



A STUDY ON SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING ATTITUDE OF ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to describe the first-year students' self-directed learning attitudes by employing a descriptive quantitative approach. This study's population was the second-semester students of the English education department, $n=(95)$, while the sample was selected through a cluster random sampling technique that consists of 55 students. A questionnaire was used to collect the data and distributed online through Google form. The questionnaire adopted from Williamson (2007) comprises five components of self-directed learning; awareness, learning strategies, learning activities, evaluation, and interpersonal skills. The techniques of data analysis involved collecting the data, presenting the data, and interpreting the data. The results showed that 80% of the students are aware of their responsibility in learning. As for learning strategies and activities, 70.91 – 80% of students considered modern educational interactive technology enhance their learning process effectively. There are 60 – 69.09% of the students who applied the self-assess method and are said to monitor their learning progress in terms of evaluation. Regarding their inter-personal skills, most of the students, with a percentage of 83 – 87.27%, are interested in learning about something they frequently exposed to and feel the need to maintain a good interpersonal relationship with others. In conclusion, most of the students, with a percentage of 72.72%, are high self-directed learners with a positive attitude. The attitudes shown by the students are responsible, initiative, independent, curious, and friendly.

Keywords: Self-directed learning, Language learning, attitude

INTRODUCTION

Learning English requires a long process because it takes time and efforts. To be fluent in English, firstly the students ought to understand the essential parts of the language. Ultimately, there is one thing that greatly affects their success in learning English as a foreign language; it is none other than students' attitudes (Alaga, 2019). In learning, attitude plays a significant role in accepting or denying something. Students' attitudes on learning determine their ability and willingness to learn.

Another key point of learning is self-reflection which contributes to a better understanding of one's own strength and weaknesses. Self-reflection enables students to move from just experiencing into understanding; it encourages a level of self-awareness and consciousness about practice. One of the learning styles that allow students to do self-reflection is self-directed learning. Self-directed learning lets students choose their learning style, and progress at their own pace

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Self-directed learning is an important issue that can support students' creativity based on their learning process needs. Self-directed learning is designed to improve students' accomplishment in learning, to broaden and deepen their understanding, to help students channel and refine it, (Gibbons, 2003). Self-directed learning emphasizes that the control of learning and the flexibility of time and place lies within the learners who learn. This strategy is suitable for students nowadays because it can be adjusted with the current technological and cultural context.

Self-directed learning is a process in which someone has an initiative to analyze their learning needs, develop learning objectives, identify learning resources, apply appropriate learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes with or without help of others (Knowles, 1975). Self-directed learners can monitor and adjust their learning because they are emotionally engaged in it (Shahrouri, 2016). Some studies have shown that self-directed learners are more aware of their responsibility to make the learning process meaningful and control their study.

This research is intended to find out the students' self-directed learning attitudes in learning English at University. This research is expected to be advantageous for the reader especially English students, to be aware of the positive outcomes of being a self-directed learner.

What makes learning a foreign language effectively is influenced by many factors. Among those, an attitude has been identified as one of the important ones. Attitude is considered an important concept to understand human behaviour and is defined as a mental state that includes beliefs and feelings (Latchanna, G & Dagnev, A, 2009). Attitude, concerning language acquisition can be divided into three types. The attitude concept in language acquisition has three components: attitudes to English, attitudes to English as a subject to learn, and attitudes to native speakers of English (Setiyadi, 2006). Another study by Khan (2017) found that a positive attitude towards learning the target language matters a lot. The attitude that students have can also affect students' confidence and independence (Syahrial, 2020). When it comes to learning, an independent student is likely to be able to perform self-directed learning.

Self-directed learning is a process in which someone has an initiative to analyze their learning needs, develop learning objectives, identify learning resources, and apply appropriate learning strategies and evaluate learning outcomes with or without others' help (Knowles, 1975). It very well may be implied that this strategy is purposed to show students self-management with self-monitoring. Students will reflect on what they need to improve their skills and assess their learning outcomes.

