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**STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' STANCE TOWARDS LEARNER AUTONOMY AND THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING WITHIN THE ELT FRAMEWORK**

***MA Thesis**

Gülden İLİN

Assist. Prof. Dr.

Çukurova University

Educational Faculty

Gökçe DİŞLEN DAĞGÖL

Adana Science and Technology University

School of Foreign Languages

ABSTRACT

For years there has been a tendency to a traditional approach to language learning, which has constituted a major obstacle to learner autonomy. However, changes in the perspective of learning have given rise to learner autonomy, the essence of which is learner's assuming an active role in his/her own learning. Nevertheless, learning is such a complex process that it includes various dimensions. It is safe to say that learning is not only mental but also affective process. Therefore, together with students' autonomy, promoting their psychological well-being gains a great importance in learning process. As a matter of fact, there is a bond between learner autonomy and psychological dimension of the learning. For this reason, this study focuses on the interaction between learner autonomy and psychologically well environments in the classroom. To begin with, this study explores the description of learner-centeredness and its different dimensions. Next, it dwells upon the importance of the psychological well-being of the students in the classroom. This study further investigates the relationship between learner autonomy and psychological well-being of the students. The study aims at indicating the reasons of probable changes, if any, in students' perceptions on the relationship between learner autonomy and psychological well-being throughout their education in the ELT Department as prospective teachers.

*This study constitutes some part of the MA thesis titled "*Students' and Teachers' Perceptions on the Relationship Between Learner Autonomy and the Psychological Well-Being in the ELT Context*" conducted by Dişlen (2010)

The students who are at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the educational process in this department and teachers in the same department were the participants of the study, and they were selected via "Purposive Sampling". Three hundred and fifteen students and eight teachers participated in this study. The data were collected through a questionnaire and a series of subsequent interviews which were held with students at different grades of the mentioned department. The data collected were analysed in two terms. That is, the questionnaire administered was analysed through SPSS and the verbal data gained through interviews were subjected to content analysis. In this respect, this study bore both quantitative and qualitative features. At the end of the study, preparatory class students were found to incline to learner autonomy less than the second and fourth year students. As for psychological well-being, results indicated that fourth year students had the positive self-concepts most except for the sense of pressure in life. In terms of negative self-concept, second year students displayed the least level of negative self-concept. When it comes to the interaction between learner autonomy and psychological well-being, level of positive perceptions appeared to increase among preparatory class, second year and fourth year students respectively. Furthermore, probable reasons of findings, implications and suggestions were presented.

Key Words: *Learner autonomy, psychological well-being, initial teacher education, student-centred education, teacher autonomy, lifelong learning.*

1. Introduction

Human beings have a complex nature, with a number of distinctive features. Among these features is their personality factor, which is one of the important cores of humans. As we all know, human nature is multi-dimensional, which means that we have not only physical features but also psychological, cognitive and social features. All these features complete one another and constitute our whole nature. As complex creatures, human beings carry these characteristics to their learning environments; and language learning is one of them. As it is known, language learning is not an easy process, and it requires time and effort. However, it is not just a cognitive process. It leads us to bringing some affective factors to this process. Affective factors, which are related with the state of our emotions, play a big role in language learning, and they can even determine the level of success in learning because of the fact that when we develop positive feelings during the language learning process, the possibility of achievement will directly increase. However, students can take most out of these positive feelings such as sense of security, self-confidence, self-esteem and the like, when they find the opportunity to express themselves freely in the classroom. At this point, learner autonomy presents itself.

Learner autonomy gives students responsibility for their own learning, which makes them more active during the process. Unfortunately, there was a tendency towards teacher-directed learning, and the students were regarded as passive receivers of the information. However, with the entry of learner autonomy into the context of language learning, students have grasped more rights independent of teacher, and they have begun to take more active role in their own learning, which is the essence of learner autonomy.

