

Empowering Vietnamese EFL Learners at Tertiary Level: Investigating Factors Shaping Learner Autonomy in English Language Acquisition

Nguyen Anh Thi,^{1*} Nguyen Huong Tra,² Nguyen Hoang My,³ Pham Trut Thuy,⁴ Le Thanh Thao,⁵ Phuong Hoang Yen,⁶ Huynh Thi Anh Thu⁷

¹²³⁵⁶⁷Department of English Teacher Education, Can Tho University, Can Tho city, Mekong Delta – Vietnam, ⁴Department of English Teacher Education, Nam Can Tho University, Can Tho City, Mekong Delta – Vietnam

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Abstract

This study scrutinizes the viewpoints of Vietnamese students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) regarding determinants impacting their autonomy in English language acquisition. Data was amassed from 117 Vietnamese EFL learners attending a university in Vietnam by using a survey-based methodology. The survey instrument, comprising Likert-type items, was predicated on well-established conceptual frameworks derived from antecedent studies. The study unveiled multiple key influences on learner autonomy, incorporating voluntariness, learner choice, adaptability in study alternatives, peer collaboration, and beliefs about the educator's role, motivation, capabilities, and independence. These determinants underscore the significance of learners' active participation, personal agency, social interactions, nurturing learning ecosystems, intrinsic motivation, efficacious learning strategies, and learner empowerment in cultivating learner autonomy. The implications gleaned from these results emphasize the necessity for pedagogical stratagems that encourage voluntariness, learner choice, peer collaboration, teacher backing, motivation, skill enhancement, and learner agency within English language educational environments. These pedagogical stratagems would better equip learners for the autonomous journey of English language acquisition, thereby enhancing the overall efficiency of English language education in the Vietnamese context.

Keywords: English; language acquisition; factors; learner autonomy; Vietnamese EFL learners; tertiary level

Introduction

The universally applicable and pervasively influential English language catalyzes enhanced communication, enriched opportunities, and

deepened social exchanges. In Vietnam, the indoctrination of English education is a pivotal cornerstone within a national initiative sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Training (Nguyen, 2018). This initiative strives to

***Corresponding Author:** Nguyen Anh Thi
(nathi@ctu.edu.vn) Hem 43 3 Thang 2 Phuong
Xuan Khanh 94115

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capacitate Vietnamese adolescents with the aptitude for autonomous utilization of foreign languages, specifically English, to facilitate communication, academic pursuits, and professional prospects, undergirding the country's trajectory towards modernization (Nguyen, 2019).

Notwithstanding, the multifaceted process of English language acquisition is subject to a host of internal and external determinants (Sulistiyo, 2018). Among these, learner autonomy (LA), an internal dynamic, assumes pivotal importance as it predicated on learners assuming stewardship for their learning trajectory, albeit under the resource provision and guidance of the educator (Dwee & Anthony, 2017). Autonomous learners, characterized by a heightened self-awareness and invigorated motivation, demonstrably attain superior language proficiency (Liu et al., 2015; Oxford, 2015).

In the academic canon, LA is characterized as a learner's ability to govern their educational progression (Hu & Zhang, 2017). This governance incorporates diverse responsibilities, including formulating educational objectives, exercising independent judgment, and the self-directed assessment of learning results. The notion considerably emphasizes learners' readiness to undertake accountability for their educational journey, with autonomy conceived as liberty in the genesis of knowledge. It broadens the scope of LA beyond mere self-sufficiency, positing that it originates from mutual dependence, hence underscoring the cardinal role of social interactivity in the educational process.

Two distinct types of autonomy can be observed in the context of learning, namely

Proactive Autonomy and Reactive Autonomy (Priyatno, 2017). The former represents an active modality of learning in which learners proactively shape their learning pathway through goal-setting, strategy selection, and self-assessment. The latter, Reactive Autonomy, denotes a dependence on external guidance and stimuli for learning. Notably, Reactive Autonomy is a foundational step towards Proactive Autonomy, enabling learners to allocate and manage learning resources independently. Khoo and Kang (2022) state that proactive learners, who engage with the learning process more actively and independently, tend to learn more effectively and exhibit higher motivation levels than their reactive counterparts, who engage more passively.