Self-directed learning is a students' desire for learning that came up from within students themselves because they want to achieve their goals (Haris Mudjiman, 2007). Self-directed learning is an active learning activity driven by the intention or motivation to master specific competencies to overcome a problem and are built with the knowledge acquired. Students process information from the acquired knowledge to become a new accomplishment or skill that students need.

According to Gibbons (2003), self-directed learning programs rest on five principles which are:

1. Program should be compatible with a life of learning, the natural ways people learn, and the unique methods by which of them knows best,
2. Program should respond to the maturation, change, and transition faced by adolescent students,
3. Program should cover all aspects of a full life,
4. Program should engage with a wide range of human skills, including our senses, feelings, behaviour and intellect,
5. Self-directed learning activities should be carried out in appropriate settings for its progress.

Aside from its principles, there are also various stages of self-directed learning, and these stages begin with a low rate of self-direction to the highest quality of self-directed learning (Grow, 1991). The four steps appear below:

1. Dependent student (learners of low self-direction)
2. Interested student (learners of moderate self-direction)
3. Involved student (learners of intermediate self-direction)
4. Self-directed student (learners of high self-direction)

Furthermore, some studies have shown that being a self-directed learner brings many benefits. The first benefit of being self-directed learners are students can reflect a greater awareness of the learning responsibility (Garrison, 1997). Students can make the learning process more enjoyable and supervise themselves by using this method. The learners will have a sense of curiosity and willingness to try new things, see challenges as opportunities, and enjoy the learning activities.

The next benefit of being self-directed learners are students tend to become self-disciplined and confident individuals and goal orientated with a strong desire to learn (Long, 1983). Students who already have confidence in themselves are more likely to be optimistic and motivated because they see learning as a positive path forward. They have little to no anxiety about practising their skill to attain the goals that have been set.

Lastly, self-directed learning activities also benefited students in improving their academic performance (Thomas et al., 2016). Self-directed learners are willing to spare more time in learning since they have a great interest in it. They get to practice more to have a better chance at accomplishing a better academic achievement while enhancing their efficacy, such as self-control and self-monitoring.

METHODS

By considering this research's purpose and the nature of the problem, this research is categorized as quantitative research. Quantitative research involves the process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and writing results of a study, (Creswell, 2014). The participant of this research was the first-year students of English education department. Total students in the first-year of 2019/2020 academic year in the department are 95 students. The students are divided into two classes. The sampling technique used is random cluster sampling, which procedure is done randomly in choosing a sample from the population regardless of existing strata in the population (Sugiyono, 2008).

A questionnaire was used to collect the data and distributed online through Google form. The questionnaire adopted from Williamson (2007) comprises five components of self-directed learning; awareness, learning strategies, learning activities, evaluation, and inter-personal skills. The techniques of data analysis involved collecting the data, presenting the data, and interpreting the data.

After collecting the data through the questionnaire, the researchers analyzed the data. The researchers analyzed the data used frequency calculation to find the percentage from the students' responses. The last step is to conclude all of what has been investigated. However, this research's conclusion is considered temporary, and when there is reliable and robust evidence, some changes may be possible in the future.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After collecting the data, the researchers present the data obtained from the students' responses to each self-directed learning component. The figures below represent three categories of the students' high, average, and low responses. Those three categories are inferred from the questionnaire's response key that starts from the score of 1 to 5. Responses for each statement are rated as follow: 5 = always; 4 = often; 3 = sometimes; 2 = seldom; 1 = never. Score 5 and 4 are considered to be high because it shows the students positive response towards the statement. Positive here means the students agree with the statement because they can relate to it. Next, score 3 is

considered average because it represents the students' fair response to the statement. Fair means the students somehow feel they can relate to the statement, but they do not often do it. Lastly, scores 2 and 1 are considered low because they negatively affect the statement. Negative here means the students disagree with the statement because they did not find it relatable with their learning routine.

