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**The Impact of Self-Concept on EFL Learners' Autonomy : a Case
Study of First-Year Students at Saida University**

Dissertation submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of *Master* in
Didactics.

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

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Dedication

Words can never express my deep love, gratitude and profound affection to the two dear and great persons in my life “My Father and Mother”

to the love of my life, my husband for the sleepless nights and long days he spend with me, to my lovely sisters Soso and Ilaf and my sweetest brothers Aboud and Nazih.

Thank you for all the unconditional love, guidance, and support that you have always given to me.

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I would also like to thank the members of the jury, Dr. Ghembaza , Dr. Gacem who have given their time to read and evaluate this humble work.

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of self-concept on EFL learners' autonomy. It attempted to reveal the type of relationship between EFL students' self-concept and their learning autonomy. Data were collected from a sample of (55) English language learners from a population of (167) first-year students at University of Dr. MoulayTahar- Saida. The academic year of 2020_2021. Two questionnaires were used; first is the Academic Self-Concept Questionnaire which aimed to determine the type of students' self-concept by highlighting their perceptions of confidence and effort. Second, the Learner Autonomy Scale that aimed to determine students' level of autonomy by detecting their study habits and their independence in learning. The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis and t-test for correlation between students' academic self-concept and their autonomous behavior in learning English. It was found that students with high academic self-concept were confident and made more effort which made them more autonomous during their learning; students with low academic self-concept were not autonomous rather dependent on teachers and others. Suggestions and recommendations to learners and teachers were provided. Number one, Students can achieve greater work by putting some effort and managing their time correctly. Number two, Setting goals for learning will make students motivated. Furthermore, teachers need to provide a relaxing and anxiety-free atmosphere in classroom for students to be comfortable, in addition to interesting topics and different activities to avoid boredom. According to the results, students' perceptions were important since it affected their behaviour towards learning and influenced their achievement and progress.

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List of Abbreviations

ASC: Academic Self-Concept

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELL: English Language Learner

ELT: English Language Teaching

GSE: Global Self Esteem

IL: Independent Learning

LCE: Learner Centered Education

SC: Self- Concept

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General Introduction

Researchers consider English language as a language of the world. Based on its importance it became a part of the educational curriculum such as the Algerian education curriculum. English language learning started in secondary schools as one of the subjects, however it reached its high importance when it is taken as a university major where it is considered as a base and starting point for a professional career.

Learner-Centered Education (LCE) focuses the attention on learners' engagement, which means, learners are no more seen as passive receivers but rather as active directors and monitors of both content and process, it allowed students to take part in choosing activities and making choices for their learning instead of relying only on the teacher. The wide support of this view gave rise to many new concepts in the field of Foreign Language Learning among which is the concept of learner autonomy. Over time, a large number of studies related to this concept emerged, in addition to its importance to learning, researchers were interested in what causes learners to behave independently and take responsibility for their learning. They studied relations between autonomy and other variables such as motivation, anxiety, age differences, learning environment, learning achievements, teachers' role and the notion that will take place in this work the self-concept.

Researchers investigated the different aspects of ASC in different domains such as math and engineering. Studies found some relations between ASC and achievement and found that other variables may play a great role in this relationship such as motivation, anxiety, learning environments...etc. In addition to the great work that has been done on autonomy, studies concerning teacher's roles, students roles, achievement, learning strategies, the role of technology ...etc. However, studies on ASC and autonomy exclusively are very limited, and the context is often on adolescents and late adolescents in comparison to the university context. students' beliefs of themselves need to be acknowledged in the learning and teaching practice since it influences how they approach their learning, their willingness to be more independent, and develop better studying habits. This study aims at investigating the impact of ASC on English university students' readiness for autonomy, choosing as a case study the first-year English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners at the University of Dr. Moulay Tahar-Saida.

Unlike schools; university is a challenging place, students need to count on themselves since the classroom is not the only place that studying takes place and the teachers are not the main source of information. Autonomy is the best way for highly ambitious students to practice their passion for English learning. However, some of them succeed in being responsible for their learning and enjoy the autonomous activities and achievement during their journey of studying, they are open to do more effort and work harder to fulfill their goals but others struggle in coping with this autonomous life especially the new entrants to university.

English language learners (ELLs) are individuals just like every other human they have thoughts, beliefs, and emotions, they have perceptions of the world, perceptions, and evaluations of themselves, and it is called the self-concept. Self-concept that relates to the learning process is the Academic Self-Concept (ASC) which is an "individuals' knowledge and perceptions about themselves in achievement situations". A question rises here if these perceptions affect their attitudes towards learning and if it can affect their autonomous behaviour either way.

This work is done to achieve many objectives, the most important ones are:

1- To better understand the relation between students' self-perceptions and the changes in students' autonomy.

2- To boost students' sense of responsibility a higher self-concept.

The current study aims to answer the following questions:

1- What does the impact of students' self-perceptions of confidence have on their learning independence?

2- What does the influence of students' self-perceptions of their effort have on their study habits?

3- What is the significance of academic self-concept for university students' autonomy?

In an attempt to answer these research questions, the suggested hypotheses are as follow:

•If students believe they are confident then they will probably become independent.

- Students' beliefs in themselves as capable and having the competence to do better influences how they manage time and avoid procrastination.

- The main hypotheses; Academic self-concept is significant for university students' autonomy.

The main point of the present study is to investigate the role of self-concept on autonomy and achievement, the latter are of great significance in psychology. Their implications in the field of education provide great help for educators and students. This study will transfer the idea that learning in general and English language learning specifically; is more than just transferring information from the teachers as a source to the students as passive receivers instead it has additional psychological and affective sides to it. This study is an attempt to emphasize the essential role of academic self-concept in promoting learners' performance and autonomy in English learning. The findings may be useful for future researchers in the field.

To achieve the main objective of the current study, the descriptive method is used to collect relevant data, two online questionnaires addressed to EFL learners at the university of Dr. Moulay Tahar- Saida was used as tools to collect information in addition to statistical analysis to answer the main hypothesis.

The dissertation is divided into three main chapters, the first chapter is a review of literature, it encompasses definitions of both self-concept and learners' autonomy, and it explains the nature of self-concept and its three major models. The chapter provides the importance of learners' autonomy in language learning and its relation to what students believe about their learning, and how they perceive teachers' role and feedback, their confidence in themselves as students, and the learning experiences. It reveals teachers' beliefs towards autonomy in addition to the types of strategies used by the autonomous and non-autonomous learners, finally, it highlights the existing work related to the topic.

The second chapter includes the findings and the Results collected using the Academic Self-concept questionnaire and the Learner Autonomy scale. The results are analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics and graphs. The third chapter includes the statistical analysis in addition to suggestions and recommendations that may help future researchers to do better work regarding the relationship between students' perceptions and their behaviours towards language learning.

As with any other work in the field, the present study encountered some obstacles before being completed. The first one is the limited choice of tools, because of the lockdown and the limited number of lectures that prevent the use of class observation as a tool. In addition, the use of an online questionnaire may play as an obstacle because it reduces the chances to reach to all students.

Chapter one

Literature review

1.1. Introduction

The present chapter will review the literature about self-concept and learner autonomy; provide definitions of both terms in addition to existing theories. In addition to previous work related to self-concept and learner autonomy.

1.2. Understanding Self-concept

In order to understand self-concept, it is important to note that there is no one specific or global definition for the term since many experts took part in defining it. Self-concept is a general term used to refer to how someone thinks about, evaluates, or perceives him or herself. To be aware of oneself is to have a concept of oneself. Researches on this concept began from the beginning of the 20th century where different understandings and theories emerged.

According to Lewis (1990), SC (self-concept) developed according to two aspects. The first one is the existential self. It is the child first realization of existence where he becomes aware that he is a separate entity from others. The second one is the categorical self. It is when the child is aware of the world around him and that he is part of the world, first things that a child categorizes him or herself is his/her age and gender.

During their process of understanding the concept, Brinthaupt and Lipka (1992) said, "The huge amount of interest in issues relating to the self makes researching in the field exciting but also frustrating and difficult for anyone who wishes "to come up with a meaningful picture of the self".

Indeed, SC is variously described, It is what comes to mind when one thinks of oneself (e.g. Neisser, 1993; Stets & Burke, 2003; Stryker, 1980, Tajfel, 1981). One's theory of one's personality (Markus & Cross, 1990), and what one believes is true of oneself (e.g. Baumeister, 1998; Forgas & Williams, 2002). In more detail, Pajares and Schunk (2005, as cited in Mercer, 2011) believed that SC is a psychological construct that comprises "a self-description judgment that includes an evaluation of competence and the feelings of self-worth associated with the judgment in question" in a specific domain.

Furthermore, Mercer (2011) defined SC as "a dynamic, multidimensional psychological construct, which both influences and is affected by a person's social contexts and interactions that can vary across individuals and settings but that has a certain degree of internal stability".

What can we conclude from these definitions is that self-concept is based on how a person sees himself, his awareness of himself which interferes with his psychological and emotional thoughts and feelings. SC is not stable, it differs between individuals and it has a dynamic nature.

1.3. Dynamic Nature of Self-Concept

According to existing studies, Self-concept consists of a group of elements that defines its nature. Many studies concluded that some aspects of SC are dynamic and others are more resilient to change. It is considered that more domain-specific self-concepts are less stable; whereas more general, broadly encompassing self-concepts are believed to be less susceptible to change and more fixed (Mercer, 2011). For some researchers SC is vibrant and dynamic in nature as it gains maturity with the age of the person and this aspect plays a vital role in determining how it can be modified and changed (Ajmal & Rafique, 2018). It is not constant because as the person becomes older he/she gets more insight about his/her abilities, capacities and get more knowledge about his/her potentialities and know how to come across different situations in life (Franken, 1994 as cited in Ajmal & Rafique, 2018).

Due to different opinions and point of views, researchers made different models for self-concept. The following models are chosen due to their relatedness to the topic, which are Rogers' three parts of self-concept, Bruce Bracken Self-Concept Model and Multidimensional Self-Concept Model by Richard J. Shavelson and his colleagues.

1.3.1. Rogers' Three Parts of Self-Concept

One of the interesting findings about SC is Carl Rogers (1959) study. He believed that the self-concept composes of three main parts; self-worth, self-image and ideal-self.

Self-worth is " How much you like, accept, or value yourself, which can be impacted by a number of factors including how others see you, how you think you compare to others, and your role in society" (Argyle, 2008).

Self-image is what you see when you look at your reflection in the mirror, whether you are a bad or good person, beautiful or ugly, etc. It might not necessarily be true but it is what you believe inside to be true.