Despite the undeniable significance of LA, there is a conspicuous gap in the scholarly landscape regarding empirical exploration into the determinants influencing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' autonomy within the Vietnamese milieu. Therefore, the present study explores Vietnamese EFL learners' perceptions vis-à-vis the determinants that mold their learner autonomy in English. This investigation pivots upon the theoretical frameworks postulated by Blidi (2017) and Nguyen and Habók (2020), intending to scrutinize the determinants exerting influence upon LA. Within this context, several factors are instrumental in cultivating LA, including voluntariness, learner agency with flexibility in academic choices, peer facilitation, volitional components (motivation and pedagogical beliefs), and capacity (encompassing ability, desire, and autonomy). Voluntariness, along with the liberty to immerse oneself autonomously within the learning process, is

considered cardinal to the development of LA. The facet of learner agency, coupled with flexibility in selecting academic pathways, equips learners to delineate objectives and formulate strategies toward their achievement critically. Peer facilitation and interdependence, seen through the lens of social learning, occupy a prominent place in the maturation of LA. Volitional components such as learner motivation and beliefs about the instructor's role are instrumental in contouring learners' perceptions and application of autonomy. In this context, capacity embodies metacognitive awareness and skills, motivation, and the empowerment required to govern the learning process. These determinants, taken collectively, are believed to contribute meaningfully towards fostering LA. In this respect, it facilitates the process of language acquisition. The results derived from this study are anticipated to foster the development of pragmatic strategies designed to augment LA and enhance English proficiency. Furthermore, the study is poised to offer valuable insights to enrich educators' instructional methodologies, enabling more informed decision-making for stakeholders and policymakers. To this end, the study seeks to answer the following question: "What are

Vietnamese EFL students' perceptions of factors influencing their learner autonomy in learning English as a foreign language?"

Method

Research Design

This study, adopting a quantitative research design, employed a survey-based methodology to interrogate and discern the students' perceptions of the factors influencing their LA in the context of EFL acquisition. Gideon (2012) suggests that a survey tool can inspire researchers to understand a social phenomenon comprehensively. It makes it fitting for the current study that aims to understand how students perceive the various factors influencing their LA throughout the EFL learning process.

Participants

117 Vietnamese EFL students acquiring EFL from a public university in Vietnam voluntarily participated in this study. Of the respondents, 24 (representing 21.5%) were males, while the remaining 93 (comprising 79.5% of the cohort) were females. The age distribution of the participant pool ranged from 21 to 22 years.

Table 1

Participants' demographic data

Total number of participants	117
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	n= 24 (21,5 %)
Female	n= 93 (79,5%)
<i>Training years</i>	
4 th year	n= 62 (53 %)
3 rd year	n= 55 (47 %)
<i>Age range</i>	21- 22

The demographic attributes of the participant sample reflect its alignment with the research objectives, affirming its appropriateness in addressing the research question. A comprehensive presentation of the participants' demographic data is provided in Table 1.

Data Collection

For data acquisition in this study, a structured questionnaire was utilized, derived from the works of Blidi (2017) and Nguyen and Habók (2020). The use of questionnaires as a data collection tool offers numerous advantages. They permit efficient data gathering from a large and heterogeneous sample, optimizing time and resource utilization. Furthermore, they provide a degree of anonymity, making them particularly suited for eliciting potentially sensitive information (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2022).

The questionnaire constituted two sections: one focused on collecting demographic data (including variables of gender, names, academic major, course, age, email addresses, and phone numbers), and the second encompassed a Likert-type scale incorporating 30 items. Respondents were required to express their level of agreement with each item on a numerical scale (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree).

To ascertain the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, it underwent a thorough scrutiny process involving the research team and an invited specialist in the field. The critiques and suggestions proffered by the reviewers were judiciously integrated into the finalized questionnaire version. The questionnaire was then administered to an intentionally selected sample of 117 students who voluntarily

consented to participate in the study. These students were drawn from diverse academic majors (English Teacher Education and English Studies) and courses (3rd and 4th-year students) to ensure a representative cross-section of academic backgrounds.

The questionnaire was distributed using Google Forms, with each participant granting explicit consent. The questionnaire elicited a 100 percent response rate, indicating a high degree of engagement and a willingness to contribute to the scholarly pursuit. Participants received a personalized email, and pertinent information about the study and its objectives was disseminated via social media platforms to foster the completion of the questionnaire.

Along with the invitation, a formal letter elucidating the objectives of the questionnaire was provided, emphasizing the significance of their responses. Detailed instructions were incorporated to guide participants through the process of completing the questionnaire both effectively and accurately. The meticulous attention accorded to the questionnaire's design, the high response rate, and the provision of explicit instructions and explanations, attest to the reliability and validity of the data procured for this study.

