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Heutagogical Approach in Indonesian Islamic EFL Classrooms: Exploring Students' Readiness and Attitudes

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Abstract

The implementation of heutagogical approaches in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts remains limited, particularly in Indonesian Islamic higher education, where teacher-centered practices continue to dominate, and students' readiness for self-determined learning is underexplored. This study investigates students' readiness and attitudes towards the application of heutagogy in EFL classrooms at an Indonesian Islamic university. Employing a convergent mixed-methods design, data were collected from 201 English language learners through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis to provide deeper insights into students' experiences. The findings indicate that although students demonstrate strong motivation, creativity, and positive attitudes towards collaborative and autonomous learning, their readiness remains uneven, particularly in self-assessment, independent learning management, and time regulation. Structural constraints, including rigid curricula and hierarchical teacher–student relationships, further limit the effective implementation of heutagogical practices. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the integration of heutagogy in EFL contexts be implemented gradually through scaffolded instructional strategies, including explicit training in self-assessment and self-regulated learning, as well as the use of blended learning environments that support autonomy while maintaining necessary guidance. Institutional support in curriculum flexibility and teacher professional development is also essential to facilitate the transition towards more learner-centered

Keywords: EFL Learning; Heutagogy; Indonesian Higher Education; Learner Autonomy; Self-Determined Learning



1. Introduction

Heutagogy, or self-determined learning, signifies a paradigm shift in education by prioritizing learner autonomy, reflection, and the enhancement of competencies and capabilities (Blaschke, 2012; Blaschke & Hase, 2016; Hase & Kenyon, 2000, 2007). Heutagogy, first described by Hase and Kenyon (Hase & Kenyon, 2000), emphasizes the pivotal role of learners in managing their own educational processes instead of depending exclusively on teacher-led instruction. The primary aim is to cultivate meta-learning abilities that empower learners to adjust proficiently to ambiguous and intricate circumstances. In an age marked by swift technological progress and the escalating requirements of Society 5.0, which advocates for a human-centric amalgamation of technology and education, heutagogy gains significance as it fosters critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning (Majid et al., 2023; Newfield, 2025). The increasing complexity of contemporary society underscores the significance of educational methods that emphasize flexibility, adaptation, and learner autonomy.

Empirical research in higher education and lifetime learning has demonstrated favorable outcomes for the implementation of heutagogical concepts. Studies have consistently shown that heutagogy improves student engagement, self-efficacy, and the cultivation of higher-order skills (Agonács & Matos, 2019; Blaschke, 2012; Moore, 2020). Moore (2020) discovered that learners in heutagogical contexts exhibited increased motivation and enhanced ownership of their learning processes, whereas Blaschke (2012) identified a substantial correlation between self-directed learning and improved academic performance. In the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), where conventional teaching frequently depends on inflexible, teacher-centered paradigms, heutagogy presents a contrasting methodology that fosters learner autonomy and intrinsic motivation (Richards & Renandya, 2002). This corresponds with extensive research on second language acquisition indicating that autonomy and significant learner participation enhance engagement and facilitate deeper language learning (Benson, 2011, 2013).

Moreover, heutagogy can be perceived as a pedagogical expression of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which asserts that optimal learning transpires when learners encounter autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Recent systematic evaluations in second language acquisition affirm that Self-Determination Theory offers a comprehensive framework for elucidating learner motivation and persistence (Al-Hoorie et al., 2025). Research in EFL environments indicates that fulfilling learners' fundamental psychological needs enhances the likelihood of cultivating autonomous motivation, which correlates significantly with increased engagement and persistent learning endeavors (Zarfsaz & Hosseini, 2023). Heutagogy and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) are theoretically synergistic: heutagogy offers the educational framework for self-directed learning, while SDT elucidates the motivational processes that enhance the efficacy of such learning.

Notwithstanding its potential, research on the application of heutagogy in EFL learning is scarce, especially within the Indonesian setting. The majority of current research on heutagogical practices has been carried out inside Western educational frameworks (Blaschke, 2012; Moore, 2020), where students are typically more familiar with self-directed learning. Conversely, EFL teaching in Asian contexts, such as Indonesia, predominantly adheres to a teacher-centered approach, prioritizing systematic instruction and constraining learner agency (Benson, 2011; Lamb, 2017; Richards & Renandya, 2002). This hierarchical attitude may impede the effective execution of heutagogical methodologies (Halim et al., 2023; Handayani et al., 2023). Consequently, it is essential to investigate how Indonesian EFL learners react to and prepare for self-directed learning approaches that contest conventional educational standards.