Ideal-self is what you like to become, what your ambitions and goals are. Rogers believes that the closer you achieve your goals, wishes, and desires in life the more you are in a state of congruence.

This model gives an idea of how SC is different from a person to another, each person has his own beliefs, evidently, students are different in the way they perceive things.

Their self-worth is related to how their peers see them; and how they compare themselves to their classmates and friends. Another factor that influences a student SC is appearance, especially during university where appearance is very important for building confidence and a good self-image. The ideal-self of students can be the reason they are studying, it can be presented as their aims and goals behind studying, as being an effective person in society...etc. As a result, a student can have positive SC if he believed that they are better or equal to their peers, and their appearance is acceptable, and if they have goals to reach and reasons to study in this way they are always motivated for success.

For Rogers, every person is born good and creative; however, each person develops in different ways based on the environment where he grew up and how his family raised him. He elaborated that an individual becomes destructive only when a poor self-concept or external constraints override the valuing process (McLeod, 2014).

1.3.1.1 Incongruence and Congruence

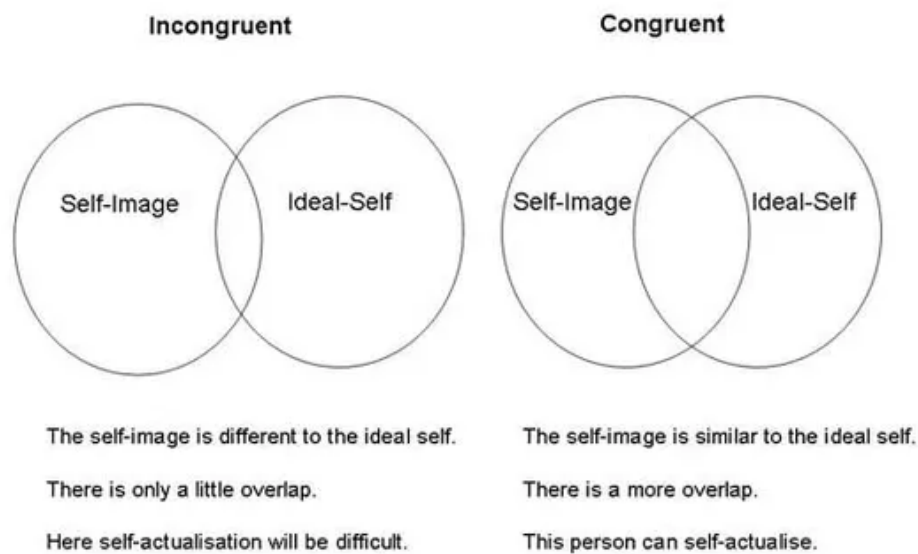


Figure 1.1: State of congruence and incongruence.

Incongruence is the state where the self-image is not similar to your ideal self, this result in low self-worth. Congruence is the state where "how you see yourself (self-image)" is close or similar to "who you like to be (ideal self)", when this happens, we say that a person reached his Self-actualization.

Rogers also provides five characteristics for the person who reaches self-actualization, which he called a Fully Functioning Person. These are:

1- **Open to Experience:** the fully functioning person accepts positive and negative emotions that occur in life.

2- **Existential Living:** his focus is on the present, interact with the different experiences of life, have no regrets for the past, and do not focus on the future.

3- **Trust Feelings:** he trusts his own decisions, he believes in his instincts, gut, and feelings.

4- **Creativity:** he has the ability to change and adjust to new experiences; he has creative thinking and takes risks in life.

5- **Fulfilled Life:** he is happy and satisfied with his life, always looking for new challenges and experiences.

If a student gains most of these characteristics then he will be a successful person.

Other psychologists propose other theories such as Henri Tajel's social identity theory, he says that self-concept is composed of two parts; **personal identity** which he defines as the traits and the characteristics that identify the person from others. **Social identity** is when the person sees himself according to the group he identify himself in such as religion groups or political parties.

1.3.2. Bruce Bracken Self-Concept Model

Since the work of Shavelson et al (1976), self-concept was accepted as a multidimensional construct. Bruce Bracken (1992) proposed a model for SC, providing six specific domains as shown in the figure bellow.



Figure 1.2 :Multidimensional self-concept

Figure 1.2 shows SC with six different dimensions; academic, social, affect, competence, physical, family self-concept. To illustrate the model Bracken used a Venndiagram, presenting global self-concept in the center with each of the individual self-concept domains in a segment so it represents the individuality and the interrelation between the domains.

Bracken (2009) defined these specific self-concepts as follows:

Academic self-concept represents how a person feels about himself or herself within a school or academic setting or concerning a student's academic progress. He suggested factors that influence and affect ASC which are success and failure in the domain, difficulty or ease in acquiring information, student's intellectual abilities of self and in comparison to others, relationships with teachers and classmates, acceptance from others.

Affect self-concept is a self-evaluative awareness and acceptance of one's affective state and those issues or conditions that contribute to different affective states experienced by the individual. The ability to overcome the negative states that students have such as anxiety, sadness, and angriness is important to meet a positive affect self-concept (Bracken, 2009).

Competence self-concept is a person's evaluation of his ability to meet his basic needs (Bracken, 2009). He adds that a positive sense of competence is in having the requirements that make it easy to meet your needs in a simple manner.

Family self-concept How people feel about themselves as members of a family, within their family milieu, represents a person's family self-concept (Bracken, 2009). He adds that family self-concept depends on intra and extra-individual characteristics

Physical self-concept is essentially how a person feels about himself or herself as a physical person. This includes appearance, limitations, and powers.

Social self-concept reflects how a person feels about his or her ability to interact with others, participate in social activities, and be accepted within social settings because social interactions and interpersonal relations are key to healthy mental health (Bracken, 2006).

After considering SC as multidimensional, Richard J. Shavelson claimed that SC has a hierarchical structure where he proposed an updated version of his model "Multidimensional Self-Concept"

1.3.3. Multidimensional Self-Concept Model

Psychologists conducted much research concerning the theoretical nature of self-concept. Among them was Richard J. Shavelson and his colleagues who proposed a model for self-concept where they suggested a multidimensional, hierarchical structure as shown in figure 1.3.

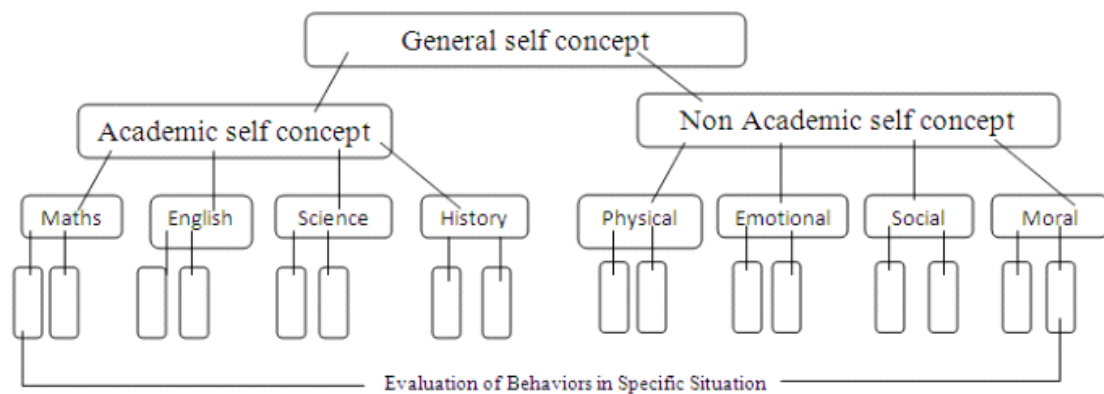


Figure 1.3: Model of self-concept proposed by Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976)

Shavelson and his colleagues proposed a model for SC in 1976, they suggested that SC have multiple specific domains and have hierarchical structure. Shavelson placed general self-concept at the apex of the model than he divided it into academic (educational) and non-

academic (communal/societal) self-concept at the next level, then each of these two categories are divided into more specific subject areas. He believed that self-concept is more general at the beginning then it starts to become more specific in time when the person is older and more complex.

After the widespread of this structure, Marsh and Shavelson (1988) revised this model to identify the relationship between these specific self-concepts, they proposed a similar model with a more multifaceted, hierarchical construct. They divided academic self-concept into math academic self-concept and verbal academic self-concept, each of the two are divided into domain specific SC such as English SC, History SC in the verbal / academic SC and math SC, Economics SC in the math / academic SC.

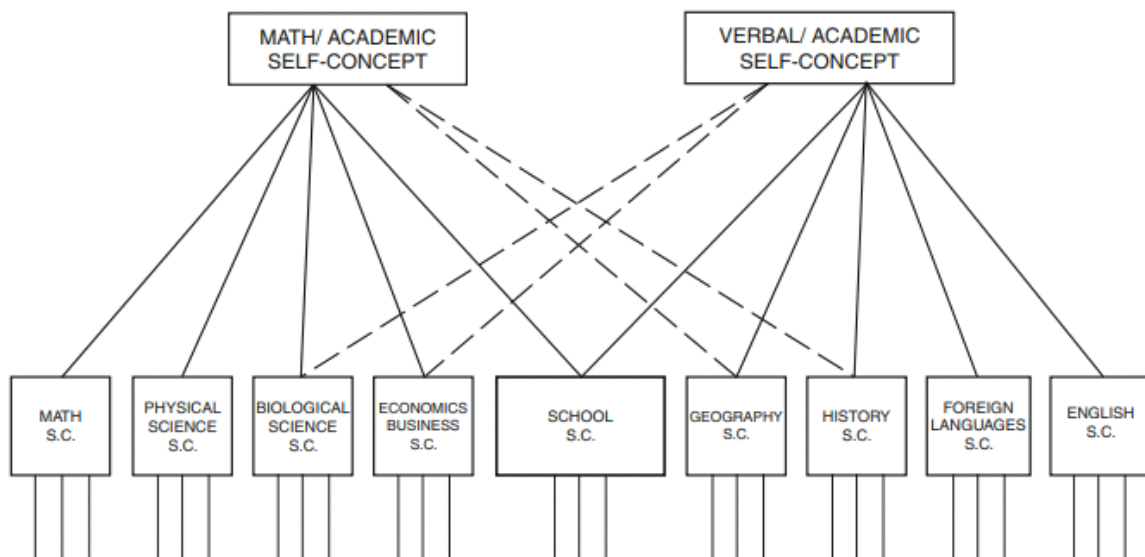


Figure 1.4: An elaboration of Marsh and Shavelson (1985) model.