As the father of learner autonomy, Holec (1981) states, autonomous learning requires the skill of taking responsibility and control of learning process (in Burkert, 2008). Thus, the first thing for the teacher to attain is to comprehend autonomy in real sense, and to volunteer to change their roles. Adopting a broader perspective and respecting students as individuals constitute crucial steps in making learner autonomy thrive in the context of language learning. For this reason, teachers should be open to constructing a good relationship with the students and also quitting the “know-it-all-role” as Nakamura (2000, p.119) suggests. It is important for the teachers not to try to become a superior figure in the classroom. This way, students feel more relaxed and secure in the lesson. When students actively participate in the lesson, they feel the sense of success. They begin to believe in their abilities which, in turn may increase their self-confidence and self-esteem. In the classrooms where teachers provide students with the chance to become active participants, students get more willing towards lesson. Hence, learner autonomy promotes their level of motivation to learn. Taking an active role during the learning process helps learners to get involved in the lesson both physically and mentally; hence, students begin to take more pleasure out of learning the language. Pleasure, fun and joy build a low-anxiety environment in the classroom, contributing to students’ success.

All in all, giving responsibility to the students help them to use their potentials. This way, students get more aware of their own abilities. Through the sense of responsibility and success, students develop positive feelings towards themselves like self-confidence and self-esteem. Students may begin to feel more relaxed and psychologically secure in the classroom. Consequently, trying to promote learner autonomy so as to increase students’ positive feelings gains importance in learning.

1.1 Learner Autonomy

Autonomy is not a simple concept. It should not be regarded as just being alone in the process of performing a task at hand. It refers to learners’ independence and control over the task. However, if it is looked beyond the literal meaning of this concept, it is possible to find out a more profound meaning. At this point, self-direction presents

itself, which lays the foundation of understanding the meaning of autonomy. Lee (1998, p.282) notes that "learning to be self-directed involves taking responsibility for the objectives of learning, self-monitoring, self-assessing and taking an active role in learning". As understood from this definition, autonomy is a more complex process with further dimensions.

When students begin to take an active part in their own learning and get rid of the dependence on teacher, learning in real sense appears, and their learning becomes permanent. "Responsible learners are learners who accept the idea that their own efforts are crucial to progress in learning, and behave accordingly" (Scharle and Szabo, 2000, p.3). However, autonomous learning context does not reduce the responsibility of the teachers; in contrast, it assigns more significant and meaningful roles to them. Charles (1999, p.221) asserts that "teachers who want to empower students to make decisions and resolve their own problems will give students opportunities to think, act and take responsibility". Teachers try to provide students with the situations that make learning easy for the students in the classrooms where learner autonomy is dominant. In such classrooms, "Teachers serve as facilitators and guides rather than directors and moulders of children's learning" (Santröck, 2006 p.315). New roles of teachers require them to possess more important and remarkable skills and to train students to be more independent, autonomous, motivated and reflective learners. Little (2007) remarks that

It is important to recognize that teacher has a responsibility to intervene when her learners' choices are leading them into a blind alley, and especially when they are failing to set themselves optimal challenges. And she must provide suggestions and procedures that lie beyond their experience, cultivating a classroom dynamic that constantly lifts them to new levels of effort and achievement (p.24).

Development of learner autonomy is a dynamic process. Learners need to go through a gradual process to become autonomous, which makes the course of development more meaningful and efficient. Sharle and Szabo (2005, p.9) divide the development of learner responsibility into three stages as "raising awareness, changing attitudes

and transferring the roles". In addition to these stages, Zhou and Chen (2005, p.51) propose another stage after transferring roles: positive interdependence. Although autonomy requires independent learning, teacher and students are connected to one another interdependently. As it is apparent from these stages, autonomous learning is a process. It requires time and effort. It is crucial that students get accustomed to the idea of autonomy and feel secure with it. Wachob (1996) state that students ought to develop learner autonomy so as to achieve in the lesson, then in different classes and later in future occupations.