Despite the growing body of research on heutagogy, existing studies have predominantly focused on its conceptual foundations and applications in Western or technologically advanced learning environments (Blaschke, 2012; Moore, 2020). In EFL contexts, particularly in Asian settings, research has mainly examined learner autonomy and motivation within structured pedagogical models, rather than fully self-determined learning frameworks (Benson, 2011; Lamb, 2017). Recent studies in Indonesia have begun to explore the potential of heutagogy in higher education; however, these studies largely emphasize implementation challenges and general perceptions, with limited attention to the interplay between learners' readiness, attitudes, and self-regulatory capacities (Halim et al., 2023; Handayani et al., 2023).

Moreover, although readiness has been acknowledged as a critical prerequisite for successful heutagogical learning, it is often treated as a general construct without detailed examination of its cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions within specific sociocultural contexts. Similarly, while attitudes toward learner autonomy have been widely discussed, few studies have systematically analyzed how these attitudes interact with self-regulated learning (SRL) skills and motivational processes, particularly within Islamic higher education settings where hierarchical learning traditions remain influential. As a result, the existing literature does not sufficiently explain how readiness, attitudes, and contextual factors jointly shape students' engagement with heutagogical learning in EFL environments.

Addressing these gaps, the present study offers a more integrated perspective by examining students' readiness and attitudes toward heutagogy through the combined lenses of heutagogy, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and Self-Regulated Learning (SRL). Unlike prior studies that focus primarily on perceptions or implementation, this study investigates how motivational, self-regulatory, and contextual dimensions interact to influence students' capacity to engage in self-determined learning. In addition, by focusing on an Indonesian Islamic university context, this study contributes context-specific insights into how cultural and institutional factors mediate

the adoption of heutagogical practices.

Therefore, this study aims to explore (1) the extent of students' readiness for heutagogical learning, (2) their attitudes toward self-determined learning, and (3) how these dimensions are shaped by motivational, self-regulatory, and contextual factors. Through this approach, the study seeks to provide a more nuanced understanding of how heutagogy can be effectively implemented in EFL higher education contexts that are still transitioning from teacher-centered to learner-centered paradigms.

2. Methods

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods design to examine students' readiness and attitudes toward heutagogical learning in an Indonesian EFL context. This design was considered appropriate because the research problem requires both the measurement of general patterns and a deeper understanding of students' experiences in engaging with self-determined learning. Quantitative data were necessary to identify trends in students' levels of readiness and attitudes, while qualitative data were used to explain how these patterns are shaped by learners' experiences and contextual factors, particularly within a predominantly teacher-centered educational environment.

The use of a convergent design allows for the simultaneous collection and integration of quantitative and qualitative data, enabling the triangulation of findings and strengthening the overall validity of the study (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach is particularly relevant in educational research where complex constructs such as learner autonomy, motivation, and self-regulation require both statistical representation and interpretive understanding (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). In this study, survey data provided an overview of students' readiness and attitudes, while semi-structured interviews offered in-depth insights into the challenges and processes underlying the implementation of heutagogical learning (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The participants were English language learners from various Islamic universities in Indonesia. A total of 201 students participated in the survey. The participants were selected based on their registration in English language classes, ensuring that they have experiences with academic supervision.

Prior to data collection, a structured questionnaire was developed to measure students' readiness and attitudes toward heutagogical learning. The instrument consisted of two main constructs, namely (1) readiness for heutagogical learning and (2) attitudes toward heutagogy, with a total of 10 items distributed across both constructs. The readiness construct included items related to learners' goal-setting ability, self-assessment, resource management, motivation, and collaborative learning, while the attitudes construct focused on learners' perceptions of autonomy, creativity, relevance to real-world contexts, and the integration of heutagogy into the curriculum.

All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly

Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), allowing for the identification of variations in students' perceptions and levels of agreement (Cohen et al., 2018; Dörnyei, 2007). The questionnaire items were adapted from established frameworks of self-directed learning, self-regulated learning, and learner autonomy to ensure theoretical alignment with heutagogical principles. Minor modifications were made to contextualize the items within the Indonesian EFL setting.

To ensure content validity, the instrument was reviewed by experts in English language education and educational research to evaluate the relevance and clarity of each item. A pilot test was conducted with a small group of students to assess the reliability of the instrument. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's alpha, which is widely recommended for Likert-scale instruments in educational research (Dörnyei, 2007). The results indicated that the instrument achieved an acceptable level of reliability, confirming its suitability for the main data collection.

The questionnaire was administered online using Google Forms and distributed through academic communication channels, including email and WhatsApp groups. Participation was voluntary, and respondents' anonymity was ensured throughout the data collection process. The quantitative data were analyzed for descriptive statistics, such as mean scores and standard deviations, to examine the patterns that emerge regarding the levels of readiness and attitudes of the students. The qualitative data were analyzed for themes using the technique of thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2013).

