English-majored Students' Perceptions towards the Effects of Asynchronous E-learning on Learner Autonomy

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Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138
Volume: 06
Issue: 04
July - August 2025
Received: 23-05-2025
Accepted: 28-06-2025
Published: 07-07-2025
Page No: 373-380

Abstract
The recent educational reforms in Vietnam as well as in international settings favor student-centered approaches, which provide chances to investigate learner autonomy within modern online learning environments. However, the educational system suffers from two main issues affecting English language education: passive learning behaviors combined with restricted learner autonomy. This study aims to investigate the perceptions of English-majored students toward how asynchronous e-learning environments influence their learner autonomy. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining a 20-question survey with 200 students and semi-structured interviews with 10 English-majored students. It was found that students have positive perceptions about the effects of asynchronous e-learning mode on their learner autonomy. These results are expected to provide valuable insights into the application of learner autonomy in the context of Vietnam's higher education system, offering implications for further educational innovation.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.54660/.IJMRGE.2025.6.4.373-380

Keywords: Learner Autonomy, Asynchronous E-learning, English-majored Students, Perceptions

1. Introduction

Rapid technological developments in the 21st century have changed the learning system carried out in schools. The growth of educational technologies during recent years has brought important changes to how language education occurs in higher education institutions. The teaching and learning process known as e-learning through online network technologies has emerged as a widespread education method. The implementation of e-learning occurs within the timeframes of both real-time and independent sessions. The two e-learning modes exist, but asynchronous education stands out for its flexible delivery model. Through asynchronous e-learning, students can independently access course materials whenever they choose since this mode eliminates the requirement for real-time participation (Berestok, 2021) [1]. Students gain flexibility through this learning format, yet they must independently oversee their educational process.

In asynchronous e-learning, students and teachers are not in the same place, so students need to study by themselves and complete tasks independently of the instructor (Lim & Morris, 2009) [2]. Because there is no face-to-face contact, students need to be more responsible for how they study. This brings attention to learner autonomy, which is the ability to take control of one's own learning (Holec, 1981) [3]. Since the 1970s, educators and researchers have extensively studied learner autonomy across different parts of the world (Chan, 2015) [4], but the research focus on learner autonomy emerged in Vietnam only during recent years (Van Loi, 2016) [5]. Many research investigations on learner autonomy have focused on blended learning situations and both synchronous e-learning and Learning Management Systems (LMS) together with general language learning environments. However, studies about learner autonomy within asynchronous e-learning environments remain insufficient according to current academic research. The importance of this research gap becomes clear because asynchronous learning demands self-sufficiency from students at a level higher than other educational approaches.

In Vietnam, learner autonomy is still a challenge. As Dang (2010) [6] points out, Vietnamese students are often seen as passive learners who depend too much on teachers. Many still focus on listening, taking notes, and repeating what they have learned. Other problems in English learning also exist, such as large classes, lack of resources, and traditional teaching methods (Phan, 2013; Tran, 2013) [7, 8]. These things make it harder for students to become independent learners. However, education in Vietnam has changed a lot in recent years. The government has supported new teaching methods that help students become more active and creative. Policies also encourage better English learning and allow students more choice in how they learn (Bao, 2017) [9]. The evolution of higher education towards more flexible and technology-integrated systems necessitates greater learner autonomy, as students are increasingly responsible for managing their individualized learning paths within these adaptable environments (Fujii, 2024) [10]. These changes create a good chance to study how learner autonomy works in new ways of learning, especially through asynchronous e-learning.

At the university where this research was carried out, an asynchronous e-learning platform has been used in recent times to support students in English language learning. This system allows students to study at their own pace without being tied to fixed class schedules. While such flexibility is useful, it also raises questions about how well students can manage their own learning when they are not closely guided by teachers.

This practical situation led to the idea for this study. Since learner autonomy is considered important in online learning environments, especially in asynchronous settings, it is necessary to understand how students perceive their ability to take control of their learning. Therefore, this research focuses on English-majored students' perceptions of the effects of asynchronous e-learning on their learner autonomy.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition and theoretical background of learner autonomy

According to Holec's (1981) [3] research, which first introduced the concept, learner autonomy is defined as the "ability to take charge of one's own learning". He also noted that this ability "is not inborn but must be acquired either by 'natural' means or (as most often happens) by formal learning, i.e., in a systematic, deliberate way". This definition has become the most frequently cited in the literature (Benson, 2009) [11].