Data Analysis

The amassed data from the study were subjected to a quantitative analysis employing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 26. This analytical process's principal objective was to discern Vietnamese EFL learners' perceptions concerning the factors that influence their LA within the purview of EFL acquisition.

The reliability of the collected data was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and obtained a notably high-reliability index of $\alpha=0.96$. This result was interpreted following Colman and Pulford's (2011) rule of thumb, which provides the following guidelines: an $\alpha \geq 0.9$ represents excellent reliability, $0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$ signifies good reliability, $0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$ suggests acceptable reliability, $0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$ reflects questionable reliability, $0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.6$ denotes poor reliability and $\alpha < 0.5$ stands for unacceptable reliability. With the derived score of $\alpha=0.96$, it can be inferred that the data collected from the survey manifest a substantial degree of internal consistency, thereby enhancing its credibility for further data analysis. The elevated Cronbach's alpha score indicates that the survey questions successfully encapsulate the constructs pertinent to LA.

A descriptive statistics test was executed to ascertain the degree of influence exerted by the identified factors. This analytical step incorporated the computation of mean scores for each item in the questionnaire. Mean scores proffer a measure of central tendency, facilitating ranking factors based on their perceived influence levels. An inspection of the mean scores allows for the extrapolation of insights into which the participants regard factors as wielding greater influence on their LA.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

A descriptive statistics test investigated factors influencing students' LA in their EFL learning (Table 2).

Table 2
Influential Factors of LA

Items	Min	Max	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1. Volunteering in self-directed learning programs	1.00	5.00	4.05	.92
2. Sense of responsibility in voluntary learning programs	1.00	5.00	4.14	1.02
3. Willingness to care for learner autonomy in voluntary learning programs	1.00	5.00	4.06	.92
4. Enthusiasm in voluntary learning programs	1.00	5.00	3.96	1.01
Voluntariness	1.00	5.00	4.05	.88
5. Flexibility in changing study options (objectives)	1.00	5.00	3.97	.95
6. Flexibility in changing study options (contents)	1.00	5.00	3.95	.94
7. Flexibility in changing study options (learning process)	1.00	5.00	3.87	.95
Learner Choice and Flexibility	1.00	5.00	3.94	.59
8. Interaction with peers	1.00	5.00	4.01	1.07
9. Negotiation with peers	1.00	5.00	3.86	.98
10. Collaboration with peers	1.00	5.00	3.88	1.01
Peer Support	1.00	5.00	3.92	.91
11. Teacher's facilitating role in teaching	1.00	5.00	3.87	.94
12. Teachers' behavior in developing learner autonomy	1.00	5.00	4.01	.92

13. Teachers' instructions in developing learner autonomy	1.00	5.00	4.06	.87
14. Teachers' pedagogical knowledge in developing learner autonomy	1.00	5.00	3.85	.99
15. Teachers' characteristics in developing learner autonomy	1.00	5.00	3.71	1.04
Beliefs About the Teacher's Role	1.00	5.00	3.91	.77
16. Motivation for autonomous language learning	1.00	5.00	4.13	.92
17. Motivation as a tool for entering the learning situation	1.00	5.00	4.13	.97
18. Increasing learner autonomy with sufficient motivation	1.00	5.00	4.25	.93
Motivation for LA			4.17	.84
19. Understanding strengths for relevant learning goals	1.00	5.00	4.17	.93
20. Understanding weaknesses for relevant learning goals	1.00	5.00	4.17	.96
21. Understanding tasks while learning	1.00	5.00	4.06	.92
22. Using effective strategies for completing learning tasks	1.00	5.00	4.03	.90
23. Using essential skills contributing to learner autonomy (planning, self-evaluating, monitoring)	1.00	5.00	4.29	.88
Abilities	1.00	5.00	4.14	.79
24. Freedom to choose learning materials	1.00	5.00	3.89	.99
25. Freedom to choose learning activities	1.00	5.00	3.89	1.02
26. Freedom of expression in learning	1.00	5.00	4.07	.92
27. Freedom to make decisions in learning and teaching	1.00	5.00	3.91	.91
Freedom	1.00	5.00	3.94	.81
28. Desire to identify and pursue specific learning goals	1.00	5.00	3.91	.92
29. Desire to complete specific tasks in learning	1.00	5.00	4.02	.94
30. Desire to solve problems in learning	1.00	5.00	3.97	.96
Desire	1.00	5.00	3.96	.82

As evidenced by the outcomes delineated in Table 2, motivation emerges as the most potent determinant affecting students' LA (M=4.17). Subsequent in influence are Abilities (M=4.14), Voluntariness (M=4.05), Desire (M=3.96), Learner choice and flexibility in study options (M=3.94), Freedom (M=3.94), Peer support (M=3.92), and Beliefs about the teacher's roles (M=3.91).

