ID 82

Assessing the e-Learner Autonomy among ESL (English as a Second Language) Learners in Higher Education Institutes, Sri Lanka

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Learner autonomy (LA) is defined as the readiness to assume responsibility for learning in the service of one's needs and purposes. LA entails one's capacity and willingness to act independently and cooperate with others as a socially responsible person. There is a dearth of studies conducted on e-learner autonomy among ESL (English as a Second Language) learners in Sri Lanka. Hence, this cross-sectional study aimed to assess the e-Learning Autonomy (e-LA) of ESL learners in higher education institutes in Sri Lanka. An online questionnaire that consisted of two sections, i.e. the socio-demographic data and e-learning autonomy scale, were shared in social media for two weeks and responses were received. Data were analysed using SPSS 23.0 version. Shapiro-Wilk test revealed that the data are not normally distributed on the e-LA score. The descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation), Mann–Whitney U test, Kruskal–Wallis test were performed to find the associations. During the given two weeks, 154 participants responded to the study, and the majority were females (62.3%). The mean e-LA score of the study sample was 31.10 ± 2.78, which was lower than the original study. There was a statistically significant association between the level of e-LA and the academic stream ($p<0.05$). However, e-LA had no statistically significant associations with gender difference, academic years, and satisfaction with internet facilities or satisfaction with the instructor/lecturer support ($p> 0.05$). The lecturers' necessary interventions and the students' commitment are crucial in improving e-LA among ESL learners in Sri Lanka.

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