Figure 1.4 shows the updated version of Shavelson's model. It shows the structure of Academic self-concept. Here academic SC is divided into separate yet still related domain specific SC. The author chose these three models because they explain the reason why SC is different from student to another, they show the structure of SC and where the English SC is located.

1.4. Academic Self-Concept

Lüdtke, Köller, and Baumert (2006) define academic self-concept as “a person’s self-evaluation regarding a specific academic domain or ability. Redd, Brooks, & McGarvey (2001) defined ASC as “an individual’s perception of his or her level of competence or ability within the academic realm”. It is one’s self-assessment concerning academic capabilities and skills (Trautwein, et al., 2006 as cited in Ajmal, 2018). It is a psychological concept mostly used to explain students’ certainty and belief in their abilities regarding specific academic areas such as biology, engineering, etc (Ajmal & Rafique, 2018).

ASC refers to "individuals’ knowledge and perceptions about themselves in achievement situations" (Byrne, 1984; Shavelson and Bolus, 1982; Wigfield and Karpathian, 1991 as cited in Bong, 2003).

To conclude, it is how a person evaluates his performance in one of the specific SC such as English SC. Scholars differentiate Academic self-concept from general SC and non-academic SC. It is related to students and school environment," ASC is an evaluative self-perception that is formed through the student’s experience and interpretation of the school environment (Marsh & Craven, 1997; Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976).

Comparison dimensions	Academic self-concept
1. Working definition	Knowledge and perceptions about oneself in achievement situations
2. Central element	Perceived competence
3. Composition	Cognitive and affective appraisal of self
4. Nature of competence evaluation	Normative and ipsative
5. Judgment specificity	Domain-specific
6. Dimensionality	Multidimensional
7. Structure	Hierarchical
8. Time orientation	Past-oriented
9. Temporal stability	Stable
10. Predictive outcomes	Motivation, emotion, and performance

Table 1.1: Academic Self-Concept

Table 1.1 shows a detailed definition for academic self-concept for a better understanding.

Studies related to ASC found that when students believe in something, they unconsciously behave according to it, Marsh and Shavelson (1988) saw that learners' beliefs in their competence of achieving good grades affect their learning outcomes. They also saw that these sets of beliefs and evaluations of themselves differ between subjects, in other words, learners may have positive English self-concepts; they think that they do great in English, at the same time, they may also have negative math self-concepts, they find the subject difficult and they cannot overcome these difficulties.

Marsh (2002) and Trautwein (2006) both find that learners' ASC can be influenced by their peers, they can enhance their ASC by adapting the behaviors and characteristics of others in a high achieving group within the classroom. This means that students can better their performance in learning English; by engaging in a group activity, which also raise their ASC. As Marsh and Parker (1984 as cited in Ajmal & Rafique, 2018)) also note, "Below average students' academic self-concept has mostly been affected adversely whenever the performance of the high achievers' group is good in which they are placed for improvement in academics".

To sum up, academic self-concept is students' evaluation of his competence and performance concerning a domain specific SC, for example, how they believe they do in learning English; if they are good or weak in learning English. What a student believe is important for his ASC. When a student is confident in himself that he is able to succeed, and he believe that he is making effort for achieving his aims, his performance will improve and he will be motivated for learning. Environments, acceptance from others, appearance, relationship with others, beliefs of competence, self-confidence, all are factors that influence students' ASC.

1.5. Definition of Learner Autonomy

Learner Autonomy (LA) is defined in many ways. In the early studies, the term LA was first introduced in 1981 by Henri Holec, the "father" of LA. Holec defines the concept as "To say of a learner that he is autonomous is to say that he is capable of taking charge of his own learning, and nothing more ", he adds "to take charge of one's learning is to bear responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning " (Holec, 1981). This

was the starting point of extensive researches in the field of language learning. According to Benson, LA is “the capacity to control one’s own learning” (Benson, 2011, p. 58). Researchers encourage learner’ engagement in the learning process both outside and inside classrooms. Little said that control is essentially a matter of who makes the important choices and decisions in language learning, whether inside or outside the classroom (Little, 1991). We say that a student is autonomous in his study when he is able to make choices and set goals for learning, in addition to having an understanding of the content.

LA is the centre of attention of teachers, educators, and researchers in various contexts (Benson, 2007; Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2011; Chan, 2003) such as English as a Foreign Language context. EFL students have certain attitudes and beliefs towards language learning, as it was mentioned earlier, students’ beliefs are important, they are hard to change but can be replaced, that is why it is necessary to study students’ readiness for autonomy.

Autonomous learning is variously described as the learner’s ability to acquire knowledge or skills of value independently by processes that he/she determines (Chene 1983), also as being a psychological characteristic of individuals who are able to independently direct their learning (Knowles 1980; Merriam and Caffarella 1999; Ponton 1999). This means that autonomous learners are independent in their study, which includes choosing how to learn, engaging in classroom activities; make important decisions inside and outside classroom without ignoring teachers’ role and guidance, looking for information by themselves without relying only on the teacher. Long (1998) used the term “self-directed learning” to describe autonomous learning, since it involves the application of personal initiative in engaging with learning and finding resources and opportunities for learning, persistence in learning, and resourcefulness (Ponton, Carr, and Confessore 2000).

Autonomy in learning is to make the important decisions concerning how, when and why to learn without completely ignoring the teachers’ guidelines.

1.6. The Importance of Learner Autonomy in Language Learning

At present, it seems that autonomy is gaining increased attention in different educational fields. LA has a significant role in aiding learners to reach high degrees of creativity and independence. Given the advantages that autonomy provides, several researchers argue its importance from different points of views. As stated in (Harmer, 2007), independent learners can develop their learning strategies therefore they compensate for the

limited time in the classroom which increases chances for successful language learning because "there is simply too much that can be learned of a foreign or second language to fit into a language course " (Nunan, 1988). It means that learning a language in an effective way cannot happen only in classroom, learners need to do more work and effort outside classroom using helpful strategies.

Umida (2000) gives three reasons for the importance of autonomy; constructing a lifelong ability to cope with rapidly changing society, strengthens learners' individuality, and creates diversity for students' educational and cultural backgrounds. Benson (2013) indicates that developing such a capacity of taking control over one's own learning is always helpful.

1.7. Autonomy and Learners Beliefs

Autonomy manifests itself in complex ways and to differing degrees; it depends on what students believe autonomy is, Brog (2001) defines beliefs as "a mental state" that the individual holds as true even if they encounter disagreements from others. Attitudes and beliefs are basic in fostering learners' autonomy; they also have a profound influence on their learning behavior and may either contribute to or impede their willingness to become autonomous. That is why it is important to know what students believe about certain factors and how that can influence their autonomous behaviour.

In a study constructed by Cotteral (1995) which investigates learners' beliefs about factors and their relation to autonomy, six factors are obtained:

- (1) Role of the teacher
- (2) Role of feedback
- (3) Learner independence
- (4) Learner confidence in study ability
- (5) Experience of language learning
- (6) Approach to studying

1.7.1. Role of Teachers

Cotterall explained that there are two "conceptualizations of teacher roles in language learning" (1995), some students see the teacher as an authority figure and others see him as a facilitator. Learners who believe that teachers should "offer help"," diagnose difficulties for them" and "explain the reasons for activities" are not yet ready for autonomy (Cotterall, 1995).

Elsewhere, Zhong (2010) elaborates that students "believed that teachers should exert some pressure to push them to learn by giving more exams and homework and monitoring their learning". It shows that they see that teachers have control over their learning, thus "their beliefs about the importance of their own effort and the role of teachers were clearly in conflict" (Zhong, 2010). For this matter; Cotteral (1995) suggested awareness-raising and gradual transfer of responsibility as means to alter these beliefs.

However, autonomous learners believe that supportive teachers are those who provide time for independent work and empower students with chances to achieve learning objectives.

1.7.2. Role of Feedback

Learners differ in the way they approach teachers'feedback. Radecki and Swales (1988 as cited in Cotterall, 1995), suggested that "the usefulness of feedback depends on the match between teacher intentions and student expectations". According to Cotteral, students understanding of feedback are always associated with the teacher; she added that expectations are influenced by one's understanding of the learning process.

Autonomous learners, however, do not depend entirely on teacher feedback, they constantly evaluate their progress using a group of strategies to enhance their learning such as Self-monitoring, self-assessment, etc.

1.7.3. Learner Independence in Learning

It would be easier if students learned how to learn. Independent learning (IL) is a way of learning by yourself. One of the famous quotes of Albert Einstein "Education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think "; when the teacher gives students chances to think or to do researches rather than simply provide information, they will become familiar of studying on their own according to what they need. In the early studies,IL was defined as "learning in which the learner can make the decisions to meet his own learning

needs "(Kesten, 1987). this definition is still used in today's studies (see Bates &Willson, 2002; Black, 2007; Bullock & Muschamp, 2006; Laurillard, 2002; Williams, 2003).

For the autonomous students classroom lessons and activities do not satisfy their desire for learning completely, instead, they tend to gather or consume more knowledge outside the classroom, this behavior stems from their perception of themselves of being the experts of their own learning. Whereas dependent students are passive recipients of knowledge.

Over time, researchers used different terms to describe IL, such as 'self-directed learning ' (Korotov, 1992), 'supported study' (MacBeath, 1993), 'Self-regulated learning' (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994; Pintrich, 2000), 'Self-learning '(Ching Mok& Cheng, 2001), 'self-directed active learning ' (Birenbaum, 2002), 'Self-access learning' (Chiuan Chia, 2005), 'Learning to learn ' (Black et al., 2006), ' Student-centered learning ' (Black, 2007). These themes and processes involve students setting goals and finding out the strategies to reach them, both in the classroom and outside the classroom. However, this kind of learning is difficult to begin with, since students may encounter obstacles such as being familiar with the traditional education system adopted in the early stages of their learning which lead to the acquisition of beliefs that encourage dependence rather than independence, thus these beliefs are strongly held and difficult to alter. Autonomous learners are likely to be individuals who have overcome the obstacles, which educational background, cultural norms, and prior experience may have put in their way.

1.7.4. Learner Confidence in Study Ability

Successful students often have the quality of high self-confidence, they are ambitious, goal-oriented and have positive attitudes about their abilities, and are always motivated. Studies in language learning generally associate students' confidence in their abilities to the learning outcomes, students with high self-confidence achieve positive outcomes whereas students with low self-confidence achieve low scores.

Studies showed the existence of factors influencing students' confidence. Motivation is a significant factor that promotes learners' competence. Dianna and Blerkom (2011) pointed out that "Motivation can be described as something that energizes, directs, and sustains behavior toward a particular goal" (p.17). Mehr and Meyer (1997) also explained the significance of motivation "a theoretical construct used to explain the initiation, direction,

intensity, persistence, and quality of behavior, especially goal-directed behavior". This indicates that confidence boosts learners to act autonomously and therefore raises their determination for success.