It should be noted that "Motivation" was overall earmarked as a principal component in

LA. The students acknowledged its function in galvanizing their engagement and metacognitive competencies in language acquisition. With a mean score of 4.13, respondents recognized the importance of motivation as a facilitator for initiating the learning process and as a catalyst for amplifying their autonomy. It underscores the paramountcy of intrinsic motivation in empowering learners to steer their learning journey.

The results also highlighted the relevance of “Abilities” in fostering LA. Respondents recognized the value of understanding their strengths and weaknesses, leveraging effective learning strategies, and developing crucial skills such as planning, self-evaluating, and monitoring. These factors registered high mean scores ranging from 4.03 to 4.29, thereby underscoring their role in buttressing LA.

On the variable of “Voluntariness,” participants demonstrated a pronounced preference towards voluntarily participating in self-directed learning initiatives, as indicated by a mean score of 4.05. It insinuates that when learners are afforded the liberty to chart their educational trajectory, they are likely to feel empowered and exhibit an increased motivation to assume ownership of their learning experience. Moreover, a discernible sense of responsibility permeated among the participants, as denoted by a mean score of 4.14. It underscores the primacy of personal accountability in nurturing LA.

The results also underscored the criticality of “Learner choice and Flexibility.” Respondents acknowledged the merits of tailoring their learning objectives, content, and processes in alignment with their needs and interests. The mean scores for flexibility in these dimensions were 3.97, 3.95, and 3.87, respectively. It evidences the learners’ perception of the ability to exercise choice and make necessary modifications as critical factors in augmenting their autonomy.

Dealing with “Freedom” emerged as a critical determinant in LA. Respondents acknowledged the significance of having the freedom to choose learning resources, activities, articulate their thoughts, and

make decisions in the learning and teaching process. The mean scores for these factors varied between 3.89 and 4.07, thereby emphasizing the importance of learner agency and autonomy in shaping their learning experiences.

“Peer support” was another determinant identified as having a substantial influence on the study. Respondents affirmed the positive implications of interaction, negotiation, and peer collaboration on their learner autonomy. The mean scores for these aspects were 4.01, 3.86, and 3.88, respectively. It accentuates the social dimension of autonomy, highlighting that autonomy is not strictly an individual pursuit but also a product of interdependence and cooperative learning.

Also, “Beliefs about the teacher’s role” surfaced as significant factors in LA. Respondents acknowledged the importance of teachers’ facilitating roles, demeanor, instructional methodologies, pedagogical acumen, and attributes in nurturing their autonomy. Though the mean scores exhibited slight variability across these factors (ranging from 3.71 to 4.06), collectively, they reinforce the role of teachers in fostering an empowering and supportive learning ambiance conducive to the cultivation of LA.

Finally, regarding “Desire,” the results demonstrate participants’ marked predilection for goal orientation, task completion, and problem-solving, as indicated by mean scores nearing the scale maximum (5.00). The 3.91 average score for “Desire to identify and pursue specific learning goals” signifies participants’ propensity for delineating and pursuing personalized learning goals, suggesting their preference for structured learning. The highest

mean score of 4.02 for “Desire to complete specific tasks in learning” epitomizes participants’ emphasis on task fulfillment, symbolizing their commitment to learning and proactive task execution indicative of learning progress. The 3.97 mean score for “Desire to solve problems in learning” portrays participants’ resilience and resourcefulness in overcoming learning challenges, hinting at their problem-solving motivation. These findings suggest participants’ active learning engagement, demonstrating initiative, persistence, and autonomy.

Discussion

The results of the study align with existing Vietnamese studies, demonstrating learners’ inclination towards self-directed learning and autonomy (Nguyen & Habók, 2020). Evidencing an inherent predilection for voluntary participation, the students valued self-determination and responsibility, consonant with culturally endorsed diligence and accountability. Such inclination is particularly significant in the Vietnamese educational context, where LA is promoted (Nguyen & Stracke, 2021). Granting learners autonomous decision-making in learning activities could enhance motivation and engagement, fostering autonomy. This sense of responsibility mirrors the Vietnamese cultural emphasis on academic commitment (Coxhead et al., 2022), potentially contributing to the participants’ recognition of the role of responsibility in enhancing LA.