It seems that autonomy has an impact upon the various kinds of learning at different stages of people's lives, which reflects the core of life-long learning. Therefore, learner autonomy is associated with teacher autonomy at the same time. Teacher autonomy is a significant concept with the context of learner autonomy owing to the fact that without teacher's being autonomous it seems unlikely to instil autonomous learning habits into the students. These two concepts are very interrelated, as Thanasoulas (2000, p.8) states, "to posit ways of fostering learner autonomy is certainly to posit ways of fostering teacher autonomy, as teachers' autonomy permeates into learners' autonomy". Pearson and Moomaw (2005, p.41) depicts teacher autonomy as "the perception that teachers have regarding whether they have control themselves and their work environment". Smith (2003) describes teacher autonomy as the capability to develop proper abilities, knowledge and views regarding oneself as a teacher in collaboration with others. Thus, It seems significant to train university students, or future teachers, with an awareness of teacher autonomy concept in their initial teacher education programs, which makes them more complete graduates and sophisticated teachers.

1.2. Psychological Well-Being (PSW)

Wellness is multidimensional, and it has different perspectives. Nakamura (2000, p.5) defines wellness as "a process for the continuous self-renewal that is needed for fulfilling life. Wellness is judged from the standpoint of reaching or achieving human potential. Student wellness is another way of looking at the self-actualized person". Psychological well-being is the psychological dimension of wellness. Ryff (1989, in Harrington and Loffredo, 2007) summarizes psychological well-being as the dimensions of self-acceptance, autonomy, purpose in life, personal growth, positive relations with others and environmental mastery. psychological wellness has a strong bond with having self-worth, self-confidence, self-respect, self-efficacy and self-actualization. Lent (2004); Pollard and Davidson (2001); Pollard and Lee (2003); Ryff and Keyes (1995); Ryff and Singer (1996) cited in Fraillon (2004) view autonomy, self-acceptance, resilience and self-efficacy as the aspects of well-being. Fraillon (2004, pp.5-6) describes well-being as the prevalence of positive attributes and lists

features of well-being as the active pursuit of well-being, a balance of attributes, positive affect or life satisfaction, pro-social behaviour, multiple dimensions and personal optimisation.

2.5. The Interaction between Learner Autonomy and Students' Sense of Psychological Wellness

Learner autonomy presents students the chance to act responsibly for their learning. They get more aware of the fact that teachers cannot control all their learning and students themselves need to take some action in the learning process. "Through autonomy individuals better regulate their own actions in accord with their full array of felt needs and available capacities, thus coordinating and prioritizing processes toward more effective self-maintenance" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p.254). Autonomy supportive environments providing students with choice and encouragement for personal initiative enhance autonomous motivation (Gagne, 2003). However, "classes that are kept rigidly under the teacher's control are more likely to lead to dissatisfaction and alienation and do not facilitate personal, social or academic growth" (Williams and Burden, 1997, p.197). Quitting traditional teacher role paves the way for the multidimensional development of students. Giving students a power and offering them certain choices enhance their sense of "ownership" and willingness to learn within themselves (Brown, 2001). When students feel relaxed, motivated and enthusiastic, their psychological well-being is intensified. As Nakamura (2000, p.143) suggests, "Feeling safe and secure means that students feel they are in control of their own learning within the classroom environment-they have mastery over their being". This definition provides a clear connection between learner autonomy and psychological wellness. When students feel the sense of success through being active in the process, self-confidence and self-esteem, motivation to learn, low level of anxiety and inhibition begin to appear within students. So, it is worth mentioning that learner autonomy influences the establishment of psychologically well classroom environments.

Autonomy enhances student's inner discipline, which cultivates their empowerment. "Teaching self-control is a way of getting students actively involved, cognitively and affectively, in their own self-growth" (Kaufman, Mostert, Trent, Hallahan, 1998, p.59). All in all, fostering autonomy makes teaching and learning a conscious process, hence helping students enjoy the fruits of learning and teachers take further steps for

effective teaching. Students show academic and emotional improvement during the learning process.

2. Methodology

Descriptive research design was applied in this study. Perceptions of the students in ELT department on the relationship between learner autonomy and psychological well-being were dealt with. Regarding the issue, attitudes of the teachers in ELT department were also explored.

The study has both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Quantitative side of the study reflects the statistical part whereas qualitative side represents the interpretative face of the study. In this study triangulation was performed through using three data collection tools in order to make the collected data stronger and put forth multi-faceted findings

2.1 Participants

Two parties from the higher education environment participated in the study. In other words, both the students from different grades of the ELT Department of Çukurova University and instructors of the same department took part in the study. The participant students were the members of preparatory-class students, second and fourth grades to see the probable differing perceptions after the educational process they go through; thus, student and teacher groups were chosen by Purposive Sampling.