1.7.5. Experience in Language Learning.

According to Cotterall's study (1995), the results showed that prior experiences influence learners' awareness about themselves and their language learning and strategies. Learning experiences gives students knowledge about themselves to how they assess their learning and about their abilities, which helps them build skills and strategies to improve their performance. For Cotterall, (1995) the term most often used to refer to knowledge about learning is metacognitive knowledge (p 201). According to Flavell (1979) metacognitive knowledge includes knowledge of general strategies that might be used for different tasks. Cotterall (1995) emphasizes the importance of cognitive knowledge, she said that learners need to be also aware of the role of cognitive and affective variables in language learning, of how language works, and of how strategies influence learning.

1.7.6. Approach to Studying

According to Cotterall (1995), the term "approach to studying" describes behaviours, which learners engage in as they study. Students have different ways to approach their learning to get good results, a group of studies tried to find out these differences and to what extent they can lead to success.

Douglas Barton (2016) spend 13 years investigating habits, techniques, and practices of the highest performing students to identify exactly what drives their performance; under the question of what the top students do to get the top results ?. The results were (1) top students do not necessarily get the top results because they have high IQ or because they are smarter than others. (2) Students with top results follow a set of skills that are significant to learning. (3) These skills can be both taught, and used by students to get top results. Douglas explained in a "TEDx Talks" event about his study: "we found 13 variables were more effective in terms of predicting academic performance ", he continued that a few of these variables are practice exams (he stressed that this was multiple times more effective in achieving good grades); students practice on solving activities using previous exams. Self-motivation for example, they set short-term goals to achieve. Self-discipline, which is to cut all useless distractions and

to be resilient. To sum up, in order to get good results students do not necessarily need to be smarter in nature instead they need to be smarter in the way they approach their learning.

In another "TEDx Talks" conference, Mark Rober (2018) talked about how can people achieve success using what he called "the super Mario effect ". He did an experience on 50 thousand followers on YouTube using an online puzzle. He divided this number into two groups, the first group that played the puzzle had to lose points each time they fail and were asked to try again (this act will make them focus on their failure), the second group will not lose the points and simply were asked to try again. The results were for those who were not penalized had more success than other groups. This experiment shows that when students focus on their failure they more likely to feel anxious and stressed, they can lose their confidence in their abilities, which can be a reason for future failure.

He backed up these results by collecting another piece of data, the second experiment called "attempts to solve before finding success"; the results indicate that those who do not see failure in a negative way have "two and a half more attempts" to solve the puzzle. This means that students can use previous failure as a way to recognize their weaknesses and work to improve them. He concluded," to unpack these results the trick to learning more and having more success is finding the right way to frame the learning process ". From these examples, one way to gain more success in learning; students can use " the super Mario effect " which is using the failure to know the weak points and work on improving it to reach better performance.

1.8.Teachers' beliefs

All teachers hold beliefs about their profession, themselves as professionals, and matters beyond their profession. In the last few years, teachers' beliefs in LA gained significant attention, it was in the late 2000s that teachers' views toward the very nature of learning and their voices of what autonomy meant to them began to be heard. Teachers' beliefs are referred to as "teachers' pedagogic beliefs or those beliefs of relevance to an individual's teaching" (Borg, 2001, p. 187), or "educational beliefs" (Pajares, 1992).

Teachers can witness firsthand the importance of autonomy in learning; their beliefs are formed over time in their professional careers through experiences and observations, and related events. According to William and Burden (1997), during the process of education, teachers will use different metaphors to address their students based on the way they perceive

their role "resisters, receptacles, raw material, clients, partners, individual explorers, and democratic explorers". He added that teachers' behaviour in the classroom is guided by their "deep-rooted beliefs ". If teachers see learning as collaboration between educators and learners and a split responsibility between both, it will influence their behavior and their use of content and strategies during the lesson.

Borg and Al-Busaidi (2011) explored language teachers' beliefs towards LA concerning their practices of autonomy-friendly techniques during their teaching. They developed a questionnaire to extract teachers' beliefs and carried out interviews with the participants to discuss practices for autonomy. The findings revealed that teachers favor the student' decision-making process bearing in mind its significant impact on their learning.

In chan's (2003) study, he provided "a rich source of information on Hong Kong university teachers' perspectives and their language teaching practices regarding learner autonomy" (p. 48). The study investigated different teachers' perceptions and attitudes, results indicated that most participants had positive attitudes and awareness of LA. The participants describe their students as "decision-makers", "self-aware" and "responsible", however they prefer to "hold responsibilities for these activities themselves".

Several researchers have mentioned some factors that affect teachers' beliefs. In Bandura's theory (1986) "triadic reciprocity theory", it was suggested that environment, behavior, and beliefs have reciprocal relationships which means "teachers' beliefs have an influence on behavior and environment and that behavior and environment have an effect on teachers' beliefs." (Nguyen, 2014)

For Ernest (1989), among factors affecting teachers' beliefs are" the social context and the level of teachers' thought". The social context includes the expectations of supervisors, curriculum, colleagues, parents, students. The second factor includes adopting assumptions on the subject matter and the ability to justify these assumptions.

1.9. Language Learning Strategies

Many researchers define the term language learning strategy. Richards and Platt (1992:209) define it as "...intentional behavior and thoughts used by learners during learning to better help them understand, learn, or remember new information". Wenden (1991) defines it as, "mental steps or operations that learners use to learn a new language and to regulate their efforts to do so." Oxford (1990) defined learning strategies as "specific actions taken by

the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations” (p. 8).

Learning strategies are classified into several general types, cognitive language strategies, metacognitive language strategies, and social effective learning strategies.

1.9.1. Cognitive Strategies

The term "cognitive" refers to the use of the mind in language learning." to use all your mental processes" (cook, 2008).According to Hedge (2000), cognitive strategies are “thought processes used directly in learning which enable learners to deal with the information presented in tasks and materials by working on it in different ways”. Cognitive strategies involve conscious ways to tackling learning, such as note-taking, resourcing, elaboration (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990), in addition to repetition, organizing language, summarizing meanings, and using imagery for memorization. Either these strategies require deliberate manipulation of language physically or mentally, to improve learning, students may memorize information by connecting them to a certain image or event thus it will be easier for them to recall this information in the classroom. In this context, general types of cognitive strategies that are often used in the classroom are summarizing, note taking, making inferences, elaborating to prior knowledge, detection, imagery, and grouping.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990, as cited in Ibrahim, 2015), Cognitive strategies include:

- a) Repetition: repeating a chunk of language (a word or phrase) in the course of performing a language task.
- b) Resourcing: Using available reference sources of information about the target language, including dictionaries, textbooks, and prior work.
- c) Grouping: Ordering, classifying, or labeling material used in a language task-based on common attributes; recalling information based on grouping previously done.
- d) Note taking: Writing down keywords and concepts in abbreviated verbal, graphic, or numerical form to assist the performance of a language task.
- e) Deduction/ Induction: consciously applying learned or self-developed rules to produce or understand the target language.
- f) Substitution: selecting alternative approaches, revised plans or different words or phrases, to accomplish a language task.

- g) Elaboration: Relating new information to prior knowledge; relating different parts of new information to each other; making meaningful personal associations to information presented.
- h) Summarization: Making a mental or written summary of information presented in a task.
- i) Translation: rendering ideas from one language to another in a relatively verbatim manner.
- j) Transfer: using previously acquired linguistic knowledge to facilitate a language task.
- k) Inference: Using available information to guess the meanings or usage of unfamiliar language items associated with language tasks, to predict outcomes, or to fill in the missing information.

However, the best students monitor and evaluate which strategies work better and when to use them to improve their performance; which leads to meta-cognitive strategies.

1.9.2. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies or "thinking about thinking" involve "planning for learning, thinking about learning and how to make it effective, self-monitoring during learning, and evaluation of how successful learning has been after working on language in some way (Hedge, 2000). The benefit of these strategies is that "the use of meta-cognitive strategies ignite one's thinking and can lead to more profound learning and improved performance" (Anderson, 2002 as cited in Heath, 2016). Autonomous learners often hold these strategies.

In addition, Metacognition is not simply thinking about thinking as it also includes knowledge of, and regulation of, cognition (Garofalo & Lester, 1985). Flavell (1979, 1981) argued that Metacognition is a combination of metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive experiences. He explained that Metacognition knowledge consists of three aspects, (1) "the person variable" refers to the knowledge and beliefs one has about one's own and others' abilities as learners. (2) "The task variable" included knowledge of available information, resources, and task difficulty, which guide one's view of the possible goals of a cognitive undertaking. (3) "The strategy variable" relates to identifying goals, including the thought and action needed to accomplish the goals. (Flavell, 1981 as cited in Gubrin, 2015).

1.9.3. Other Strategies

Elsewhere, some studies explored other strategies that often exist in university context. Eronenet al.(1998) explored three strategies used in academic achievement situations:

illusory optimism, defensive pessimism, and self-handicapping. Illusory optimism users have a strong image of their competence and prior learning success that gives them high outcome expectations. When students are familiar with obtaining good grades. They tend to expect good results every time these beliefs make students act in an optimistic way that keeps them at ease and comfortable in their study, it boosts their confidence, so they are more likely to achieve good results.

Defensive pessimism in the other hand is used as a strategy to prepare for anxiety-provoking performances, such as exams and presentations. Martin et al. (2001) have suggested that defensive pessimism is a strategy to protect one's self-worth, and it is a dysfunctional strategy. Individuals who use this strategy have low expectations for their performances, even if they already did great; they focus on obstacles that could hinder their progress. This type of thinking can lead to either failure or success, students who prepare themselves and take action to avoid these obstacles will possibly end up having good results.

Students frequently participate in self-handicapping behaviour to avoid feeling bad about themselves if they do not perform well in class. According to (Jones & Berglas, 1978) Self-handicappers are afraid of potential failure and they concentrate on task-irrelevant behaviour in order to create excuses for their failure. Eronen et al. (1998) showed that university students using self-handicapping strategies were less satisfied and less successful in their studies, in comparison to optimistic and defensive-pessimistic students.

1.10. Academic Self-Concept, Autonomy and Academic Achievement

Investigating the relationship between students' self-concepts and their academic achievement is important; some students may experience constant failure because of their negative beliefs about themselves (Dambudzo, 2009). In educational setting academic achievement is considered the determinant of whether the student is successful or not. The literature showed that some studies examined the causal relationship between ASC and academic achievement; studies found that ASC functions as a predictor of learners' achievement. A slight raise in ASC is observed with the increase in academic achievements (Ajmal & Rafique, 2018), and others found that high academic performance is what makes positive ASC. However, most studies supported the reciprocal relationship between the two variables which means that changes in one variable leads to changes in the other.