Subsequent to the quantitative element, Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposive subsample of six students representing low, medium, and high levels of readiness, allowing for comparative analysis across different learner profiles. To ensure systematic selection of interview participants, students were categorized into three levels of readiness—low, medium, and high—based on their overall mean scores from the questionnaire. Following the interpretation scale used in this study, students with mean scores ranging from 1.00–2.60 were categorized as low readiness, 2.61–3.40 as medium readiness, and 3.41–5.00 as high readiness. This classification enabled the researcher to purposively select participants representing different levels of readiness and to explore variations in attitudes and learning behaviors across these groups. For example, two students were selected for each level in order to capture a different spectrum of views, as suggested by Guest et al. (2012). This is because semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility in research while allowing respondents to expand on their answers while still being guided towards different topics (Guest et al., 2012).

For qualitative data, thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2013) was employed. The thematic analysis procedure includes familiarization with data, coding, identification of themes, and final refinement of themes in relation to emerging patterns

of readiness, attitude, and heutagogical learning engagement. The choice of thematic analysis in this study was based on its appropriateness to investigate participants' experience and processes of meaning making in educational studies (Braun & Clarke, 2013). By incorporating the mixed-methods approach in this study, it allows for the examination of statistical trends as well as providing an in-depth analysis on the effectiveness of heutagogical learning in the Indonesian EFL setting.

3. Results

This section describes the findings of the study, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data to reveal Indonesian EFL students' readiness and perspectives toward heutagogical learning. The quantitative findings from the questionnaire offer an overview of students' preparation, motivation, autonomy, and attitudes toward heutagogy. The findings are confirmed and strengthened by qualitative data from semi-structured interviews that examine students' experiences, problems, and learning methods in greater depth. The integration of numerical trends and interview insights provides a more explicit comprehension of students' perceptions and engagement with self-directed learning within the Indonesian EFL context.

3.1. The Quantitative Analysis

In this research, a quantitative approach was adopted to investigate the readiness and attitude of students toward heutagogical methods in EFL learning. The data collection technique involved a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD). The descriptive statistics of frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were calculated to ensure a thorough interpretation of the findings.

To facilitate the interpretation of the mean scores obtained from the Likert-scale data, the responses were categorized into five levels based on predetermined intervals. Following common practices in educational research (Cohen et al., 2018; Dörnyei, 2007), the interpretation of mean scores was defined as follows: 1.00–1.80 = very low, 1.81–2.60 = low, 2.61–3.40 = moderate, 3.41–4.20 = high, and 4.21–5.00 = very high. These categories were used to consistently interpret students' levels of readiness and attitudes toward heutagogical learning.

3.1.1. Students Readiness Towards Heutagogy

To measure the students' readiness to apply the heutagogical approach in learning English, a descriptive statistical analysis was carried out on several aspects reflecting independence and motivation in learning. The following are the results of the study based on data collected from 201 students. The results of the analysis show that the majority of students are quite ready to apply heutagogy.

Table 1. The frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation of the students' readiness for the Heutagogical Approach in language learning

No	Items		SA	A	N	D	SD	N	Mean	SD
1	I am responsible for determining my learning needs and goals to improve my English skills.	F	0	98	24	4	4	201	4.13	0.847
		%	48.8	11.9	2	2	0	100		
2	I am able to search for additional learning resources to enhance my English learning.	F	86	98	13	2	2	201	4.31	0.725
		%	42.8	48.8	6.5	1.1	1.1	100		
3	I am able to assess my learning progress independently and identify areas to improve.	F	32	101	51	14	3	201	3.72	0.867
		%	15.9	50.2	25.4	7	1.5	100		
4	I feel motivated to learn English and apply it in my daily life.	F	105	77	11	6	2	201	4.38	0.804
		%	52.2	38.3	5.5	3	1	100		
5	I enjoy learning and working together with my friends to achieve learning goals.	F	112	69	14	4	2	201	4.42	0.790
		%	55.7	34.3	7	2	1	100		

The results indicate that students demonstrate an overall high level of readiness for heutagogical learning; however, this readiness is not uniformly distributed across all dimensions. While students show very high levels of motivation ($M = 4.38$) and collaborative learning preference ($M = 4.42$), their ability to engage in self-assessment is comparatively lower ($M = 3.72$), although still within the high category. This disparity suggests that students are more confident in socially supported and externally visible aspects of learning than in metacognitive processes that require independent monitoring and evaluation. In other words, readiness appears to be stronger in affective and social dimensions than in self-regulatory competencies, which are essential for effective self-determined learning.