2.2 Instrumentation

A questionnaire and a series of subsequent interviews were used for collecting the required data in this study. A questionnaire was administered to the ELT students at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the education in their department. The questionnaire was developed from different scales and articles related to the subject. The first part deals with learner autonomy and includes questions exploring how autonomous learners they are. The second part consists of questions that reveal the extent of psychological well-being students have as learner. The third part of the questionnaire is concerned with the perceptions of the ELT students regarding the relationship between learner autonomy and psychological well-being. This instrument was a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. On the Likert scale questionnaire, respondents identified their degree of agreement or disagreement with a statement by choosing one of five responses, which were strongly agree (5), agree (4), not sure/undecided (3), disagree (4) and strongly disagree (1). The items in each part of the questionnaire were categorized within themselves according to similar points they share with a view to making the questionnaire more meaningful,

concise, systematic and organized. After the administration and analysis of the questionnaire, students in preparatory classes, second graders and fourth graders in ELT department were subjected to a semi-structured interview. The interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed in order to save time and not to miss any important points. Similarly, eight instructors were also interviewed in terms of the relationship between learner autonomy and psychological well-being.

2.3 Data Analysis

The results of the questionnaire were analyzed through Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) program (SPSS 17.0 version for Windows). The quantitative data were shown in charts. Participants' responses were numerically coded, recorded and interpreted. The answers received through the interview with students were subjected to content analysis.

3. Findings and Discussion

The present study was concerned with the students' and teachers' perceptions about the relationship between learner autonomy and psychological well-being in the ELT context. In accordance with this issue, the study bears the following purposes:

- to identify both ELT students' and teachers' perceptions about the bond between learner autonomy and psychological well-being
- to reveal differing perceptions, if any, of the students who are at the different stages of their undergraduate program
- to uncover the probable reasons of these changing perceptions
- to explore the impact of university education upon the students' perceptions about the issue
- to make a positive contribution to the improvement of English Language Teaching Program

Within the framework of these aims, different data analysis tools were developed, and preparatory class, second year, fourth year students and teachers were chosen as the participants of the study. A threefold questionnaire was administered to the students, and their habits of autonomous learning, state of psychological wellness and ideas about the connection between learner autonomy and psychological well-being were obtained in respective manner. Subsequently they were interviewed to support the data collected through the questionnaire. An interview was conducted with teachers, as well, so as to elicit their perceptions about the issue. Before the study, the

following research questions were determined with a view to providing a sound ground for the study:

1. Do the ELT students perceive themselves as autonomous learners at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the educational process they go through in the ELT department?
2. Do they consider themselves as psychologically well at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the educational process they go through in the ELT department?
3. To what do the students attribute the probable changes, if any, concerning the issue?
4. What are their perceptions concerning the probable relationship between learner autonomy and psychological well-being of the students?
5. How do the instructors of ELT department view the probable relationship between learner autonomy and psychological well-being of the students?
6. Do they believe that they provide grounds for the student-teachers to become more autonomous in their learning? If so, how?

Research Question 1: It explores students' self-perceptions about being autonomous learners at the different stages of their educational process they go thorough at university. Their perceptions about the concept of learner autonomy were gathered in four different categories such as teacher role, independent work, readiness for autonomous learning and academic self-awareness. Most of the preparatory class students expect their teacher to tell them what to do, and they give the responsibility of setting learning goals to the teacher. Furthermore, roughly half of the prep students hold the belief that teacher should take full responsibility for their learning. It seems that preparatory class students tend to show dependency on their teacher during their learning process. Moreover, they are not adequately ready to the student-teacher role exchange, and they have high expectations from their teachers. However, during the interview more prep students expressed their beliefs that it is the student that is responsible for his/her learning. It appears that these students' perceptions about the autonomy have not been settled sufficiently yet. They are aware that students are responsible for their learning and teacher has the role of guiding them; nevertheless, questionnaire results show that they give more responsibilities to the teacher. It may be because of the fact that they want to be autonomous learners and they are conscious of its importance; however, they do not know how to apply it. Due to the fact that these students are new to university environment and they come from conventional teaching system, they are not expected to be familiar with the concept of learner autonomy. In contrast, more than

half of the second year students are not of the opinion that teacher should assume full responsibility for their learning even though there are a lot of students expecting their teacher to establish their learning goals. It seems that most of the second year students do not assign their teacher full responsibility for their own learning and they tend to be autonomous learners.