Also, the results highlight the importance of learner choice and study flexibility. Despite the traditional pedagogical emphasis on teacher-centric methods and structured curriculum in Vietnam, an increasing shift towards learner-centered approaches, promoting flexibility and

choice, is noted (Ha et al., 2022; Tran et al., 2017). The study underscores Vietnamese EFL learners’ preferences for personalized learning experiences, reinforcing the significance of LA. The mean scores obtained suggest learners recognize the importance of flexibility in learning objectives, content, and processes to their autonomy. It supports the proposition that personalization and adaptability, inherent in learner-centered approaches, enhance motivation and engagement, and contribute to LA development (Nguyen & Habók, 2020).

Regarding peer support, the study’s results emphasize the significance of social interactions in fostering LA (Chowdhury, 2021). In the collective Vietnamese learning culture, peer interactions offer academic and social support and are instrumental in nurturing LA (Tran, 2017). It is also reported that Vietnamese EFL learners perceived activities involving interaction, negotiation, and collaboration as beneficial to their autonomy (Nguyen & Habók, 2020). These results validate the role of peer support in bolstering LA, demonstrating that autonomy is not exclusively individualistic but can be enhanced collectively. Collaborative learning experiences like group projects and peer feedback can enhance confidence, motivation, and critical thinking (Salma, 2020), underscoring the positive impact of peer interactions on autonomy in line with the Vietnamese communal learning ethos.

Moreover, the study results concerning beliefs about the teacher’s role assert the pivotal influence of teachers on LA. There is an increasing acknowledgment of the importance of teachers transitioning from authoritative figures to facilitators, thus empowering learners and promoting autonomy. The results

demonstrate that Vietnamese EFL learners deemed facilitator roles, behavior, pedagogical expertise, and teachers' instructional methods critical to their autonomous development (Blidi, 2017; Nguyen & Habók, 2020). Moreover, effective teaching strategies fostering active learning, critical thinking, and self-reflection enhance LA and their transition to self-directed learners (Muslem et al., 2022; Nguyen & Habók, 2020). Amid a dominant tradition of teacher-centered approaches, there is an emergent shift towards learner-centered methods that cultivate autonomy in Vietnam (Ha et al., 2022). Thus, teachers can augment LA among Vietnamese EFL students by adopting facilitator roles, implementing efficacious strategies, and leveraging pedagogical knowledge.

Furthermore, these results on the role of motivation in LA highlight motivation as a pivotal determinant of autonomy (Nguyen & Habók, 2021). In the difficult context of EFL education in Vietnam, motivation is a critical catalyst for learner engagement and persistence (Hien & Loan, 2018). The data suggests Vietnamese EFL learners acknowledge motivation's instrumental role in language acquisition. Motivation fuels goal-setting, self-reflection, and the adoption of effective strategies (Seven, 2020; Umida et al., 2020). Intrinsic motivation, underpinned by personal interest, facilitates autonomous behaviors (Rheinberg, 2020), empowering learners to personalize their learning trajectory (Rheinberg, 2020). Given the strong Vietnamese societal emphasis on academic accomplishment (Coxhead et al., 2022), harnessing intrinsic motivation proves vital in bolstering learner autonomy and enhancing engagement and perseverance in language learning (Nguyen et al., 2019).

In addition, the study's results emphasize the importance of learner abilities in fostering autonomy. Cultivating such abilities is essential for learner agency within the context of English language learning in Vietnam, characterized by resource limitations and a lack of exposure to authentic English settings (Hien & Loan, 2018). High mean scores for facets including self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses, application of effective strategies, and development of essential skills underscore their recognition among Vietnamese EFL learners (Cox, 2017; Syarif & Sunubi, 2019). Given the Vietnamese educational context with resource constraints and reliance on formal instruction (Pham et al., 2020), nurturing a suite of abilities proves instrumental in enhancing LA. This focus aligns with Vietnamese educational objectives seeking to empower learners with crucial skills for personal and professional development (Pham & Tran, 2013).