In terms of self-assessment and collaborative learning, the mean score for self-assessment ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.867$) falls within the high category, indicating that students demonstrate a relatively strong level of confidence, although this aspect remains lower compared to other readiness indicators. However, the mean score for motivation ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 0.804$) is categorized as very high, indicating strong intrinsic motivation among students to learn and apply English in real-life contexts, yielding 4.38 ($SD = 0.804$). Collaborative learning obtained the highest mean score ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 0.790$), which falls within the very high category, suggesting that students strongly value peer interaction in their learning processes. The standard deviations reveal that although most students are ready to undertake self-directed and collaborative learning processes, there

may be some who need further support in order to fully take advantage of heutagogic learning settings.

Responsibility for Learning Needs and Goals

The aspect of students' responsibility to set their learning objectives and requirements is critical in heutagogical settings. A mean of 4.13 shows that students feel they can control their learning paths. A deviation of 0.847 shows that students' levels of confidence are not similar. Fewer students showed neither agreement nor disagreement, though nearly half of them showed strong agreement with this aspect. This finding indicates variation in students' confidence in setting learning goals, suggesting that not all students possess the same level of readiness for autonomous learning.

Ability to Search for Additional Learning Resources

The consistently high mean score for the ability to access additional learning resources ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.725$) suggests that students possess strong procedural autonomy in locating learning materials. However, when considered alongside lower self-assessment scores, this finding indicates a potential imbalance between resource utilization and reflective learning practices. This result reflects students' ability to independently access learning resources, indicating a strong level of procedural autonomy in managing learning materials.

Self-Assessment of Learning Progress

Self-assessment emerges as the weakest dimension of readiness ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.867$), indicating that metacognitive regulation remains a challenge for many students. This finding highlights a critical gap between students' motivation and their ability to monitor and evaluate their own learning. This finding highlights that self-assessment is comparatively less developed, indicating challenges in students' ability to monitor and evaluate their own learning progress.

Motivation to Learn and Apply English

A mean score of 4.38 with a standard deviation of 0.804 reflects that students are highly motivated towards learning and applying English in their everyday lives. This result also reflects that not only are students willing participants in learning activities, but they also have a desire to apply English in their everyday activities. The high mean score also reflects that it is a supportive environment for implementing heutagogy, since motivation is a significant element in successful learning. This result indicates that students possess strong intrinsic motivation, particularly in applying English in real-life contexts.

Enjoyment of Collaborative Learning

With a mean of 4.42 and a standard deviation of 0.790, the result shows that the students' enjoyment of collaborative learning had the highest mean score. It can be perceived that a combination of heutagogical methods with collaborative elements could

be more effective in this scenario, where there is a clear inclination towards collaborative activities and shared efforts for meeting learning goals. Apart from improving language skills, collaborative learning also helps in developing skills of communication, teamwork, and socialization. This finding suggests that students strongly value collaborative learning as part of their learning experience.

3.1.2. Students Attitudes towards Heutagogy

The findings reveal a generally positive attitude toward heutagogical learning, with all mean scores falling within the high category. However, a closer examination shows that students express stronger preferences for creative and autonomous learning environments ($M = 4.31$) than for institutional integration of heutagogy into the curriculum ($M = 3.94$). This suggests a potential tension between students' desire for autonomy and their uncertainty about how such approaches can be formally implemented within existing academic structures. It also indicates that while students value the principles of heutagogy, their acceptance of systemic changes remains cautious.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of students' attitudes toward the Heutagogical approach in language learning

Items		S A	A	N	D	S D	N	M ean	S D
I need to have more control over my own learning process and goals.	F	6 7	9 6	2 8	6	4	2 01	4. 07	0. 877
	%	3 3.3	4 7.8	1 3.9	3	2	1 00		
I prefer a learning environment that encourages creativity, experimentation, and independent learning.	F	9 4	8 2	2 1	2	2	2 01	4. 31	0. 779
	%	4 6.8	4 0.8	1 0.4	1	1	1 00		
I believe that Heutagogy makes learning English more interesting and relevant to real-world needs.	F	5 3	9 1	4 7	9	1	2 01	3. 93	0. 848
	%	2 6.4	4 5.3	2 3.4	4 .5	0 .5	1 00		
I think that Heutagogy should be integrated into the English curriculum.	F	6 4	7 9	4 2	1 4	2	2 01	3. 94	0. 947
	%	3 1.8	3 9.3	2 0.9	7	1	1 00		
I believe that Heutagogy can help me improve my confidence and skills for the 21st-century world of work.	F	5 2	1 05	3 3	1 0	1	2 01	3. 98	0. 818
	%	2 5.9	5 2.2	1 6.4	5	0 .5	1 00		

From the above table, it is clear that most students feel a great need for increased control over their learning process, as shown by a mean of 4.07 (SD = 0.877). Furthermore, students also feel a great need for an environment that encourages creativity, experimentation, and self-directed learning, as shown by a mean of 4.31 (SD = 0.779). The mean scores show a positive disposition towards student autonomy, while the standard deviations show a medium level of response variation (Cohen et al., 2018; Dörnyei, 2007).