The rate of the students expecting their teacher to tell them exactly what to do, set their own learning goals and take full responsibility for their learning gets lower relative to those of preparatory class and second year students. They appear to be conscious of teacher role and willing to share learning responsibility. Interview results show that more students believe that student and teacher should be mutually responsible for the learning. As regards the independent work, most preparatory class students deem doing well at school as a necessary process and do their assignments to be considered as good students. However, they incline to manifest more independency while learning new things. What is more, according to the interview results more prep students exhibits dependency on teacher in terms of independent work. As opposed to this group, most second year students are prone to independent work and they do not wait for the teacher to want them to do so. However, their interview results indicate that they have conditional independence with respect to independent work. Most of them tend to study independently without being requested so when the course or the topic attracts their attention. That is to say, they prefer independent work on the subjects that are appealing to them. In addition, many a fourth year student has an inclination to learn new things independently even if it is not compulsory work. When it comes to readiness for autonomous learning, most prep students seem to be ready for autonomous learning. They display propensity towards autonomous habits, they would like be autonomous; however, overall results indicate that they need training to get more familiar with the concept. Apart from this readiness, they appear to have academic self-awareness in terms of knowledge on what to learn, importance of effort in learning and self-evaluation. In addition to these, second year students manifest readiness for autonomous learning in terms of goal-setting, participation in the classroom activities, decision making and responsibility taking. They have also academic self-awareness from the aspects of self-evaluation, persistence, knowing what to learn and importance of student effort in learning. They are also aware that there may be different variables for the failure in learning since most second year students stated indecisive responses about the issue. Likewise, fourth year students exhibit readiness

for autonomous learning in terms of goal-setting, participation in the classroom activities, decision making and responsibility taking, preference for student-centred classrooms, individual study and pre-class preparations. Together with this readiness, they seem to be aware of themselves academically in self-assessment, tenacity, knowing what to learn and significant role of student effort in learning. Just as second year students, they seem to be conscious of the possibility of the different variables for the failure in learning.

All in all, when each group of students is evaluated within themselves, preparatory class students seem less autonomous than second year and fourth year students in terms of identification of teacher roles. Preparatory class students give more responsibilities to their teachers; more students view teacher as fully responsible for their learning and expect him/her to tell them what to do. However, interviews show that more prep students believe that students are responsible for their learning, and there are students sharing this responsibility between student and teacher without assigning full responsibility only to the teacher, which reflects that prep students are aware that learner autonomy is important; they have responsibilities for their learning; however, they are not fully ready to take the proper responsibility because their perceptions may not have been settled sufficiently and they may have been trained in a conventional teaching setting in prior to university. However, this rate lowers among the second and fourth year students. Fourth year students appear the most autonomous group among them in terms of teacher role since they may have got more conscious about the issue after the education they have received at university. As expected second year students stand between prep and fourth year students. However, in the interviews two students gave the responsibility of learning to the teacher. It may be because of the fact that they are also still at the stage of constructing their own personal theories about the issue. Fourth year students do not put all the responsibility on teacher's shoulders; more students aware that learning responsibility is a mutual process. When it comes to independent work, again fourth year students are seen as the most autonomous group. When each group is viewed within themselves, fourth year students deal with independent work outside classroom more than the other groups. Although preparatory class students show tendency to independent work, they give more importance to completing assignments in order to be regarded as good students and out of necessity. As the interview results indicated, more prep students exhibit dependency in relative to the independency. It may be again due to the conventional system they have been exposed to. As one of the teachers indicated in the interview, students display an inclination to dependency in traditional systems. Although second year students

show more independency than prep class students, their notion of independent work is conditional. They claim to be more independent worker when some conditions are completed. When each group is dealt with within themselves, fourth year students appear to be the most ready group for autonomous learning, as expected owing to the teacher education they have received at university.