ASC received much attention from educational researchers because it influenced students' academic functioning. Numerous studies reported how positive self-concept facilitated students' academic engagement, goal setting, task choice, persistence and effort, intrinsic motivation, strategy use, performance and achievement, and even career selection (Bong, 2003). Liu and Wang (2005) find that ASC comprises different aspects that are linked to the academic achievement of the pupils. Olatunde (2010) concluded that there is a vital, and a positive correlation between self-concept and academic achievement, also they are so linked as one affects the other and vice versa.

In a study conducted by Ahmed Hussein (2014) on University EFL Learners' Perceptions of Their Autonomous Learning Responsibilities and Abilities, he assessed the EFL learners' readiness for autonomous learning. He found that learners have the ability to learn autonomously however they have a habit to place the responsibility of their learning success or failure on their teachers, the author suggested that this habit was a result of previous educational experiences.

Researches on ASC are numerous and different whether in contexts, objectives, measurements...etc. In a quantitative study conducted by Louise Rolener Coetzee (2011) he investigated relationship between university students' ASC and motivation, and how this relationship could affect academic achievement, he found that ASC and motivation predict levels of academic achievement only of second and third-year students but cannot predict that of first and fourth-year students. In a similar study, Garin Terzian (2015) investigated relationship between ASC and Academic Motivation of Lebanese Learning Disabled Students. Results indicated that the ASC of no learning deficiencies (NLD) students was found to be higher than the ASC of students with special education needs. Low ASC is a result of low self-confidence of students that affected their self-image in addition to social acceptance; students may feel rejected by society and by their peers.

In another study by Rodell E. Tan (2019), he investigated the level of ASC of university students and assessed their strategy use, in addition to the relationship between ASC and problem solving. Results revealed that high self-concept in academics and the strategy use in solving math's problems result in a high problem-solving achievement. This shows that strategy use boosts student's intelligence in solving problems. In the same context, Reza Biria (2013) conducted a study on affect and strategy use, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between language learning strategies (LLSs) and global self-

esteem (GSE) in a quantitative study among college-level EFL learners. She found that LLSs correlate significantly with GSE, and the most used strategies were cognitive strategies.

In 2018, Filiz Yalcin Tilfarlioglu analyzed a relationship between EFL learners' autonomy, self-esteem, and the choice of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) among 157 mixed gender undergraduate EFL learners. The findings confirm that LA and SE contribute to effective vocabulary acquisition, while they also contribute significantly to VLS.

These are a few examples of previous studies that are related to the terms used in this thesis. However, none of them studied the relation between ASC and LA exclusively.

1.11. Conclusion

The reason for choosing these two notions to talk about in this work was that self-concept is an interesting topic for the writer; it has a great impact on human behaviour. A large work was done to understand self-concept. However, there is little to read about self-concept and learners' autonomy in English as a foreign language, that is why this work can be considered as a starting point for future research with more in-depth information.

The aim behind this chapter was to give a review of literature about some concepts that are related to the topic. The chapter provided different definitions of both self-concept and learner autonomy, It explained the dynamic nature of self-concept and its three major models of self-concept. In addition, it explained the importance of learner autonomy in language learning and language learning strategies. Finally, the chapter states the work that exists in the literature related to this topic.

Chapter Two

Research Methodology and Data Analysis

2.1. Introduction

This chapter is the practical part in this research. It provides the reader with the research design and methodology; it also describes the population and the sample of this study, research instruments and data analysis.

2.2. Description of the Study

This study aims to find the relationship between academic self-concept and English learners' behaviour and readiness for autonomy. This study takes place in the English department in Saida University, data were collected using two different questionnaires for the sample, descriptive method was used in addition to tables that indicate the results and figures to demonstrate participants' answers. Correlation analysis was used to find the type of relationship between academic self-concept and learners' autonomy.

2.2.1. Population

The population of the present work is (167) EFL learners at the department of English at Dr. Moulay Tahar University- Saida. First-year level and The academic year of 2020/2021.

2.2.2. Sample

From a total of (167) EFL learners, (55) learners were chosen as a sample. The participants were chosen randomly via online questionnaires. The sample took 24 hours to be gathered.

2.3. Research Instruments

Two questionnaires are used to collect the needed data. The first tool is the academic self-concept questionnaire (ASCQ) and the second is the learner autonomy scale (LAS). The use of questionnaires was chosen because they provide a large number of accurate information in a short time; it provides a snapshot of participants' opinions and thoughts.

2.3.1. Academic Self-Concept Questionnaire (ASCQ)

The Academic Self-Concept Questionnaire (ASCQ) is used to assess learners' academic self-concept. This questionnaire is for first-year EFL students from the English department of Dr. Moulay Tahar University. ASCQ was developed by Liu and Wang (2005),

it consists of 20 items that address two factors; Academic confidence and academic effort. All the necessary changes were made to adjust it for this case.

The Questionnaire was presented as 12 statements using 6 for each factor against which participants are asked to rate each statement as it relates to them using a five-point likert scale with Very like me at one end and Not at all like me at the other. (See appendix A).

2.3.2. Learner Autonomy Scale (LAS)

The learner Autonomy Scale (LAS) is used to assess learners' autonomy. This questionnaire is for first-year EFL students from the English department of Dr. Moulay Tahar University. LAS was developed by Macaskill and Taylor (2009), it consists of 14 items that address two factors, Independence of Learning and Study Habits. All the necessary changes were made to adjust the scale for this case. The scale was presented as 7 statements against which participants are asked to rate each statement as it relates to them, using a three-point Likert scale with Like me, Neutral, and Not like me. (See appendix B).

2.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of giving meanings to the collected data. This section deals with the analysis of the data gathered by the two questionnaires.

2.4.1. Analysis and Interpretation of Academic Self-Concept Questionnaire

The questionnaire is addressed to first year LMD students at the English department at Dr Moulay Tahar University- Saida, from a population of (167) learner, a sample of (55) students are chosen randomly to participate in this research and answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into two sections; each section contains a number of statements.

Section one: perceptions of confidence

This section contains six statements, the answers are revealed as follows:

Statement 01: I can follow the lessons easily.

First-year EFL learners were asked if they can follow the lessons easily, their answers varied which are organized in table 2.

option	Number	percentage
Very like me	30	54,5 %
Like me	15	27,2 %
Neutral	2	3,6 %
Not like me	8	14,5%
Not at all like me	0	0 %
total	55	100%

Table 2.2: Following the lessons

In table 2, the results show that half of first-year EFL students (54,5%) answered the first statement with very like me and (27,2%) with like me which means that the majority of the students follow the lessons easily, whereas (14,5%) answered with not like me and the rest were neutral (3,6%). This means that the majority of students follow the lessons easily.

Statement 02: Most of my classmates are smarter than me

Participants were asked if they see their classmates smarter than them. Figure 06 shows the result of statement 02, it shows that (36%) answered with not like me; and (18%) with not at all like me, which means that, they see themselves intelligent and smart whereas, (33%) were neutral. (9%) answered with like me; and (4%) with very like me this means that they think of themselves as weak in their study. The results mean that half of the students do not see others as smarter than them and only few students do.

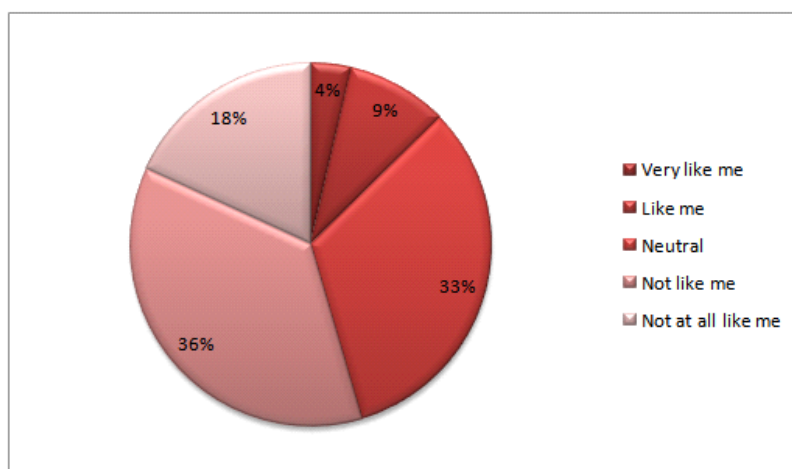


Figure 2.5: participants' answers on (Intelligence level)

The results clearly indicate that the majority of learners believe that they have a good level of intelligence; they are smart and capable of achieving good marks in their study whereas the 13% believe they are weak in their study.

Statement 03: I get frightened when I am asked a question by the teachers.

Statement 03 aims to know if students see themselves as confident when it comes to their knowledge and if they see their teachers as authority figures or as a facilitator. The results are formulated in the following table.

option	Number	percentage
Very like me	12	21,8 %
Like me	16	29 %
Neutral	20	36,3 %
Not like me	7	12,7 %
Not at all like me	0	0 %
total	55	100%

Table 2.3: behavior towards teachers' role

The results of this statement show that (36,3) were neutral: (29%) reply with like me and (21,8) with very like me. It means that the majority of participants have anxiety when it comes to answering teachers' questions because they believe that the teachers have great authority on their learning; maybe because the teachers are strict and not easy to talk to. Only (12,7%) reply with not like me; perhaps this means that students are confident in themselves or they prepare for their lessons or simply because they believe that the role of teachers is to ask questions and to correct their answers if they were wrong which facilitate their learning.

Statement 04: I am good in most of English modules.

Statement 04 aims at knowing if students believe that they are good in most of their learning. Results indicate that (40%) students' answers with like me, (10, 9%) with very like me, (12,8%) with not like me, and (3,6%) with not at all like me. (32, 7%) were neutral. This means that half of the students believe they are good at their learning.