In relation to the application of heutagogy within English language learning, the findings suggest that the respondents are generally in agreement that the application of heutagogy has a positive effect on engagement and alignment with the needs of the workplace (M = 3.93, SD = 0.848). Similarly, there is a tendency for agreement on the incorporation of the principles of heutagogy within the curriculum, though some degree of doubt is apparent, as indicated by the mean score of 3.94 (SD = 0.947). Finally, the respondents were positive regarding the application of heutagogy within the development of skills for the workplace, with a mean score of 3.98 (SD = 0.818) (Cohen et al., 2018).

The findings indicate that students generally hold positive attitudes toward heutagogical learning, particularly in relation to autonomy, creativity, and real-world relevance. The mean score for the need for greater control over learning (M = 4.07, SD = 0.877) falls within the high category, suggesting that students are inclined toward more autonomous learning processes. However, the relatively higher standard deviation indicates variability in students' confidence and familiarity with self-directed learning.

Desire for Control Over Learning Processes

The preference for autonomy has been shown to exist in the students, with an average score of 4.07 in relation to their aspirations for more control over learning goals and processes. The standard deviation of 0.877 shows differences in their confidence levels in undertaking self-directed learning, some being encumbered by the implications of self-directed learning, while others can flourish in autonomous learning environments. This can be aided, and their confidence in self-directed learning can be boosted by offering them opportunities to take increasingly more responsibility.

Preference for Creative and Independent Learning Environments

With a mean of 4.31 and a standard deviation of 0.779, there is a strong preference for learning contexts that promote exploration and creative learning. The results show that students are open to learning in experimental and unstructured learning environments. The results are consistent with heutagogy. The students' preference for learning contexts that promote creative learning implies that students are likely to perform well in learning contexts where there is emphasis on developing their creativity. Activities such as inquiry learning and project learning will play a crucial role in developing this independence.

Perceived Relevance of Heutagogy to Real-World Needs

The students generally agreed that heutagogy is also relevant to the learning of the English language because it improves the engagement with the content as well as its application in real life. The result can be seen in the mean value of 3.93 with a standard deviation of 0.848. By linking the learning process to the application in real life, the students show increased levels of engagement in the learning process while also feeling it is more relevant to their situation at the same time as it also equips them to apply the language skills in real life.

Attitudes Towards Integration of Heutagogy into Curriculum

The result of a standard deviation of 0.947 and mean value of 3.94 reveals that there are varying levels of attitudes towards the inclusion of heutagogy within the English curriculum. The result indicates that although students recognize its value, they are not very supportive of its implementation at an institutional level. This could be attributed to their reservations about how heutagogy could be aligned with their existing curriculum and assessment processes. Building trust and acceptance at an institutional and personal level could be achieved by working on such concerns.

Belief in Heutagogy's Role in Developing 21st-Century Skills

Moreover, the fact that the average result of 3.98, with a standard deviation of 0.818, reveals that the students feel heutagogy is an enabling strategy in the development of skills that are in demand in the current job market. This result indicates an awareness of the relevance of heutagogical learning methodologies in the development of the skills of self-efficacy that the twenty-first-century job market demands. The relevance of the development of skill sets in the job market, with the rising importance of skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong learning, could make heutagogy an extremely valuable strategy in this respect.

3.2. *The Qualitative Analysis*

The qualitative findings provide important explanatory insights into the quantitative results, particularly regarding the uneven distribution of readiness across different dimensions. While survey data indicate high levels of motivation and resourcefulness, interview data reveal that only high-readiness students consistently engage in goal-setting, self-monitoring, and reflective practices. In contrast, medium- and low-readiness students demonstrate reliance on external guidance and show limited engagement in self-assessment. This alignment between quantitative trends and qualitative evidence strengthens the interpretation that self-regulatory capacity, rather than motivation alone, is the key factor influencing students' readiness for heutagogical learning.

Analysis of the questionnaire findings suggested that while a large number of students appreciated the idea of self-directed learning, many struggled with adjusting to heutagogy. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with students stratified based on their readiness and acceptance of heutagogy. The findings were consistent with the questionnaire findings and found that students at different readiness levels have their own challenges and preferences when it came to adjusting to heutagogical learning. The

aim of this study is to gain a deeper insight into these and come up with strategies that will make it easier for them to transition into a self-determined learning environment.