Although preparatory class students have sound opinions about autonomous learning and teacher-centred classrooms, they may need more steps to take on the path to becoming more autonomous. Second year students may have also begun to experience the effects of methodology courses on their perceptions. When academic self-awareness is in question, each group seems to have similar academic self-awareness levels.

Implications: Habits of autonomous learning should be provided from childhood so that students will not have difficulty in adapting to school environment. Owing to the fact that there is a high possibility that preparatory class students come from conventional teaching system, these students should be made familiar with the concept of learner autonomy in order to enable them to gain autonomous habits. It would be beneficial for students to take methodology courses focused on student-centeredness. A course titled “learner and teacher autonomy” may be included in the syllabus to help the prospective teachers get more aware of these important concepts. What is more, on account of the fact that university education is supposed to make students more autonomous, teachers at university may concentrate on real autonomous behaviours more so as to raise students’ consciousness.

Research Question 2: It investigates perceptions of students at different stages in the department regarding their own psychological well-being. On the one hand, preparatory class students have positive self-concepts in such issues as the ability to solve difficult problems when tried hard, self-expression, comprehension skill, reaching goals, having good qualities and social interaction. They also remarked a positive self-attitude in the interview. However, they have imprecise perceptions about motivation, in contrast to interview, and satisfaction with the self. On the other hand, they possess such negative self-concepts as sense of pressure by responsibilities and chance of choice. Second year students have positive self-concept from most aspects such as feeling confident and positive, carrying out plans and realizing goals, positive self-attitude, self-discipline and self-expression, tenacity,

comprehension skill, social interaction and satisfaction with the self. They also feel good in terms of motivation; however, its level changes according to the teacher and course. Relative to the positive one, they have less negative self-concepts. By the same token, fourth year students have similar positive self-concepts. Nevertheless, they have negative self-concepts in terms of feeling pressured in life and having lack of chance of choice. It may be because of the fact that they got closer to take a step into the profession and become teacher; they got more aware of the constraints of real life. To sum up, each group of students have resembling positive self-concepts in general sense.

However, as for the negative self-concepts, second year students seem to have the least level of negative self-concepts. Interview results also supported this view as most of the second year students have positive self-attitudes. In general, preparatory class students appear to have more negative self-concepts than the other groups. It may be because of the fact that university environment is new to them; they may have some adaptation and adjustment problems and they may be trying to settle their self-beliefs about their own qualities. As the interviews indicate, equal number of students has both positive and negative self-attitudes. However, when it comes to sense of pressure in life, fourth year students have negative self-concepts most. They may have become more aware of the constraints of life; they may be dealing with the finding job, and they may be feeling pressured and distressed due to the compulsory exam they will take to start their profession and become a teacher.

Implications: Students should be trained in a way through which they can evaluate themselves objectively without degrading or exaggerating their own qualities. They can be given opportunities to foster their self-confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy and motivation. Meetings can be conducted to facilitate the adaptation of newcomers. Students from all grades should be trained to look for something positive in a negative situation via real life examples. Through activities and verbal encouragement students can be presented the chance of having a sound self-consciousness. Teacher education should be both in the form of instruction and psychological counselling.

Research Question 3: It dwells upon what the students attribute the probable changes to, if any, concerning the issue. Fourth year students attribute the development of their ideas about the related issue to the education they receive at university. Teacher education at university helps students to form their own personal theories. As a result of the nature of the program, they get more aware of education-related issues.

Implications: Since teacher education is so influential in students' development of personal theories, it should be given more importance to the inclusion of the concept of autonomy into the syllabus. It would be useful for students to get more exposed to the learner and teacher autonomy.

Research Question 4: It focuses on the students' perceptions with respect to the probable bond between learner autonomy and psychological well-being. Taking responsibility, being active in learning, involvement in the decision making process, being free of pressure and control contributes to the prep students' sense of wellness.