Over time, different scholars have expanded on this definition. Hedge (2001) [12] built upon Holec's work by using the term "responsibility" instead of "charge" and detailed that learner autonomy consists of independent planning, organization, and monitoring of educational processes that teachers do not oversee. Boud (2012) [13] emphasized that autonomy involves students taking significant responsibility for their own learning, beyond merely responding to teacher instruction.

The initial understanding of learner autonomy centered on student self-capability. Research findings from recent times demonstrate that autonomy consists of two parts: individual effort and collaborative learning elements. Benson (1997) [14] established three dimensions through his research: technical, psychological, and political. Learning strategies combined with learner training form the basis of the technical dimension, which promotes independent learning. The psychological element of learning autonomy refers to learners' self-directed learning capacity which aligns with Holec's original definition. Learners possess political autonomy when they both select their learning materials and establish their own learning approaches.

Oxford (2003) [15] built on Benson's framework by introducing four new perspectives which include technical, psychological, sociocultural and political-critical. The expanded framework incorporates emotional and cognitive elements together with social mediation of learning and cultural and ideological engagement of students. Through her work, Quoc Lap (2005) [16] stressed the importance of affective and cognitive, and social elements in autonomous learning.

The research adopts learner autonomy concepts from Benson (1997) [14], Oxford (2003) [15], and Quoc Lap (2005) [16] through four dimensions which it employs. Students who belong to the technical dimension show their ability to perform independent learning activities outside classrooms without needing direct instructor supervision. Within the psychological framework, learners must develop independent responsibility for learning through maintaining both their motivational drive and self-control as well as confidence levels. The learner achieves political control through their ability to decide their educational path by selecting learning content and methods. Autonomy also grows through learning alongside others. The social dimension strengthens students' ability to learn independently through meaningful interactions and collaborative work.

Moore (1972) [17] defined learner autonomy as a fundamental factor for independent learning. Students require higher autonomy to determine their learning targets while searching for educational resources and assessing their progress thus making e-learning work at their own pace successful. Oxford (2008) [18] agrees with Moore that learners need to take full responsibility for both planning and executing tasks in an e-learning system with complete autonomy. Students with limited learner autonomy experience reduced decision-making authority which might negatively impact their involvement and educational performance. Autonomy holds special importance for e-learning students because they learn through digital platforms instead of traditional classroom settings. Students using e-learning can direct their English education independently from external pressures and instructions. The students maintain their strong connection to textbooks and educational institution objectives and course materials and resources to achieve language proficiency. (Smith et al., 2008) [19]. The online English course students demonstrated increasing learner autonomy according to Bedoya (2014) [20] as they gained confidence and self-sufficiency through platform features and course design together with teacher support. Through technological support, students learn to become skilled users of various online resources while effectively working in e-learning environments and developing better abilities to organize their online studies according to Zhong (2018) [21]. Such abilities are characteristic of autonomous learners. Students learn to take control of their studies while acquiring better language skills from this experience in a "digital social environment".

According to Zimmerman (2002) [22] learner autonomy stands as an essential factor for success in e-learning platforms since students must independently oversee their learning process. Lynch and Dembo (2004) [23] reached a similar conclusion when they stated that students need independence to succeed

in online education. Andrade (2014) [24] stressed that online learners need to effectively use resources and tools alongside self-regulation and personal agency. The study conducted by Lazorak et al. (2021) [25] discovered e-learning courses enable students to control their educational experiences which results in better academic results.

Ribbe and Bezanilla (2013) [26] state that online learning requires students to accept personal responsibility for their education which Little (1995) [27] initially described as learner autonomy. Students who actively participate in selecting their learning paths will develop higher autonomy when the tasks contain personal meaning. Students exhibit higher enthusiasm for computer-based and Internet-based assignments than traditional paper-based work according to Mutlu and Eröz-Tuga (2013) [28]. These out-of-class learning activities with personal and active participation could lead to substantial growth of student autonomy.

2.2 Overview of asynchronous e-learning

E-learning refers to educational experiences that use web-based platforms to support virtual universities and online classrooms which facilitate digital collaboration and technology-assisted distance education according to Sharma and Kitchens (2004) [29]. E-learning stands as a highly effective educational solution to meet the rising educational needs of students (Clark et al., 2007) [30].