Table 3. Semi-Structured Interview Findings on Students' Readiness and Attitudes toward the Heutagogical Approach in Language Learning

Aspects	Interview Results
Goal-Setting and Learning Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and structured goal-setting among high-readiness students • Inconsistent and unclear goal-setting among medium and low-readiness students
Additional Learning Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active exploration of diverse learning resources by high-readiness students • Selective and limited resource utilisation by medium-readiness students • Dependence on lecturer-provided resources among low-readiness students
Evaluating Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment practices among high-readiness students • Informal and inconsistent progress tracking by medium-readiness students • Minimal progress evaluation by low-readiness students
Motivation in Self-Directed Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic motivation and self-driven learning among high-readiness students • Motivation fluctuates in medium-readiness students based on external factors. • External motivation dependency in low-readiness students
Relevance to Workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong confidence in workplace adaptability among high-readiness students • Awareness of workplace relevance, but a lack of confidence among medium-readiness students • Recognition of importance, but a lack of readiness among low-readiness students

The results of the interview provide further insight into students' attitudes and readiness for learning English as a foreign language (EFL) with heutagogy. Although there are general attitudes toward heutagogy from the questionnaire results, there are particular actions, issues, and motivations for students' participation in heutagogy from the interview results. Based on the classification derived from questionnaire mean scores,

students were grouped into three levels of readiness: low, medium, and high. This categorization provides a basis for interpreting differences in students' attitudes, learning strategies, and engagement with heutagogical practices across varying levels of preparedness.

Optimistic and well-prepared students have a proactive and systematic approach towards learning. They set up clear learning goals and distinguish between short-term goals (such as mastering pronunciation in a few weeks) and long-term goals (such as mastering conversational skills). These students proactively search and integrate various sources of learning, such as podcasts, online tutorials, scholarly journals, and language exchange apps. These students use systematic self-evaluation methods, such as writing journals, audio recording, and comparing previous and current performance, more than the other groups. These students are self-directed, appreciating autonomy, enjoying learning challenges, and motivated by outcomes. They also consider self-directed learning a necessity for personal and professional growth within the context of a constantly changing business environment and consider heutagogy an important skill for achieving success at the workplace.

However, students with a neutral or optimistic learning disposition with a medium level of preparation display both self-directed learning and use of external aid. Though they realize the importance of heutagogy learning and try to set learning goals, their goals are likely to remain vague. Though they use both formal and informal learning tools like podcasting, language learning applications, and textbooks recommended by lecturers, they lack a structured approach to integrate diverse learning tools. They use informal learning strategies that are based on changes noticed in natural environments. External stimulants such as success outcomes, engaging learning environments, or social contacts seem to drive these students. Though they realize the importance of heutagogy learning in preparing the workforce, they lack confidence in self-directed learning.

Low readiness students have a pessimistic or uncertain mindset, making it difficult for them to learn independently and requiring a traditional classroom approach to instruction. Instead of taking an active role to set their own goals for learning, they passively follow directions to accomplish educational goals without personalizing their educational path. They rarely seek external materials or new tools to enhance their knowledge; their educational opportunities are confined to those available inside the classroom. Their educational process is largely passive (viewing English-speaking films or listening to music) and not taking part in active self-enhancement processes (participating in written assignments or speaking practice). Unlike other categories, they use only external assessments (tests and assignments) to measure their educational process and do not track their educational process on their own. Externally motivated, they participate in educational processes to satisfy their obligations and not for self-actualization purposes. While they understand the significance of self-directed education

for their personal and professional development, they feel they are not equipped to use heutagogical learning principles in a working environment.

The qualitative findings indicate clear differences across levels of readiness. High-readiness students demonstrate structured goal-setting, consistent self-assessment, and strong intrinsic motivation. Medium-readiness students show partial engagement with self-directed learning but rely on external support and exhibit less consistency in applying learning strategies. In contrast, low-readiness students tend to depend heavily on teacher guidance, demonstrate limited use of learning resources, and show minimal engagement in self-monitoring practices. These patterns suggest that readiness for heutagogical learning varies significantly among students, particularly in terms of self-regulatory capacity and learning independence.

4. Discussion

The findings reveal a consistent pattern in which students demonstrate strong motivation and positive attitudes toward autonomy, yet show uneven readiness in executing self-directed learning practices. This indicates that learner autonomy in this context is better understood as a developing competence rather than an immediately attainable condition.

This study contributes to the existing literature in several important ways. First, it provides an integrated analysis of heutagogy by combining perspectives from Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Self-Regulated Learning (SRL), demonstrating that motivation alone is insufficient without the support of self-regulatory competencies. Second, unlike previous studies that primarily focus on perceptions or implementation challenges, this study systematically examines the interaction between readiness, attitudes, and contextual factors, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how heutagogical learning is enacted in practice. Third, by situating the analysis within an Indonesian Islamic higher education context, this study highlights how cultural and institutional structures shape the development of learner autonomy, thereby extending the applicability of heutagogical theory beyond predominantly Western settings.