Starting from the first indicator, which is awareness, the students are encouraged to show their responses towards awareness in learning. There are twelve items from the questionnaire relating to learners' awareness of the factors contributing to becoming self-directed learners. The students' responses are presented in the following figure:

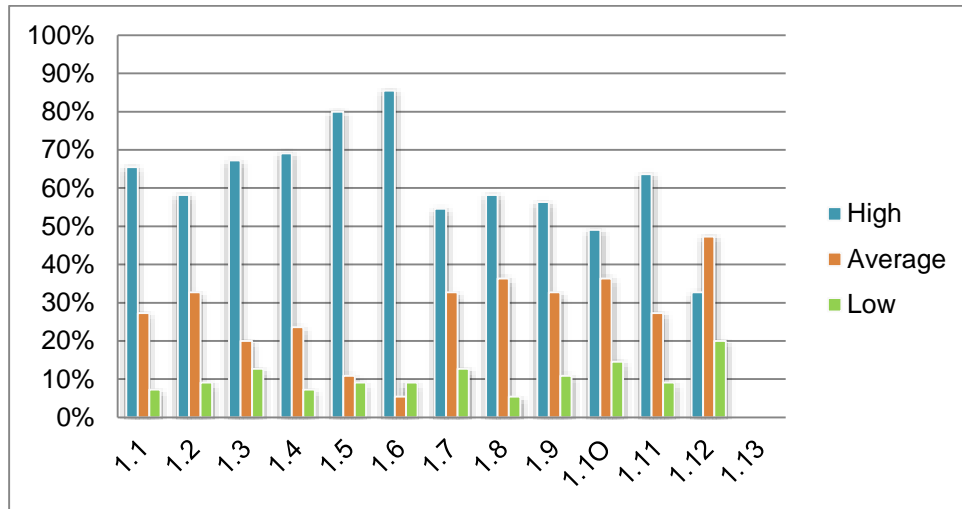


Figure 1. The Percentage of Students' Awareness in Self-Directed Learning

The next indicator of self-directed learning is learning strategies. Becoming a self-directed learner makes it possible for the students to choose and apply the best learning strategy. There are twelve items from the questionnaire explaining the various strategies self-directed learners should adopt to become self-directed in their learning processes. The students' responses are presented in the following figure:

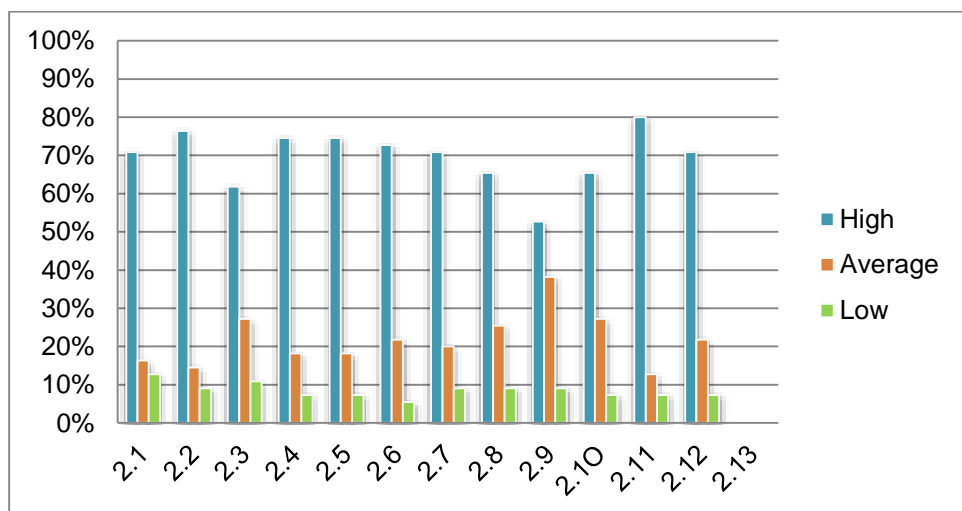


Figure 2. The Percentage of the Students' Learning Strategies in Self-Directed Learning

Learning activities are designed to develop learning that helps students to achieve their goals. There are twelve items from the questionnaire specifying the learning

activities learners should actively engage to become self-directed in their learning processes. The students' responses are presented in the following figure:

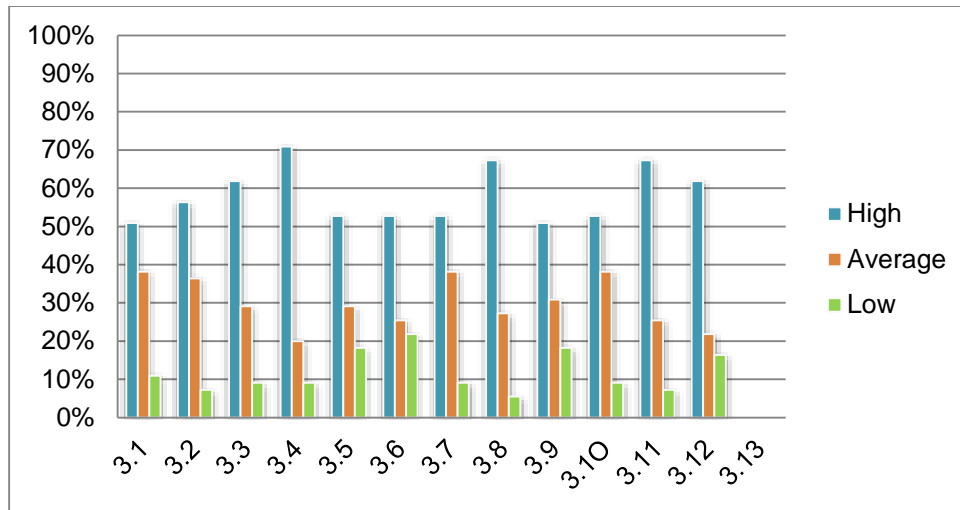


Figure 3. The Percentage of the Students' Learning Activities in Self-Directed Learning

In self-directed learning, the evaluation of learning outcomes is done by the students themselves. There are twelve items from the questionnaire revealing learners' specific attributes in order to help monitor their learning activities. The students' responses are presented in the following figure:

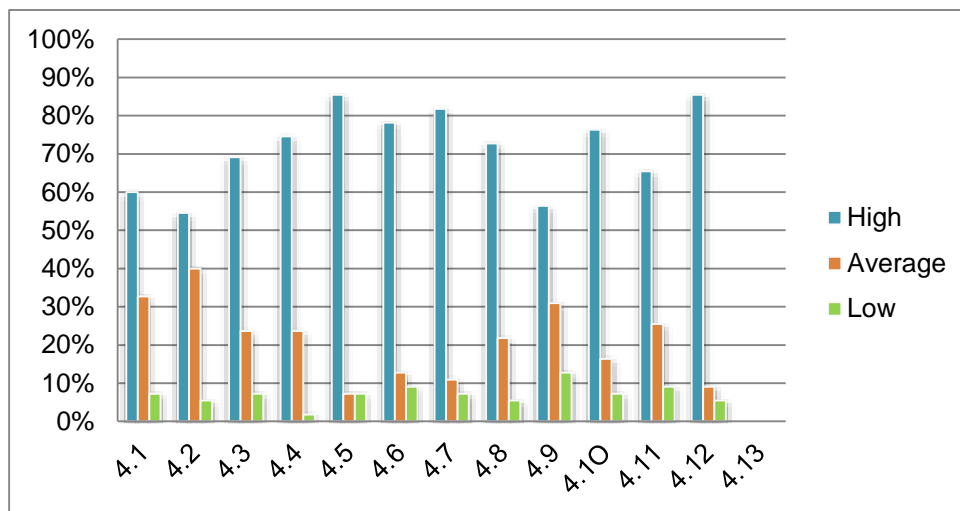


Figure 4. The Percentage of the Students' Evaluation in Self-Directed Learning

Having a good interpersonal skill will improve students' individual to individual relationship as well individual with group's relationship. There are twelve items from the questionnaire relating to learners' skills in inter-personal relationships to their becoming self-directed learners. The students' responses are presented in the following figure:

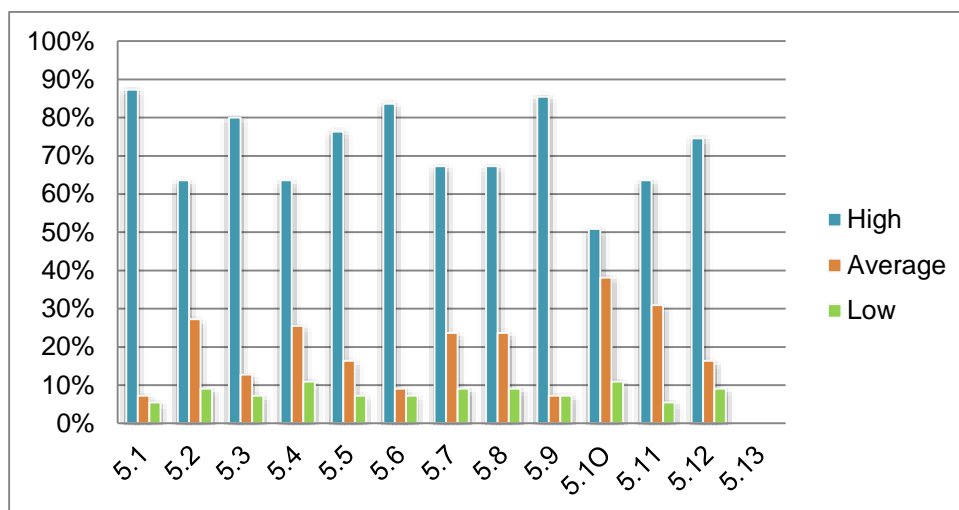


Figure 5. The Percentage of the Students' Interpersonal Skills in Self-Directed Learning

1. Awareness in Self-Directed Learning

The majority of the students, with 47 students, consider that they have responsibilities for identifying their areas of deficit. The next statement that the students' dominantly chosen with many 44 students is they feel responsible for their learning. Those two statements with the highest point mentioned above indicate that most of the students are aware of their learning responsibilities. Still, they are also mindful of their duties to determine where they might be lacking in their study. Identifying which area they are lacking is important because it will help the students develop and improve their area of deficit.

37 out of 55 students consider the lecturer as facilitator of learning rather than providing information only; this means most of the students looking at their lecturer as the one who provides resources, monitoring their progress and encouraging them to be problem solvers. Another statement that is also chosen by most of the students, with a total of 38 students, is the one where they keep up to date on different learning resources available. Thus, it can be seen that there is a large part of the students who are always updated with recent learning resources that can be found these days easily. This habit will help them to become more productive and make their learning process more effective.

Another statement with 36 students that can be considered major population in this research is said to be able to identify their learning needs. The next argument, which has 32 students in it, stated the students could select the best learning method. The last statement that mostly chosen with a total of 33 students is the one in which they can plan and set their learning goals. Therefore, it can be indicated that most of the students can determine their own learning objectives that can be identified based on their needs to achieve the best method in learning.

Talking about the majority of the population, there must be a minor population as well. The lowest point with 18 students is about their awareness to study without being instructed by a lecturer beforehand. Another issue has a little population because it is only chosen by 27 students who stated they need to keep their learning routine separate from their other commitments. The next point with 30 students that close to the minority of the population indicated that the students could maintain their self-motivation.

According to Odanga (2019), nowadays, students' self-motivation to learn is potentially more critical than ever. Based on the students' responses, it can be indicated that there are still a large part of the students who can still not maintain their self-

motivation in learning which cause them to have no intention to study unless they are being told to or feel the urge to study. It is also can be seen that there are almost a half of the students that like to mix up their other commitments with their learning activities which is not good since it can distract their focus.