E-learning consists of two primary learning methods which are synchronous and asynchronous learning. Most e-learning programs during the past era relied on asynchronous delivery methods for educational content (Hrastinski & Keller, 2007; Romiszowski & Mason, 2013) [31, 32].

The definition of asynchronous e-learning describes it as an "interactive learning community that operates without time constraints and physical boundaries and classroom limitations" (Mayadas, 1997) [33]. Muilenburg and Berge (2005) [34] emphasized that students need to modify their online activities to match their schedules while handling their family and work obligations for successful online learning. Hrastinski (2008) [35] explained that students enroll in online courses because they offer flexible scheduling which enables them to balance education with work and family responsibilities and other obligations. The learning method is designed for independent study which enables students and instructors to learn independently [2].

Asynchronous learning has expanded its reach beyond higher education to include professional training and corporate settings and self-paced skill development programs. The Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) employ asynchronous delivery methods to teach worldwide students through pre-recorded lectures that students can watch at any time (Pappano, 2012) [36]. The initial implementation of asynchronous learning depended on emails together with static web pages to distribute content [32]. The technological progress has enabled asynchronous learning to incorporate interactive media together with adaptive learning tools and AI-driven personalized learning experiences (Singh & Thurman, 2019) [37].

The asynchronous environment enables students to access educational materials through audio/video lectures and handouts and articles, and PowerPoint presentations according to Perveen (2016) [38]. Raymond et al. (2016) [39] provided examples of online teaching tools "The teacher may decide to deliver his lesson through Videotape, YouTube, Digital Video Disc (DVD) or Podcast while the students can later respond through the use of communication modes like email". Students can access learning materials at any time through Learning Management Systems and multiple other platforms.

The asynchronous e-learning model operates through Learning Management Systems and digital platforms which support both instructional delivery and student interaction without requiring simultaneous online participation. The learning management systems Moodle Blackboard and Canvas allow students to access recorded lectures and assignments and quizzes and communication tools through their platforms which enable students to review content and submit their work by set [32]. Mtebe (2014) [40] demonstrated through descriptive research that well-planned and organized courses both satisfied students better and helped them use LMS more effectively. The research showed that well-designed course content together with delivery frameworks led to better platform engagement while enhancing learner satisfaction with system features.

Some educational institutions decide to buy pre-existing systems or select open-source alternatives while others develop and operate their own LMS systems. The online learning platform of Nam Can Tho University operates its own LMS system which provides students with asynchronous e-learning opportunities. The study defines asynchronous e-learning as a teaching method which utilizes an LMS to deliver instruction and facilitate interactions between learners who study independently at any time and from any location.

2.3 Previous studies

Research on learner autonomy in e-learning has been conducted in various settings, highlighting its significance in enhancing independent learning skills.

Baru et al. (2020) [41] conducted qualitative research about the Schoology LMS platform which enables student autonomy development among 25 Discourse Analysis students. The study used data triangulation to demonstrate student autonomy development indicators which extended beyond classroom usage of the platform. The results showed that students showed high enthusiasm for participation, and they were reflected in their regular logins and active contributions in online discussions through commenting on their peers' ideas. Based on the study, Schoology allowed students to take charge of managing materials, activating their cognitive processes, and applying learning strategies, which indicates its potential to increase autonomy in content-based language learning.

Güneş (2021) [42] examined the students' levels of autonomy in an asynchronous learning environment. By using a quantitative research method, this study was carried out at a public university in Georgia, USA, and involved 40 students. They enrolled in an online English Composition course as a required class. The research results showed that most students handled their learning process effectively, demonstrating asynchronous learning can promote autonomy through regular student-instructor interaction.

Derinalp et al. (2023) [43] conducted a comparative study on online learning and learner autonomy among Turkish and Indonesian EFL students. A quantitative approach was used to survey 100 undergraduate students from Turkey and 120 from Indonesia using a 30-item online questionnaire. In contrast to the above findings, this study's findings indicated that both groups of students exhibit high levels of learner

autonomy in the online setting. However, differences were observed between two groups of participants in their ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning processes.