In alignment with previous research on heutagogy in EFL instruction, the findings demonstrate that learners appreciate autonomy, flexibility, and opportunity for reflection (Benson, 2013; Blaschke, 2012; Hase & Kenyon, 2000). A considerable number of students articulated a robust inclination to establish personal learning objectives, investigate supplementary educational resources, and participate in autonomous learning beyond curricular obligations. These behaviors correspond with the fundamental tenets of heutagogy, which prioritize learner autonomy, flexibility, and the collaborative development of learning trajectories. Nevertheless, despite these favorable perspectives, students indicated significant difficulties in self-assessment, tracking learning progress, managing time, and assessing learning outcomes over time. This mismatch highlights a crucial insight: motivation alone does not ensure effective self-directed learning.

According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), these data indicate that several pupils function at a moderate level of motivational internalization. Students evidently prioritize autonomy and flexibility; nonetheless, their motivation seems to be primarily

influenced by identified regulation, wherein learning is regarded as individually significant yet remains reliant on external frameworks and validation (Al-hoorie et al., 2025; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2017). This elucidates why students exhibit joy for autonomous learning while also desiring structured direction, explicit expectations, and instructor evaluation. According to SDT, autonomy is most beneficial when bolstered by competence and relatedness; autonomy lacking sufficient structure may result in uncertainty instead of empowerment (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The challenges students faced with self-assessment and learning monitoring underscore the significance of self-regulated learning (SRL) as the fundamental basis of heutagogy. Zimmerman and Schunk (2011) assert that effective self-assessment relies on learners' competencies in goal formulation, progress monitoring, reflection, and approach modification. The results of this study corroborate other studies suggesting that self-assessment is not an inherent ability but rather a skill that requires specific instruction and practice (Andrade & du, 2007; Panadero, 2017). Students indicating diminished readiness levels encountered significant difficulties in managing learning activities, organizing time, and assessing their progress, corroborating the findings of Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) and Nguyen and Gu (Nguyen & Gu, 2013) concerning learners transitioning from teacher-centered to learner-centered environments.

These findings extend current understandings of heutagogy by demonstrating that self-regulated learning serves as the operational foundation of self-determined learning. While heutagogy delineates the pedagogical direction for learner autonomy (Blaschke, 2012; Blaschke & Hase, 2016), and Self-Determination Theory explains the quality of learners' motivation (Al-Hoorie et al., 2025; Deci & Ryan, 2000), self-regulated learning articulates how autonomy is enacted through goal-setting, monitoring, and reflection (Sharafi, 2024; Wardatin et al., 2022; Zimmerman, 2002; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011). The findings further indicate that students with stronger self-regulated learning skills are more capable of translating autonomy into intentional learning behaviors, whereas those with weaker self-regulatory capacity tend to perceive autonomy as demanding and challenging. This highlights the critical role of self-regulated learning as a mediating mechanism in the effective implementation of heutagogical learning.

Newfield (2025) underscores the differentiation between competence and capability, so elucidating these findings. Students exhibited developing proficiency in handling typical learning tasks, including accessing digital resources and completing autonomous assignments. Nonetheless, their ability to modify learning tactics for unfamiliar, complex, or open-ended contexts—a primary objective of heutagogy—remained in progress. This underscores the conclusion that heutagogy cannot be executed as a sudden educational transition but must be presented gradually and developmentally.

The attitudes of students towards heutagogy further substantiate this interpretation. Students indicated favorable attitudes towards creative, adaptable, and self-directed learning; yet, many underscored the necessity for structured independence instead of total autonomy. This inclination indicates a need for independence within a nurturing structure, along with the autonomy-supportive teaching paradigm of Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Ekawati et al. (2022) have revealed analogous findings, asserting that heutagogical learning is most efficacious when learners are provided with explicit instruction, feedback, and scaffolding.

Cultural and institutional variables significantly influence students' readiness for heutagogy. In Indonesian higher education, entrenched hierarchical norms and teacher-centered traditions persistently shape students' expectations regarding learning roles (Halim et al., 2023; Handayani et al., 2023). These conventions frequently designate instructors as the principal authority and assessors of learning, constraining students' chances to cultivate autonomy and self-regulation. Comparable limitations have been noted throughout Asian higher education systems, where authority, conformity, and examination-centric procedures prevail (Marginson, 2011). Consequently, students' favorable dispositions towards autonomy coexist with dependence on teacher guidance, indicating a transitional rather than a fully autonomous learner identity.