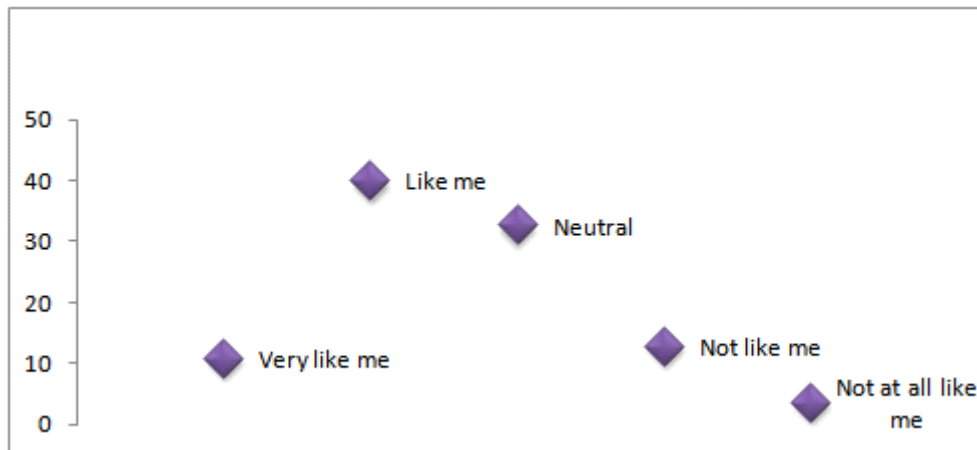


Figure 2.6: participant's answers on (generalperformance)

From the figure above we can see that most students are confident and are satisfied with their performance in learning English in most modules, However, few students are not satisfied with their performance maybe be because they are not interested in their studies or they may have difficulties in learning English.

Statement 05: I always do poorly in testes.

Statement 05 aims to know how students see their performance in tests. Table 6 reveal that (34%) reply with not like me, a close rate was (30,9%) of students being neutral. (12,7%) of students believe they do poorly in tests however the same number (12,7%) of others in addition to (9%)believe they don't.

option	Number	percentage
Very like me	5	9%
Like me	7	12,7%
Neutral	17	30,9%
Not like me	19	34%
Not at all like me	7	12,7%
total	55	100%

Table 2.4:Tests performance

According to the table above, it is noticeable that nearly half of students (46%) have good marks in the tests because of preparation and good time management. (22%) said that they do poorly in tests it can be a result of not revising the lessons or preparing for the tests or lack of good time management strategies, which leads to anxiety and fear and therefore low performance.

Statement 6: I am able to do better than my friends in most modules.

Figure 10 shows that half of the learners (52,7%) are neutral, it also reveals that (18,1%) with like me; and (9%) with very like me believe they can do better than others, (12,7%) with not like me and (7,2%) with not at all like me feel they do not do better than others.

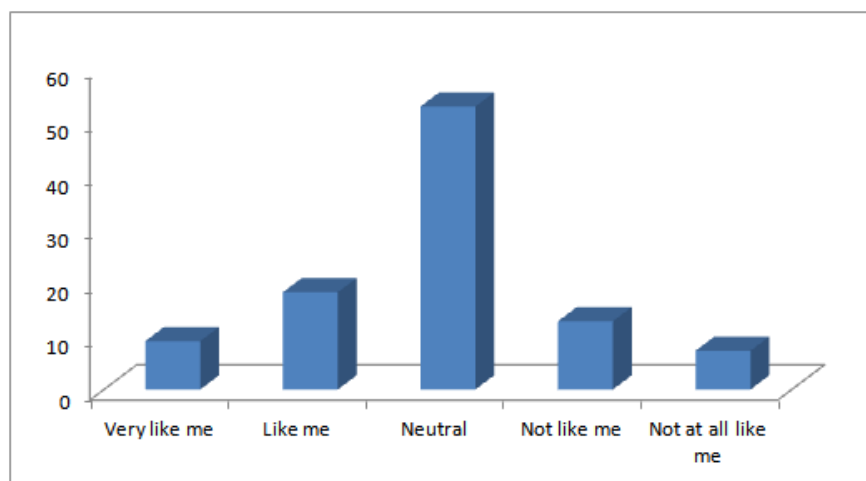


Figure 2.7: participants' answers on (competence in comparison to others)

The results indicate that half of the students do not tend to compare themselves to their peers. However, (27%) believe that they reach better achievement than others, they are more confident and set goals for their learning while the rest of the students believe they are weaker than others, and cannot overcome this weakness.

Section two: Perceptions of Effort

This section is divided into six statements, the answers are revealed as follows:

Statement 01: I daydream a lot in class

The table below shows the result of statement 01, more than half of learners (60%) do not daydream in class in addition to (14,5%). Whereas (14,5%) with answers of like me

and (3,6%) with answers of very like me do daydream a lot in the classroom. The rest (7,2%) are neutral.

option	Number	percentage
Very like me	2	3,6%
Like me	8	14,5%
Neutral	4	7,2%
Not like me	33	60%
Not at all like me	8	14,5%
total	55	100%

Table 2.5: classroom engagement

Participants' answers show that most students engage in classroom activities and pay attention to the lessons whereas (18%) are passive in the classroom.

Statement 02: I pay attention to the teachers during lessons

This statement aims at knowing if students pay attention to their teachers during the lessons, results reveals that (72,7%) reply with like me, (10,9%) reply with very like me. (7,2%) are neutral and (5,4%) with not at all like me, (3,6%)with not like me. This means that most of the students pay attention to the teacher during lessons.

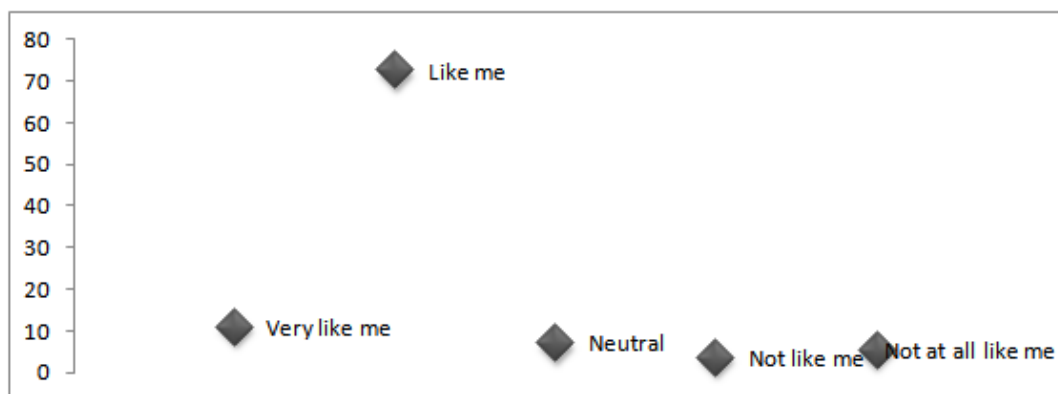


Figure 2.8: participants' answers on (Paying attention to the teacher during lessons)

According to the answers, the majority of students pay attention to their teachers, they consider the teacher as an important source of information and only few students do not rely on the teacher to get information rather they rely on themselves and do their own research.

Statement 03: I study hard for my tests

Figure 09 shows the results of statement 03, it shows that (54,5%) of students reply with like me which means that half of the learners believe that they study hard to achieve good marks in tests in addition to (9%) who reply with very like me. (25,4%) are neutral. (9%) plus others (2%) believe that they do not study hard for tests.

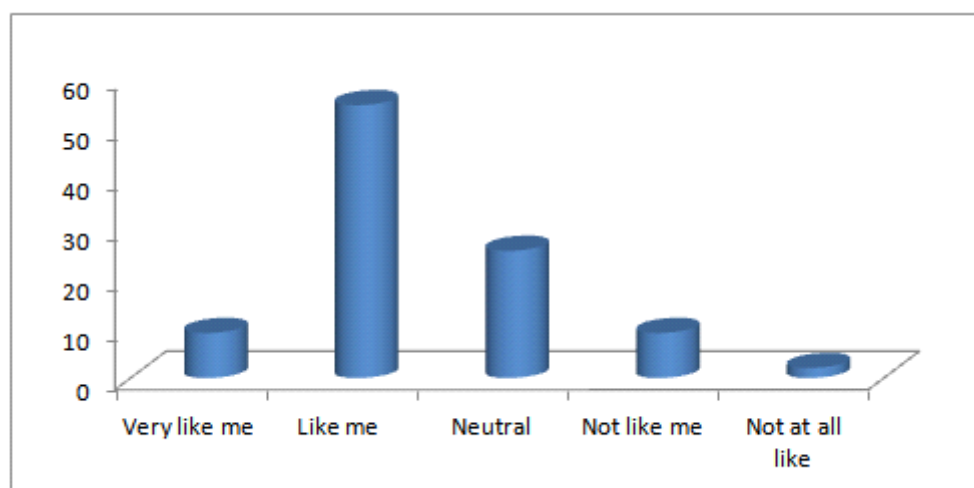


Figure 2.9: participants' answers on (studying hard for the tests)

The results reveal that most learners study hard for the test they prepare themselves and revise their lessons to achieve good marks this includes outside classroom activities and efforts whereas (11%) do not study hard for the test may be because they accept having low marks or they find excuses to avoid studying.

Statement 04: I am willing to do my best to pass all the modules

The above statement reveals that half of the EFL students (50,9%) believe that they have the will to work harder to succeed, in addition to the (7,2%) who reply with very like me. (29%) of the rest are neutral. (7,2%) reply with not like me and (3,6%) with not at all like me.

Option	Number	Percentage
Very like me	4	7,2 %
Like me	28	50,9 %
Neutral	16	29 %
Not like me	4	7,2 %
Not at all like me	2	3,6 %
Total	55	100%

Table 2.6: more effort to pass all modules.

As it is displayed in table 11, the result reveals that half of participants believe that they make more effort to succeed and to achieve higher marks and pass all modules; they are always looking for solutions and researching information, when (11%) do not feel the need to make effort to pass all modules.

Statement 05: I often feel like quitting university

From figure 10, we see that (12,7%) in addition to (5,4%) often feel like quitting learning. However half of the learners (54,5%) do not feel the same in addition to (10,9%) who reply with not at all like me feel like continuing their studies. (16,3%) are neutral.

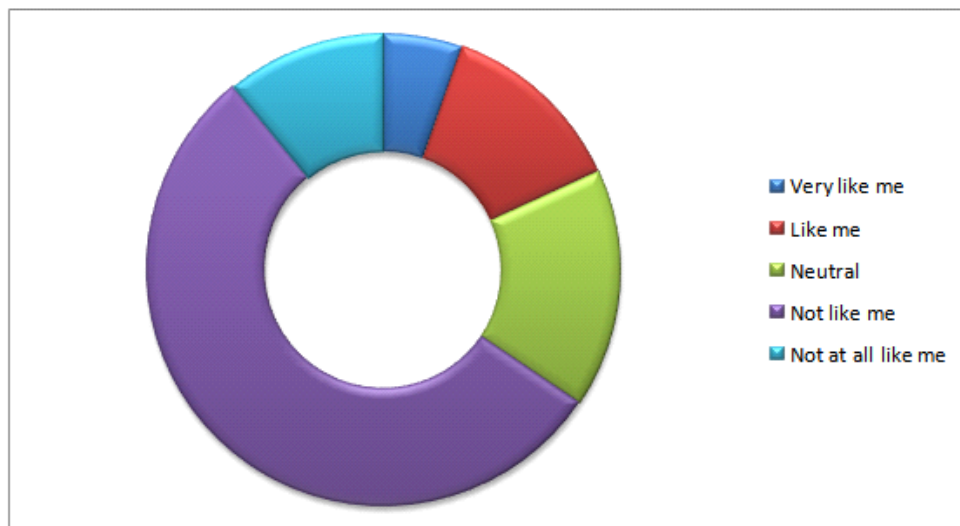


Figure 2.10: the participants' answers for (quitting university)

From the results, it is clear that more than half of students continue their study they have goals to reach and graduate however, (18%) do think of quitting university because they either get a job or they get bored and lose interest in studying.