Research studies about learner autonomy in e-learning at Vietnamese institutions have become more prominent since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

One study was carried out by Nguyen and Le (2021) [44], studied LMS effects on EFL learner autonomy at a Central Vietnamese university. Twenty-five randomly selected students took part in the focus group interviews for qualitative data collection regarding their views. Through the research, it became clear that students recognized LMS positively because it gave them the freedom to initiate tasks and track their performance while assessing their learning. The collected data reveals important information about how LMS supports learner autonomy, which matches the current research investigation of e-learning and independent learning skills.

The following study was by Nhung and Yen (2022) [45]. The research took place at a Mekong Delta university to investigate student perceptions about online education alongside their potential autonomy development in English as a foreign language. Using quantitative methods, the researcher surveyed 199 English-majored students to examine their perceptions. The findings revealed that students showed positive attitudes toward online learning and identified planning their studies as well as performance evaluation and goal-setting and study process self-regulation and learning responsibility as key components for their autonomy. The findings from this research join existing studies about learner autonomy in Vietnam and reinforce the current study's focus on e-learning as a tool for developing independent learning abilities.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research aim and questions

The purpose of this study is to examine how English-majored students perceive the role of asynchronous e-learning in enhancing their ability to learn independently.

In order to achieve these research aims, this study seeks to answer the following question:

- What are English-majored students' perceptions of the effects of asynchronous e-learning on their learner autonomy?

This study employed a mixed-methods design to investigate an overview of students' perceptions toward the effects of asynchronous e-learning on learner autonomy among 200 English-majored students. Creswell (2003) [46] defines mixed-methods research as the process of gathering, analyzing, and combining both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study to achieve a deeper understanding of the research issue.

3.2 Research instruments

In this study, quantitative data were primarily obtained through the administration of a closed-ended questionnaire, which was adapted with minor modifications from Nhung and Yen (2022) [45] to better suit the specific context and objectives of the current research.

The questionnaire were developed based on four key dimensions of learner autonomy in online learning, which include four clusters: (1) *planning learning experience* (PL), (2) *self-controlling learning process* (SC), (3) *evaluating learning performance* (EVA), and (4) *taking responsibility for decisions and assessment* (RES).

Participants responded to each item using a five-point Likert scale, which allowed them to express varying degrees of agreement. The scale ranged from 1 to 5, where 1 represented "strongly disagree," 2 represented "disagree," 3 indicated "neutral," 4 represented "agree," and 5 indicated "strongly agree".

To explore the participants' perceptions more deeply, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten randomly selected participants. The researcher adapted some questions from Nguyen and Le (2021) [45] and added questions that were suitable for the research question. The interview consisted of eight open-ended questions designed to provide more in-depth insights into the research topic.

3.3 Data analysis

The Software Package of Statistics for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 27.0) was used for the analysis process. Several statistical procedures were carried out, including Descriptive Statistics and Paired Samples T-Test, to examine the survey results.

Thematic analysis, as suggested by Boyatzis (1998) [47], was employed to categorize the data into key themes based on recurring patterns and contrasts among participants' responses. These themes were then compared with the quantitative findings to provide deeper interpretation and support for the overall results of the study.

To measure the level of the analysed data from the range from 1 to 5, the researcher based on Oxford's (1990) scale.

4. Results

4.1 Students' perceptions towards the effects of asynchronous e-learning on their learner autonomy

Table 1: Overall Mean Scores of the Questionnaire

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Overall	200	1.80	5.00	3.85	0.47

The mean score of participants' perceptions was high (M = 3.85, SD = 0.47). It could indicate that the students' agreement on the potential of asynchronous e-learning for learner autonomy is at a high level.

Table 2: Overall Mean Scores of the Four Clusters

Variables	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Planning learning experience	200	1.00	5.00	3.98	0.64
Self-controlling learning process	200	1.33	5.00	3.54	0.65
Evaluating learning performance	200	1.67	5.00	4.04	0.59
Taking responsibility for decisions and assessment	200	1.13	5.00	3.96	0.56

Among the four clusters, EVA received the highest mean score (M = 4.04, SD = 0.59), followed closely by PL (M = 3.98, SD = 0.64) and RES (M = 3.96, SD = 0.56). The Paired Sample T-Test was run to compare these mean scores. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between EVA and PL, with significance values greater than 0.05 (t = -1.2, p = 0.233). The comparison between PL and RES also yielded no significant difference (t = 0.46, p = 0.65). Similarly, the difference between EVA and RES did not reach statistical significance (t = 1.87, p = 0.63). Therefore, it can be inferred that students generally perceive

evaluating learning performance, *planning learning experience*, *and taking responsibility for decisions and assessment* as equally significant factors in fostering their learner autonomy in the asynchronous e-learning context. Although students rated SC quite well (M = 3.54, SD = 0.65), this dimension proved to be the weakest contributor to their overall autonomy.

