classroom. However, games and student-to-student interaction can also provide an opportunity to add to regular classroom activities. A Korean language class can be seen as a window to break the traditional approach to learning. By integrating essential activities out of students' needs, learning could be facilitated toward the desired achievement goal.

Moreover, this study has provided a vital contribution to planning, designing, and implementing Korean language and culture activity materials, particularly in the context of a special program in foreign language education at Bukidnon National High School. In the future, researchers could focus on the development of appropriate materials to be used in the classroom. The findings provide valuable inputs to guide the researchers and the teachers in the making of effective teaching and learning materials that best fit the need of the students in learning the language while bridging the gaps that have been experienced in the curriculum.

5.1. Additional Recommendation

5.1.1. Instructional Material Design

Teachers should develop visually engaging and interactive materials tailored to the dominant learning styles of their students. Examples include incorporating comic strips, reading and writing exercises, and culturally relevant visual content. Simultaneously, materials should cater to other learning styles to ensure inclusivity and equity.

5.1.2. Pedagogical Strategies

Educators should integrate varied teaching strategies, such as games, role-playing, and dialogues, to provide a balance of structured learning and creative interaction. These approaches can help students connect theoretical language concepts to real-world applications, fostering deeper understanding and retention.

5.1.3. Focus on Cultural Integration

The Korean language program should continue to leverage the students' interest in Korean culture by incorporating activities such as analyzing K-drama dialogues, learning song lyrics, and exploring

traditional cultural practices. This not only sustains student interest but also deepens their cultural understanding.

5.1.4. Equity in Learning Access

Teachers must ensure that learning materials are accessible to all students, particularly in remote or resource-limited settings. This includes providing hard-copy materials and activity sheets, which are particularly valuable in contexts where access to technology is limited.

5.1.5. Future Research Directions

- Develop and evaluate instructional materials specifically designed for visual learners in language programs.
- Investigate the long-term impacts of incorporating cultural content on students' language proficiency and motivation.
- Explore the effectiveness of integrating technology, such as augmented reality or mobile applications, in supporting diverse learning styles in foreign language education.

5.1.6. Broader Curriculum Implications

The findings provide valuable insights for educational policymakers and curriculum designers to refine foreign language programs. Emphasizing culturally relevant and visually engaging content can make foreign language education more effective and appealing, particularly in special programs like those at Bukidnon National High School.

Data Availability Statement. The data supporting the findings of this study, "Influences, Learning Styles, and Learning Preferences of Learners in Special Program in Foreign Language in Korean" conducted by El Chamberlain Q. Abellana and Losel Mae S. Abellana are not publicly available due to the inclusion of sensitive information from SPFL Grade 7 learners at Bukidnon National High School. Access to the data is restricted to ensure participant confidentiality and comply with ethical guidelines. However, anonymized data may be made available by the corresponding author upon reasonable request and with approval from the relevant ethical review board.

Conflicts of Interest. We hereby declare that we do not have any personal conflict of interest that may arise from our application and submission of our research. We understand that our research proposal may be returned to us if found out that there are conflicts of interest during the initial screening as per (insert RMG provision). Further, in case of any form of conflict of interest (possible or actual) which may inadvertently emerge during the conduct of our research, we will duly report it to the research committee for immediate action. We understand that we may be held accountable by the Department of Education and BERF for any conflict of interest which we have intentionally concealed.

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