Statement 06: I am always waiting for the lessons to end

Table 07 shows the results of statement 06 that aim to show students' interest in the lessons and classroom activities.

option	number	percentage
Very like me	5	9,3 %
Like me	12	21,8 %
neutral	20	36,3 %
Not like me	15	27,3%
Not at all like me	3	5.4%
total	55	100%

Table 2.7: waiting for the lesson to end

Results show that (36,3%) are neutral, (27,3%) answer with not like me for always waiting for the lessons to end which means that they are interested in their studies. (21,8%) reply with like me maybe because they get bored in the classroom. (9,3%) are very interested and (5,4%) are not interested at all. The results shows that students can get bored if the course content or the topic being discussed is not interesting.

2.4.2. Analysis and Interpretation of Autonomous Learning Questionnaire

Section One: Independence of Learning

Statement 01: I enjoy finding information about new topics on my own

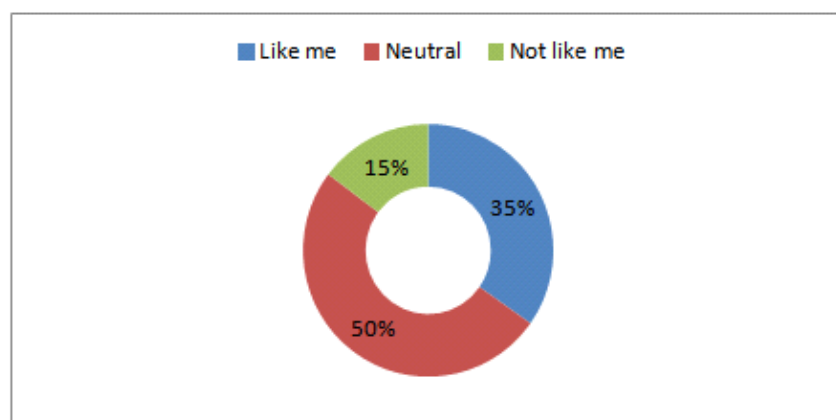


Figure 2.11: participants' answers on (finding information on my own)

Figure 11 shows that (35%) prefer to find information on their own. (15%) prefer to be given the information by their teacher. Half of the learners (50%) are neutral.

Statement 02: I am open to new ways of doing familiar things

Students are asked if they are interested in trying new ways of learning

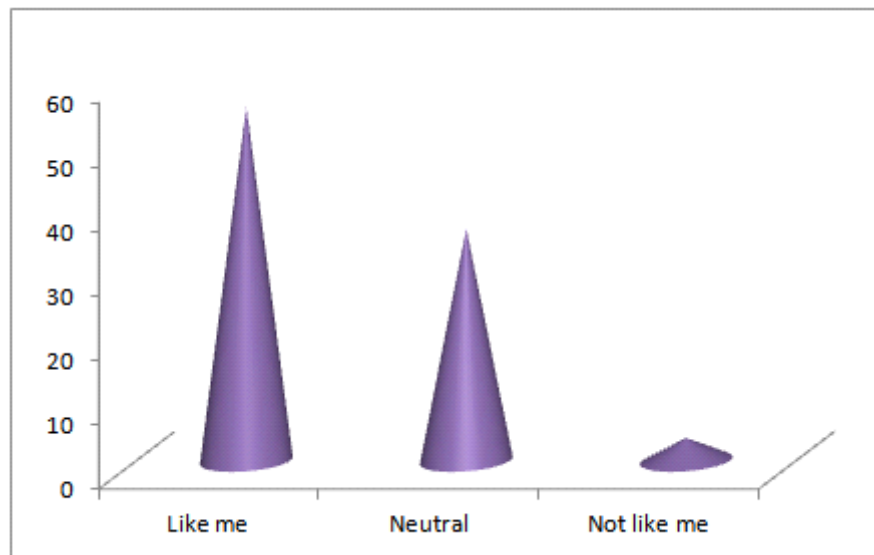


Figure 2.12: participants' answers on (open to new ways of doing familiar things)

Statement 02 aims to see if students are open to try new ways of learning. (55%) are open to new experiences; and new ways to study and learn English, only (9%) are not interested in trying new ways of learning and the rest of the students are neutral.

Statement 03: I tend to be motivated to work by assessment deadlines

Statement 03 aims to rate students' motivation to work. (40%) are motivated for work especially by deadlines, (27,3%) are less motivated to learn. Others (32,7%) are neutral.

Option	Number	Percentage
Like me	22	40%
Neutral	18	32,7%
Not like me	15	27,3%
Total	55	100%

Table 2.8: to be motivated to work by assessment deadlines.

The table shows that the majority of students are extrinsically motivated by deadlines to learn and to do their homework; others (27%) are intrinsically motivated to study and to do their homework.

Statement 04:I take responsibility for my learning experiences

The following bar charts shows that (43,6%) of students take responsibility for the learning experiences. (32,8%) do not take responsibility for the learning experiences. the rest (23,6%) are neutral.

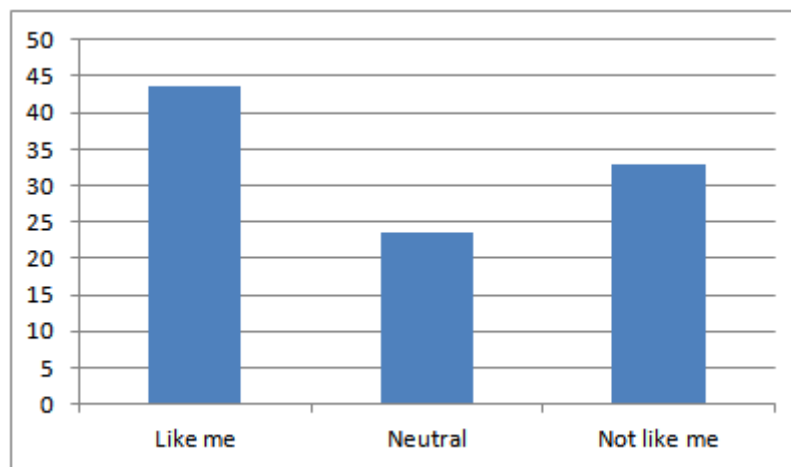


Figure 2.13: participants' answers on (take responsibility for my learning experiences)

The result indicates that the majority of learners take responsibility for their own learning; they make decisions concerning their study whereas (33%) prefer to be guided through their learning by others.

Section two: Study Habits

Statement 01:My time management is good.

Option	Number	Percentage
Like me	12	21,8%
Neutral	30	54,5%
Not like me	13	23,7%
Total	55	100%

Table 2.9: time management

Results reveals that (21,8%) are able to manage their time in a good way. (23,7%) do not have good management of time and half of the students (54,5%) are neutral.

Statement 02:I am happy working on my own

Figure 14 shows that (31%) study alone and (16,3%) work with others while (52,7%) are neutral.



Figure 2.14: participants' answers on (I am happy working on my own)

The findings show that (31%) prefer studying and working on their own maybe because they like accomplishing things by themselves, others (16%) enjoy working with their peers maybe because they find it more fun and helpful or they are sociable.

Statement 03:I frequently find excuses for not getting down to work

Students were asked if they find excuses for not doing the homework

Option	Number	Percentage
Like me	5	9,2%
Neutral	20	36,3%
Not like me	30	54,5%
Total	55	100%

Table 2.10:frequently find excuses for not getting down to work.

Results from table 10 show that (54,5%) of students do not procrastinate while learning. (9,2%) of students tend to find excuses to avoid doing homework or prepare for exams. Half of the students (54,5%) are neutral.

2.5 Statistical Analysis

In this work, a statistical analysis is used to find the relationship between learners' autonomy and their academic self-concept. The test is called Pearson Correlation using the SPSS software.

2.5.1 The Pearson Correlation

Pearson Correlation measures the degree of the linear relationship between two variables (in this case the two variables are Learner Autonomy and Academic Self-Concept), by linear relationship, it means that the relationship can be well characterized by a straight line. Correlation ranges from -1.0 to +1.0, Pearson correlation is given by the letter r .

2.5.2 Decision Rule:

This rule is used to assess if the correlation is significant or not. The rule is:

- If **P value** is less than 0.05 than the test is significant and thus there is a significant relationship between the two variables.
- If **P value** is more than 0.05 than the test is not significant and thus there is not a significant relationship between the two variables.

2.6 Analysis of Total results of both Questionnaires:

After using statistical function to sum up the total scores of each student, results appeared as follows:

levels	high	low
ASC scores	12 -30	40 -60

Table 3.11: The Total Academic Self-Concept

Students who have scores ranges from 12 to 30 have high academic self-concept an

Students who have scores ranges from 40 to 60 have low academic self-concept. See table 3.11.

levels	autonomous	Non-autonomous
Aytonomy scores	7 -11	17-21

Table 2.12: The Total Learners Autonomy

Students who have scores ranges from 7 to 11 are autonomous, and Students who have scores ranges from 17 to 21 are not autonomous. See table 3.12.