4.2 Students' perceptions towards the effects of asynchronous e-learning on planning learning experience

Table 3: Students' Perceptions of Each Item in PL

Items	N	Mean	SD
I'm able to decide what to learn next in my English course. (PL1)	200	3.75	0.89
I can plan my learning on my own. (PL2)	200	4.03	0.82
I can make targets in my learning by myself. (PL3)	200	4.16	0.75

As shown in Table 3, most students demonstrated positive perceptions regarding their ability to plan learning in an asynchronous e-learning environment. For item PL1, the mean score was 3.75 (SD = 0.89), indicating a high level of agreement. Participants expressed more positive responses in PL2. The item received a mean score of 4.03 (SD = 0.82), indicating students feel more autonomous regarding their learning plan development. Item PL3 showed the strongest support for planning-related autonomy. The highest-rated response with a mean score of 4.16 (SD = 0.75) from this item demonstrated an extremely strong agreement.

These quantitative findings were further supported by interview responses, which also revealed that most participants demonstrated a clear ability to plan their learning when studying in an asynchronous online environment:

I usually plan my study schedule when studying on the E-learning platform. Since the lessons often come with specific deadlines, I organize my time to make sure I meet them...(Student 1)

...I usually make plans to keep track of my studies and ensure I don't miss any lessons. I schedule study time for specific hours during the day, and my goal is to complete all the lessons and to understand the material. (Student 8)

A small number of participants, namely Student 2, revealed that they did not actively set goals or make structured learning plans when studying online:

...Most of the content and learning path are already designed by the teacher, so I mostly just follow what's already planned. (Student 2)

Most of the participants reported that they often set weekly study goals and made basic study plans when learning English online, while others expressed contrasting perspectives.

4.3 Students' perceptions towards the effects of asynchronous e-learning on self-controlling learning process

Table 4: Students' Perceptions of Each Item in SC

Items	N	Mean	SD
I can solve difficulties in my learning. (SC1)	200	3.63	0.91
I can accomplish the tasks by myself without much detailed instruction from the teacher. (SC2)	200	3.04	1.00
I can prevent negative effects on my learning. (SC3)	200	3.58	0.89
I can learn on my own without much teacher involvement. (SC4)	200	3.36	1.11
I like to learn on my own outside of school time. (SC5)	200	3.73	0.97
I like to find other resources of learning out of the ones prepared by my teacher. (SC6)	200	3.93	0.85

As shown in Table 4, the students displayed high agreement with Item SC1 regarding their independent handling of learning difficulties according with a mean score of 3.63 (SD = 0.91). In contrast, students showed diverse responses toward the SC2 item. This item measuring task accomplishment without detailed teacher guidance received a lower mean score of 3.04 (SD = 1.00), which placed it at the medium level. Regarding their ability to prevent negative effects on their learning in SC3, they had a high mean score of 3.58 (SD = 0.89). In relation to learning without teacher involvement in SC4, students were fairly divided, with a mean score of 3.36 (SD = 1.11).

Item SC5 received higher support levels for autonomous learning activities outside traditional classroom settings. The surveyed students scored 3.73 (0.97) on average for this item. Finally, the students scored Item SC6 at M = 3.93 (SD = 0.85), which signifies their strong drive to find supplemental educational materials independently. It can be seen that the student population in asynchronous learning actively pursues external educational materials as it exhibits strong learner autonomy.