Additionally, these results, situated within the Vietnamese context, underscore the centrality of freedom in LA. As previously stated, despite the dominance of teacher-centric pedagogical traditions and rigid curricular prescriptions in Vietnam (Vu, 2021), a growing emphasis is placed on learner agency and autonomy for improved language learning outcomes. High mean scores associated with Freedom variables, such as choice of learning materials, activities, idea expression, and decision-making, denote the salience of learner agency among Vietnamese EFL learners (Darsih, 2018; Priyatno, 2017). This agency, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills, aligns with Vietnam's educational shift towards learner-centric pedagogies and autonomy promotion (Huynh, 2019; Nguyen &

Jaspaert, 2021). The reforms of the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam stress LA, underpinning the cultivation of self-directed, lifelong learners (Nguyen & Tran, 2018).

Finally, the “Desire” category results reconfirm that Vietnamese learners’ demonstrated an inclination towards defining and pursuing individualized goals, presumably molded by Vietnam’s conventional educational structure (Vu, 2021). Concurrently, the findings exhibit a task-oriented approach endemic to Vietnamese learners, likely echoing the ingrained scholarly diligence promoted by the country’s academic ethos (Coxhead et al., 2022). Furthermore, the results recognize Vietnamese learners’ resilience and problem-solving capabilities, potentially cultivated by the country’s distinctive socio-cultural fabric (Le et al., 2020). Cumulatively, these empirical observations validate the vigorous engagement, autonomy, and initiative embodied by Vietnamese learners, accentuating the effectiveness of learner-centered pedagogical approaches (Nghia & Quang, 2021) and reiterating the broader movement towards augmenting LA within the Vietnamese educational paradigm (Nguyen & Habók, 2020).

The study implies that cultivating an educational milieu endorsing self-determination, responsibility, learner-centric approaches, and peer collaboration can strengthen LA. The educators’ role as guides, sustained by professional growth, along with learners’ intrinsic motivation and metacognitive development, is essential for enhancing active learning. By allowing learners autonomy in their learning trajectory, their agency is reinforced. For Vietnamese learners, pedagogical strategies fostering goal orientation and practical problem-

solving skills align with their preference for individualized objectives, advancing LA in Vietnam’s education system. However, this study has limitations. It primarily relied on self-reported perceptions of Vietnamese EFL learners, presenting potential biases. Future studies might consider additional data collection techniques like interviews or observations to deepen the understanding of learner autonomy. The sample size and the only university source may limit the generalizability of findings. Subsequent research could broaden the participant pool from diverse educational and regional backgrounds for improved external validity. Lastly, this study largely focused on learner perceptions, neglecting the views of other stakeholders in English language education. Future research should incorporate the perspectives of teachers, administrators, and parents for a comprehensive understanding of LA determinants.

Conclusion

This research explored Vietnamese EFL learners’ perceptions concerning influential factors for LA in English language acquisition. Through survey methodology, data were garnered on these learners’ perceptions. The study’s respondents who volunteered their participate were 117 Vietnamese EFL students from a local university. The results illuminated multiple autonomy-enhancing factors within the Vietnamese context. Of paramount importance was the interplay of voluntariness and responsibility, as the learners recognized the criticality of personal agency and accountability in fostering autonomy. The salience of learner choice and curricular flexibility surfaced, allowing for individual adaptation of learning

objectives, content, and methodologies. Significantly, peer support was identified as a pivotal factor underscoring the social dimensions of autonomy and the advantageous effect of interaction, negotiation, and peer collaboration. The participants' beliefs about the pedagogical role underscored teachers' substantial influence in engendering a supportive and autonomy-conducive learning environment. Motivation emerged as a primary driver impacting learner engagement and the development of metacognitive skills.

Similarly, self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses, strategic learning utilization, and essential skills development were recognized as influential determinants. Lastly, providing freedom in choosing learning materials, directing activities, expressing ideas, and decision-making was underscored as crucial in fostering LA. This confluence of factors reflects the intricate, multilayered nature of learner autonomy within the Vietnamese EFL context.

The study was conducted exclusively through a quantitative research approach, which, as a result, could lack a thorough understanding of the participant's perceptions. Consequently, future studies are encouraged to delve deeper into students' thought processes using qualitative or mixed-methods approaches. Moreover, researchers interested in this field may wish to investigate how demographic variables such as age, gender, and education levels influence EFL students' perceptions of the influential factors on their LA. Furthermore, it may also be beneficial to conduct experimental studies to contrast students with high self-perceived LA and those with low self-perception regarding their academic performances. Finally, it would be advantageous to conduct

longitudinal studies to examine how students' self-perceived LA and the levels of influence of various factors change over time.

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