Institutional requirements for standardized and quantifiable learning outcomes further limit the implementation of heutagogy. Assessment systems that emphasize measurable outcomes frequently hinder adaptable, individualized learning trajectories, which are essential to self-directed education. Biggs and Tang (2011) contend that assessment procedures should correspond with learning objectives; hence, incorporating portfolio-based assessment, project-based learning, and reflective evaluation may offer a more appropriate equilibrium between responsibility and autonomy.

Technology has emerged as both an enabler and a constraint in heutagogical learning. Digital platforms facilitated adaptable access to materials and individualized learning possibilities, as noted by Trakhumala and Hidayat (2025). Nevertheless, technology by itself did not provide autonomy. Students with deficient self-regulated learning skills typically utilized digital tools in a passive manner, depending on resources supplied by instructors instead of actively engaging in knowledge construction. This corroborates Majid et al.'s (2023) claim that Society 5.0 necessitates both technology progress and the development of human-centered competencies, including responsibility, contemplation, and creativity.

Variations in preparation levels further elucidate the practical application of heutagogy. Interview results indicated that readiness, rather than linguistic skill, was the most significant predictor of successful involvement with heutagogical learning. Students with inadequate preparation encountered difficulties in goal development and self-confidence, necessitating structured mentoring prior to attaining autonomy (Mwinkaar & Lonibe, 2024). Students with moderate readiness appreciated flexibility yet required validation and supervision, corroborating Nguyen and Gu's (2013) assertion for a gradual transfer of authority. Well-prepared students exhibited increased autonomy however encountered difficulties with procrastination and self-evaluation, especially in the lack of external deadlines.

The findings suggest that the implementation of heutagogy in EFL contexts requires a scaffolded and gradual approach, where autonomy is progressively developed alongside explicit support in self-regulated learning strategies such as goal-setting, monitoring, and reflection (Blaschke & Hase, 2016; Nugraha et al., 2022). This highlights the importance of aligning pedagogical design with students' readiness levels rather than assuming immediate capacity for independent learning, particularly in contexts where learners are transitioning from teacher-centered to learner-centered practices (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Nguyen & Gu, 2013).

In conclusion, the comprehensive analysis reveals that students' readiness for

heutagogical learning is influenced by the interplay of motivational quality, self-regulatory skills, cultural environment, and pedagogical design. Although students typically possess favorable views toward autonomy and flexibility, their ability to participate in self-directed learning is contingent upon the fulfillment of psychological needs, the internalization of motivation, and the cultivation of self-regulated learning skills. This study situates heutagogy at the convergence of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Self-Regulated Learning (SRL), enhancing the comprehensive understanding of self-determined learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. It emphasizes that effective preparation for Society 5.0 necessitates not only innovative pedagogies and technology but also continuous focus on learner development and support.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights the significant potential of heutagogical learning in Indonesian EFL education while identifying critical challenges that must be addressed for successful implementation. The findings indicate that while students are generally motivated and willing to take ownership of their learning, varying readiness levels affect their ability to engage effectively in self-determined learning. Lower-readiness students require more structured support, while higher-readiness students benefit from greater autonomy with periodic guidance.

Self-evaluation, independent progress appraisal, and time management are significant obstacles. These findings highlight the necessity of scaffolded support systems that assist students in progressively moving from teacher-dependent learning to autonomous, self-regulated study. These gaps can be filled, and the efficacy of heutagogical techniques in the classroom can be increased using digital resources, peer cooperation, and organised feedback systems.

Institutional and cultural limitations also greatly influence students' interactions with heutagogy. In Indonesian higher education, traditional teacher-centred methods are still widely used, which makes it challenging to implement self-determined learning models completely. Therefore, modest institutional modifications are required to promote a balanced approach where autonomy and instructional guidance coexist peacefully.

Teachers should use blended learning methodologies, adaptive curriculum models, and assessment methods that support self-determined learning principles to increase the acceptance of heutagogy. Providing heutagogical methods and professional development for teachers would facilitate this shift even more by giving them the tools they need to help students become more autonomous.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study relies on data collected from a specific group of students within Indonesian Islamic higher education, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Second, the use of self-reported questionnaire

data may be subject to response bias, particularly in measuring constructs such as readiness and attitudes. Third, the study primarily employs descriptive statistical analysis, which limits the ability to examine causal relationships between variables such as motivation, self-regulated learning, and readiness for heutagogical learning.

Future research is therefore recommended to involve more diverse institutional contexts, apply more advanced analytical methods, and explore longitudinal designs to better understand the development of learner autonomy over time. Additionally, further studies may investigate the role of instructional interventions, digital learning environments, and teacher readiness in supporting the effective implementation of heutagogy in EFL contexts.

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