The interview results showed that most students can control learning difficulties and complete tasks without much teacher involvement:

When I face difficulties in online English learning, I often rewatch the lessons on the e-learning platform since I'm allowed to access them after class. If I still don't understand, I'll look for similar videos online for more explanation. I may also ask my friends or teachers for further clarification. (Student 4)

...I usually try to figure things out on my own first. I'll search on Google, watch videos, or read more to understand better. If I still don't get it, I'll ask my friends or make a note to ask the teacher later...(Student 6)

It depends on the assignment. If it's difficult, I'll need guidance from the teacher. But generally, for e-learning, I don't need detailed instructions from the teacher because the content provided is already comprehensive enough to complete the tasks well. (Student 8)

To summarize, the interviewees usually reach out for help from other online materials first, but if their assignments are too complicated, they will ask for teacher guidance later.

4.4 Students' perceptions towards the effects of asynchronous e-learning on evaluating learning performance

Table 5: Students' Perceptions of Each Item in EVA

Items	N	Mean	SD
I'm able to identify my strengths in learning English. (EVA1)	200	4.03	0.79
I'm able to identify my weaknesses in learning English. (EVA2)	200	4.17	0.76
I can evaluate what I have learned. (EVA3)	200	3.93	0.72

In terms of identifying their strengths in EVA1, the data revealed that most students evaluated their ability at 4.03 (SD = 0.79). Interestingly, the responses to Item EVA2 were even more positive. This item yielded a higher mean score of 4.17 (SD = 0.76), indicating strong agreement with the ability to identify personal weaknesses in English learning. Regarding their ability to evaluate what they had learned (EVA3), the results were also favorable, with a mean score of 3.93 (SD = 0.72).

In the interview, students said that they mainly evaluated their learning and assessed their strengths and weaknesses.

I regularly assess my strengths and weaknesses during online learning... I've realized that my strengths are self-discipline and the ability to grasp lessons fairly well. However, my weakness is that if I don't take notes of important points, I tend to forget them easily... (Student 4)

I often review my assignment scores and learning results to assess my progress. Additionally, I reflect on how I feel while learning to identify areas where I am improving and areas where I need more practice. (Student 9)

...I usually assess my strengths and weaknesses through small tests. I compare my results over time to identify areas where I make frequent mistakes or errors. I often retake tests available on English learning websites or the E-learning system to track my progress and see how much I've improved... (Student 10)

Overall, the participants of the interview showed that they usually evaluate learning performance through self-reflection about understanding, checking assignments regularly, and monitoring their progress throughout time.

4.5 Students' perceptions towards the effects of asynchronous e-learning on taking responsibility for decisions and assessment

Table 6: Students' Perceptions of Each Item in RES

Items	N	Mean	SD
I can suggest activities for my classwork. (RES1)	200	3.37	0.91
I like to have choices in the way I learn. (RES2)	200	4.22	0.68
I want to be involved in deciding learning activities. (RES3)	200	3.98	0.83
I want to be involved in deciding learning topics. (RES4)	200	3.93	0.87
I want to be involved in deciding learning targets. (RES5)	200	4.09	0.81
I like to be asked for opinion about the learning process I like. (RES6)	200	3.90	0.94
I want to be given tasks/assignments that I can choose. (RES7)	200	3.95	0.88
I don't really like to be strictly controlled in my learning. (RES8)	200	4.24	0.86

As shown in Table 6, particularly in RES1, which asked whether students could suggest activities for classwork, received the lowest mean score of the cluster (M = 3.37, SD = 0.91), indicating only a moderate level of confidence among students. In contrast, RES2 achieved a very high level of agreement (M = 4.22, SD = 0.68).

With regard to decision-making in learning, RES3, RES4, and RES5 focused on students' preferences for participating in decisions about learning activities, topics, and targets. The mean score reached 3.98 (SD = 0.83), 3.93 (SD = 0.87), and 4.09 (SD = 0.81), respectively. The results for RES6 and RES7 were similarly positive. In RES6, the item received a high mean score (M = 3.90, SD = 0.94). For RES7, students showed a preference for being given a choice in assignments, with a mean score of 3.95 (SD = 0.88). Item RES8 revealed the strongest preference for autonomy among all items in this cluster. The mean score for this statement was 4.24 (SD = 0.86), placing it in the high range

The results showed that the interviewees also often reported a preference for being involved in decisions related to their learning process:

I'd love to be involved in deciding the learning activities, topics, and goals. I think this would make learning more enjoyable and engaging... (Student 3)

...I don't need full control over everything, but I'd like to at least have the chance to make suggestions or choose between a few options... (Student 6)

Notably, many students felt they were tightly constrained by the time limits or content of their e-learning courses, while others believed that these courses were comfortable.