2. Learning Strategies in Self-Directed Learning

The majority of the students, with a total of 44 students, agree that modern educational interactive technology enhances their learning process. Raja & Nagasubramani (2018) stated that the application of technologies equipment would increase student learning and interactivity. The next statement that mostly chosen by the students with a number of 42 students is the one about peer coaching or studying with fellow friends are considered to be effective. Another statement that most of the students also chose with a total of 41 students is they find interactive teaching-learning sessions more effective than just listening to lectures. Thus, it can be indicated that the majority of the students like to take advantage of technology to support their learning, and the presence of their fellow friends both inside and outside of the classroom will make the teaching and learning process more effective and become interactive.

39 out of 55 students like to participate in group discussions as part of their learning activities. Before the statement above, this must be related to why the student finds peer coaching effectively. As for studying in a group, learning from a case study can help the students focus on a specific concept or help them solve a problem and provide the necessary platform for students to communicate and collaborate. Based on the students' responses, 41 students find learning from case studies useful. The next statement with a significant population consists of 39 students who feel that their inner drive directs them towards further development and improvement. Therefore, it can be said that through obstacles that the students face in their learning, their internal drive will lead them to do better to improve and develop their knowledge.

Another statement that has 36 students and considered majority in this section is how the students regard problems as challenges in their study. Regarding problem as a challenge in most students' study, they are not afraid to try something new in their learning and step out of their comfort zone. The last point with the major population chosen by 36 students is that they find concept mapping an effective learning method. According to Hay et al. (2008), concept mapping will play a vital role in the future growth of higher education. Also, It can be said that the majority of the students are visual learners since concept mapping is considered to be a visual study tool.

Although it is still considered the majority of the population, as for the lowest point in this section with number of 29 students which stated how the students arrange their self-learning routine so that it helps develop a permanent learning culture in their lives. It means that more students think that they do not have a fixated method in their self-learning routine that is already permanent yet.

3. Learning Activities in Self-Directed Learning

The majority of the students, with 39 students, consider that they can use information technology effectively; related to the statement above, technology sure is a thing that most students think to be effective in supporting their learning. The next statement that the students chose with a number of 37 students stated they keep an open mind to others' points of view. With most of the students agree on this matter, it can help the students take risks, find opportunities, and understand others. Another statement that is also chosen by most of the students, with a total of 37 students, is they can relate knowledge with practice. The integration of relating knowledge with practice is essential in learning since it develops professional skills and better understands real-world problems in the future.

34 students use concept mapping as a useful method of comprehending a wide range of information. Concept mapping is especially useful for students who learn better visually. It is a powerful study strategy because it helps the students see the bigger picture and make it easier to remember. The next statement with the same number of 34 students prefers to break in between any learning tasks. Taking breaks from studying can improve both the students' focus and attention. Another statement with a major population of 29 students considers that their concentration intensifies and becomes more attentive when reading a complex study content beyond the prescribed course objectives. The students also like to note or summarise all their ideas and reflections and new learning.

There are also a close to a minor population with 28 students who did not seem like to review and rehearse their new lesson after class; raising a question while in teaching-learning sessions is still not done by some of the students. Both points have the same number of students that agreed on these matters. Reviewing lessons is considered important because it allows the students to transfer new knowledge and skills from short-term to long-term memory. As for raising a question in teaching-learning sessions, it will help the students to assess their understanding of the material.

4. Evaluation in Self-Directed Learning

The majority of the students, with a total of 47 students, consider that others' success inspires them. If someone encourages the students, it will give them new ideas and a strong enthusiasm to learn and do better in the future. The next statement that the students mostly chose with 45 students agrees that criticism is considered the basis for improving their learning. In the pursuit of knowledge, the students must be prepared to revise what they repeatedly know by overcoming the fear of criticism and learning how to benefit from it is the second most crucial step for effective learning. The next point with a major population of 43 students considers both success and failure to inspire them further. Success and failure both make the students realize just how capable they are. When the students try and fail, despite the failure, the students will learn just how amazing they indeed are and how much they can accomplish.