Correlations

		total_ASC	Total_auono my
total_ASC	Pearson Correlation	1	,929**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001
	N	55	55
Total_autonomy	Pearson Correlation	,929**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	
	N	55	55

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

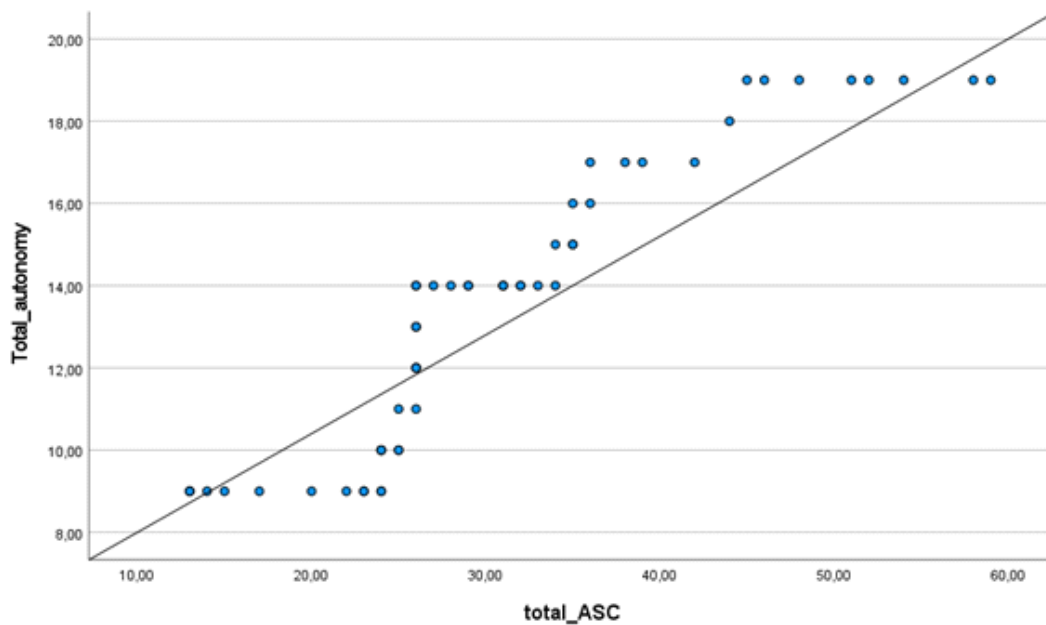
Table 3.13: Correlation Results of ASC and Autonomy

From table 13 we see that the Pearson Correlation is 0,929 and the **P value** (Sig. (2-tailed))is 0,001. When we compare the result to the decision rule, we find that 0.001 is less than 0.05, which means that there is a significant relationship between students' academic self-concept and their autonomy.

Written Results in APA Format:

There is a significant positive relationship between academic self-concept and autonomy, $r(53) = 0.92$, $p = 0.001$. (r = total number of the sample - 2. p = p value.)

The following graph shows the linear relationship between ASC and autonomy:



10.00 = High academic self-concept
60.00 = Low academic self-concept
8.00 = more autonomous
20.00 = less autonomous

Figure 3.15: the linear relationship between ASC and autonomy

2.7 Analysis and Interpretation of Pearson Correlation:

From the graph, we can see that when the points are between 10 and 25 on total_ASC(high academic self-concept) at the same time it is between 7 and 10 on Total-autonomy (more autonomous). When points are between 45 and 60 on total-ASC (low academic self-concept) at the same time, it is between 19 and 20 (less autonomous). we can also see that when points go higher towards 60 on total-ASC (towards low academic self-concept) the points go higher towards 20 Total-autonomy (towards less autonomous) and vice versa which means high academic self-concept leads to more autonomous learning and low academic self-concept leads to less autonomous learning;

ASC differs from student to student. Results answer the research questions; student's perceptions of confidence influence their learning independence. When a student is confident in his ability, he will be able to take control of his study, choose how to learn according to his needs; he will take responsibility for his learning experience. Students ' self-perceptions of their effort influence their study habits. When students are interested in their study, they will be motivated to do more work in order to better their performances. They will be open to new ways of learning and use different strategies to reach their aims. According to the findings of

Pearson correlation, students' self-concept is significant for students to become autonomous. High ASC make autonomous learners and low ASC make dependent and passive learners.

Students can achieve greater work by putting in some effort and managing their time correctly, it is also really helpful to set goals for learning, this will make students motivated, teachers need to provide a relaxing and anxiety-free atmosphere in the classroom for students to be comfortable, in addition to interesting topics and different activities to avoid boredom.

2.8 Conclusion

This part of the research contained the analysis and interpretation of results of both questionnaires. It showed learners perceptions of effort and confidence, which determined the type of learners' academic self-concept and showed learners' study habits and their independence of learning which determined their level of autonomy in learning English.

It also included the statistical analysis and the results that answered the research questions. As a result, students who were confident in themselves, believed they are smart and capable of overcoming obstacles, who managed their time, made efforts to succeed, have goals and aims to reach were more autonomous in learning English, they were in control of their learning, they were open to new experiences and made their own decisions concerning their studies.

Chapter Three

Suggestions and recommendation

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the offered recommendations. This work could help other instructors understand how students' self-concept influences their learning autonomy. The present chapter attempts to provide instructions to EFL students and teachers on how to gain a high ASC and be more autonomous. This study reveals that there is a significant relationship between ASC and LA. Moreover, students' perceptions of confidence have a consistent relationship with their independence and students' perceptions of their effort have direct relationship with their study habits. Both relationships contribute to the positive link between ASC and autonomy that leads to academic achievement. Teachers play an important role in raising students SC and autonomy by providing comfortable environment in classroom and choosing different activities and interesting lessons.

The research findings indicate a serious need for change in learners' beliefs and behaviours at the University of Saida to improve their performances and make the learning experience enjoyable. Recommendations are suggested below to assist learners and teachers to raise students' SC and boost their autonomy.

3.2 Suggestions for Students:

Students are different in the way they learn English language, some of them are active learners and others are passive learners. Active learners are more autonomous when they study and they achieve higher scores than others and have high self-concept. For students to have high SC they need to first; have confidence in themselves, feel able to overcome obstacles and solve problems, practice solving complicated activities and use strategies. Second, they need to engage in classroom activities and try new ways to learn. Third, they need to pay attention to their teachers and take their notes and instructions seriously in addition to setting goals for learning to remain motivated. Making friends and engaging with family can be helpful to boost self-confidence.

3.3 Suggestions for Teachers:

Teachers play important role in students' learning process. That is why teachers must be aware of the importance of students' self-concept in affecting their behaviour. To raise students' SC, teachers first need to make students feel at ease when studying. A teacher needs to recognize the obstacles that students have and try to help overcome these obstacles. Providing interesting content and different activities can make learners interesting in the

lesson. In addition to SC, teachers must pay attention to their students' engagement in classroom, and try to engage the passive students in learning. Learners also need to feel important and have a role in the learning process; that is why it is useful for teachers to give students chances to make decision concerning classroom activities; like choosing what to learn, what kind of materials to use in a certain session. Finally yet importantly, Teachers need to give students opportunities to find information on their own and not being the only source of information. Finally, teachers need to make sure they are easy to talk to, being a facilitator for learning rather than an authority figure helps students to be comfortable with asking questions or asking for instructions.

3.4 Recommendations for Future Researchers:

This work was an attempt to find the relationship between self-concept and EFL' learners autonomy. Two questionnaires were used for this purpose; the Academic Self-Concept questionnaire and Learner Autonomy Scale. Both questionnaires were effective in gathering data, which was done online. Both descriptive and statistical analysis were done using Pearson Correlation for deciding the type of relationship between ASC and LA. Results indicated that high academic self-concept leads to autonomy; and autonomous learners tend to have a high academic self-concept. This work is significant because it deals with ASC and LA exclusively; it also uses a statistical analysis using SPSS software to calculate results, which means that the results are accurate. However, the work encounters some limitations, which future researches can avoid. First, the use of more than one kind of research instrument, it is helpful to use different tools to gather information. Second, the use of pen and paper when gathering data to make sure that all the sample participated in the work. This way the work can be more solid.

3.4 Conclusion:

In this chapter, Suggestions for students and teachers were demonstrated and some recommendations for future researchers were provided. Students' beliefs and perceptions are extremely important for constructing a positive self-concept that is why both students and teachers must pay attention to it in addition to promoting learner autonomy.

General Conclusion

This work is an attempt to know the impact of students' academic self-concept on their autonomous behavior in their study, the case of first-year EFL students. It highlighted the relationship between self-concept and autonomy. The results indicated that students who were confident and made efforts in their study tend to be autonomous during the learning process, they were more independent and in control and manage time in a good way.

- After statistically analyzing the data, collected by the two questionnaires from a sample of 55 first-year English learners in University of Moulay Tahar- Saida. The results were summarized as follows. First, results of academic self-concept questionnaire showed that the majority of first- year EFL students have high academic self-concept. Second, results of learner autonomy scale showed that the majority of participants are autonomous. Finally, according to the Pearson correlation analysis there is a correlation between EFL learners' self-concept and their autonomy. When student' ASC is high (i.e. positive), the student is more autonomous in learning and in control of his study. When the student' ASC is low (i.e. negative), the student is less autonomous and dependent in his study. These results go in line with the three hypotheses stated in the general introduction, where the main hypothesis is that academic self-concept is significant for university students' autonomy.

The experiment provided new insight into the relationship between academic self-concept, achievement and autonomy; since this work dealt with the academic self-concept and autonomy exclusively, which made it a starting point for other researchers in the future. The present work had some limitations such as the small number of participants. Online questionnaires decrease chances to reach the entire sample. The current circumstances of the pandemic prevented the use of observations and interviews.

After examining the self-concept and autonomy of EFL learners at the University of Dr.Moulay Tahar- Saida, collecting and analyzing the needed information, some points need to be taken into consideration. Further research is required to establish whether teachers' role as authority figure hinders students' independence in learning which also lower their tendency for autonomy.

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Appendix A:

Academic Self-Concept Questionnaire

The following questionnaire is an attempt to investigate the impact of self-concept on EFL learners in achieving autonomous learning. We would be very grateful if you respond to these questions, it would take less than 15 minutes to answer. Your information will remain confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation

Students choose one of the answers on five pointlikert scale that begins with very like me, like me, neutral, not like me, not at al like me.

I can follow the lessons easily.

Most of my classmates are smarter than me.

I get frightened when I am asked a question by the teachers.

I am good in most of English modules.

I always do poorly in testes.

I am able to do better than my friends in most modules.

I daydream a lot in class.

I pay attention to the teachers during lessons.

I study hard for my tests.

I am willing to do my best to pass all the modules.

I often feel like quitting university.

I am always waiting for the lessons to end.

Appendix B:

Learner Autonomy Scale

The following questionnaire is an attempt to investigate the impact of self-concept on EFL learners in achieving autonomous learning. We would be very grateful if you respond to these questions, it would take less than 15 minutes to answer. Your information will remain confidential.

thank you for your cooperation

Students are asked to answer by choosing from: like me, neutral, not like me.

I enjoy finding information about new topics on my own

I am open to new ways of doing familiar things

I tend to be motivated to work by assessment deadlines

I take responsibility for my learning experiences

My time management is good.

I am happy working on my own

I frequently find excuses for not getting down to work