I don't really feel overly controlled. The schedule is pretty flexible, and the teacher doesn't supervise me as closely as in face-to-face classes, so I feel more comfortable... (Student 1)

I do feel overly controlled when I'm required to watch the full video content. Sometimes, the e-learning system requires me to watch up to 90 minutes, which can feel a bit too much. (Student 5)

In summary, the interviewees revealed that they want to be involved in deciding learning process. They also have different opinions for their feelings about the online learning courses.

5. Discussion

The findings revealed that asynchronous e-learning mode provided an environment for encouraging learner autonomy. The researchers confirmed findings from Baru et al. (2020) [41], Güneş (2021) [42], Derinalp et al. (2023) [43], Nguyen and Le (2021) [44], and Nhung and Yen (2022) [45] who demonstrated that asynchronous learning platforms facilitate student development of autonomous actions.

More specifically, students demonstrated the ability to plan their learning independently. They can decide what to learn next in their English course, can plan their learning on their own, and can set targets in their learning themselves. This supports the argument made by Ribbe and Bezanilla (2013) [26], who emphasized that learner autonomy can be promoted when students are granted opportunities to determine their own learning paths. Learners who take control of their educational decisions in flexible learning settings like online classes tend to maintain responsibility toward their education and stay focused on their learning process. Similarly, the research conducted by Derinalp et al. (2023) [43] revealed that participants displayed high levels of learner autonomy

regarding planning their learning activities.

The results also showed that students possessed the ability to control their learning process independently. Students demonstrated this ability through independent problem-solving and minimization of negative distractions while completing work without requiring extensive teacher supervision. The ability to regulate oneself plays an essential role in developing student autonomy within asynchronous e-learning platforms. Supporting this, Lazorak et al. (2021) [25] emphasized that e-learning environments, when designed effectively, can empower students to take greater control of their learning. Interestingly, while many participants in this study reported being able to manage their learning without much teacher involvement, Güneş (2021) [42] found that frequent instructor-student interaction played a key role in fostering autonomy in asynchronous e-learning. This contrast suggests that although students may perceive themselves as independent, structured support and consistent teacher presence may still serve as important scaffolds that reinforce their autonomy indirectly. Additionally, the mean score in this cluster was 3.54, slightly higher than the high scale level of autonomy. In comparison, Nhung and Yen (2022) [45] reported a lower mean score of 3.37, but it was also considered a high level in their study. Nevertheless, the studies demonstrate that this cluster obtained the lowest mean value among all autonomy dimensions which indicates students displayed learning management skills, yet their autonomous abilities were less developed in other areas.

Besides the self-controlled learning process, the student claimed that they were able to evaluate their learning performance. They believed that they could also independently recognize their strengths and weaknesses to find suitable learning methods for improvement. This study aligns with Nguyen and Le (2021) [44] findings that LMS activities offered students substantial opportunities to evaluate their performance. The study demonstrates that students can use asynchronous platforms to independently and repeatedly evaluate their learning outcomes.

Furthermore, taking responsibility for learning decisions and assessment is believed to be one of the dimensions of promoting learner autonomy. This aspect shows strong positive results in the findings of this study. A majority of participants showed a strong preference for being involved in choosing learning activities, topics, and goals, as well as expressed their opinions about the learning process. Similarly, participants in Nhung and Yen's research (2022) [45] showed the highest level of learner autonomy in taking responsibility for decisions and assessment among five clusters analyzed.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate students' perceptions of the effects of asynchronous e-learning on their learner autonomy. The findings revealed that students generally held positive attitudes toward learning in an online environment. Students believed they could evaluate their learning progress, planning the learning experience, take responsibility for learning decisions and assessment, self-control learning process.

Overall, the study concluded that asynchronous online learning provided an ideal environment for the development and enhancement of learner autonomy among English-majored students. The collected data helps teachers better comprehend student independent learning method patterns as well as their specific difficulties. Such knowledge enables the creation of better teaching techniques and learner-oriented practices to foster independence in remote learning settings.

Future research should concentrate on studying how asynchronous online learning affects learner autonomy not only in English-majored students, but also in other majors to develop both theoretical foundations and a deeper comprehension of the topic.

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