There are 42 out of 55 students who review and reflect on their learning activities. Reflecting on learning activities allows the students to look back from their learning experience, help the students develop critical thinking skills, and improve on future performance by analyzing what they have learned and how far they have come. Another significant population with 41 students are said to be able to identify their areas of strength and weakness; before the section of awareness, where the students are said to be responsible in identifying their areas of deficit, it seems knowing their area of strength also considered to be important in their learning. The next point with a number of 38 students believed that they could monitor their learning progress. Chang (2015) stated that self-monitoring could result in quicker and more appropriate control of intervention strategies that can lead to the task's success during learning activities. Additionally, related to the previous point above, being able to monitor their learning progress means it is easier for them to know their areas of strength and weakness.

Major population with 38 out of 55 students monitor whether they have accomplished their learning goals. One great benefit of monitoring their learning progress is that it allows them to evaluate their learning method's effectiveness. Another statement that dominantly chosen by 36 students stated that they find new learning challenging; the challenge is the core of a growth mindset; without it, students do not get the opportunities to take risks, learn to fail and figure out how to pick themselves up again.

As for the lowest point in this section, a total of 30 and 33 students stated that they self-assess before they get feedback from the instructor or lecturer, and they identify the areas for further development in whatever they have accomplished. According to Sharma et al. (2016), self-assessment is considered a crucial learning aspect since students gather information and reflect on their learning. Self-assessment can provide insight into

students' real comprehension and help them identify gaps in their knowledge and know which area they need to develop.

5. Interpersonal Skills in Self-Directed Learning

Intending to learn more about other cultures and languages the students frequently exposed to has the most population with 48 students agree on this matter. Interacting with people from different cultures and languages helps the students view life from a different perspective. When the students have an interest or intention to learn about other cultures and languages, they most likely establish new ways of thinking and solving problems.

Another highest point with 46 students considers the need to maintain a good interpersonal relationship with others. Maintaining good interpersonal relationships with other fellow friends both inside and outside of the classroom is another important way to support students' social needs. Interaction with others helps the students to develop the insight to plan for further learning is chosen by 44 students; this seems to be related with the previous point which explained how having a good relationship with other students will benefit them in their study and help them to develop their skills.

There are 42 out of 55 students who often or always feel that they need to share information with others. Referring to the explanation above, sharing information with others defines that the students really know how to support their social life and maintain a good interpersonal relationship. Another significant population with a number of 37 students agree that they find it easy to collaborate with others. As we can see in their learning strategies, most of the students like to participate in group discussions to make their learning activities more effective. The next point with a total of 35 students showed that most of them use any opportunities they come across. Making the most out of everything especially in study will make the students see how far they can go.

When it comes to communicating and expressing ideas, there are two common ways of doing it: verbally or in writing form. Based on the students' responses, more students feel that they are successful in communicating or sharing their ideas verbally rather than writing it. With a comparison of 37 to 28 students, it can be seen that there is a little gap between the students' opinion on expressing their ideas. However, most of the students, with a number of 33 students stated that they could express their views freely.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the students' responses in self-directed learning, the researcher concluded that the majority of the students with a percentage of 72.72%, are high self-directed learners with a positive attitude. There are 85.45% of the students who are aware towards their responsibilities for identifying their area of deficit, and 80% of the students who feel responsible towards their learning. Those two statements above indicate that most students are capable of becoming self-directed learners because they have positive attitudes towards them. As for learning strategies and activities, 70.91 – 80% of the students considered modern educational interactive technology enhance their learning process effectively. In terms of evaluation, 60% of the students applied self-assess method before they get feedback from lecturers, and 69.09% of the students are said to be able to monitor their learning progress. The majority of the students with 87.27% of them are interested in learning more about other cultures and language they are frequently exposed to, and 83.4% of the students feel the need to maintain a good interpersonal relationship with others. Becoming a self-directed learner makes the students more responsible for their learning and has the initiative to learn through media they find effective, like technology. Furthermore, self-directed learning makes the students become more independent by assessing and monitoring their own learning progress.

Finally, being a self-directed learner makes the students turn out to be curious individuals interested in learning something new and becoming friendly individuals with others in their lives.

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