However, they have indefinite perceptions about the development of positive attitudes towards learning due to study independent of teacher. They seem to need teacher control to some extent; however, excessive control damages their positive feelings about learning. They are not ready to become fully independent of the teacher. As the Table 4.8 indicates, there are students who feel secure when the teacher controls the environment. Because autonomy is new to them, they may get a bit stressed when taking responsibility; however, they seem willing to be autonomous, which is likely to nurture their positive feelings as the interview results show. Autonomous study fosters positive feelings of second year students' as well. Like prep students, some students have unclear perceptions about autonomous study and positive attitude towards learning. Nearly 40% of the students are undecided about teacher control. Teacher control contributes to most students' sense of security although they do not prefer strict control. Furthermore, learner autonomy appears to have a positive effect on the psychological well-being of the fourth year students. Interview results supported this view, as well.

In conclusion, when each group of students is approached within themselves, fourth year students seem to experience sense of wellness because of learner autonomy most. They appear to sense psychological well-being due to being autonomous and psychological unwellness on account of being dependent learners. Their interview results also supported their perceptions about the bond between autonomy and wellness. After them, second year students present themselves. They seem to have psychological wellness owing to taking learning responsibility and being active in the process. As in their interview results, more students constructed a positive connection between learner autonomy and well-being. However, there are some contradictory responses among the preparatory class students. Although they seem to build a positive bond between autonomy and sense of wellness, they may get stressed because of participation in the classroom. They may still need teacher control. However, their interview results indicate that they manifest a preference

towards wellness as a result of taking responsibility. However, it seems that after getting a sound training, their perceptions are more likely to be settled adequately and they are likely to experience the positive outcomes of learner autonomy.

Implications: Even when students may get daunted by learning responsibility, they should be made to experience the sense of success through appropriate activities. As future teachers, they can be trained on how to build an autonomous and supportive environment for their own students. Moreover, autonomy is important for lifelong learning; hence, their positive feelings can be nurtured through this permanent outcome of the concept.

Research Question 5: It concerns the ELT teachers' perceptions about the possible connection between learner autonomy and psychological well-being. Most of the teachers believe that autonomy makes a positive contribution to the students' sense of wellness. The necessity of laying a sound ground for the development of autonomy in order to cultivate positive feelings was also among the remarks put forward by the teachers. Furthermore, there are teachers who believe that positive attitude towards responsibility grows through self-confidence.

Implications: Misperceptions among the students and teachers should be cleared away, and appropriate role exchange between them should be encouraged. Learning should be conceived as a mutual process; teachers' and students' roles should be determined together in advance. To avoid the stressing parts of responsibility, students can be got accustomed to autonomy via activities suitable for their age, level and interest.

Research Question 6: It deals with the teachers' efforts to make their students more autonomous learners. More teachers view themselves efficient in terms of providing ground for students to become more autonomy-prone learners. They support their autonomy through presentations and project works. Nevertheless, there are teachers perceiving these efforts efficient but not sufficient.

Implications: More autonomy-supportive activities should be added to process. Teachers can work in collaboration with each other to set up proper framework conducting to learner autonomy. Probable reasons of the insufficiency in the applications of autonomous learning should be taken into consideration, and hereby students can be supported to deal with the barriers in front of them. Furthermore, autonomy can be viewed in the form of gradual process, which hints at the fact that autonomy develops at stages.

4. Suggestions for Further Studies

In this study data were collected from ELT students and teachers. Another study can be designed to explore different samples in a different context, which may yield different results. More studies need to be conducted to generalize the findings, which is also likely to shed more light into the concept of the interaction between learner autonomy and psychological well-being. Furthermore, another study can be carried out within the framework of teacher autonomy and affective factors in learning due to the fact that learning is a lifetime process.

On account of the fact that teacher education at university is influential in development of students' education-related issues, special training concentrating on learner and teacher autonomy can be put into practice, and its effects on students' perceptions about the issue can be explored as a pre and post-test. What is more, this study can be expanded through a comparative study to see whether there are differences among the perceptions of students at different departments. Such kind of a study may provide an answer to the questions of whether students who use different parts of their brains have different autonomy perceptions or their majors have an effect on their views of autonomous learning and psychological well-being.

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