
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Towards a Glocalized Learner Autonomy: A Systematic Review of Moroccan Higher Education

Sara Kharroubi¹ ✉ and **Abdeljabbar El Mediouni²**

¹*Doctoral Candidate, Communication, Education, Digital Usage and Creativity Laboratory, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Mohammed I University, Oujda, Morocco*

²*Senior Professor, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Mohammed I University, Oujda, Morocco*

Corresponding Author: Sara Kharroubi, **E-mail:** sara.kharroubi.d24@ump.ac.ma

| ABSTRACT

This systematic review explores the integration of learner autonomy within Moroccan Higher Education, focusing on its current state and the factors influencing its development and effectiveness. A qualitative thematic analysis was employed to review and synthesize existing literature, providing a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The review identifies a fragmented understanding of learner autonomy in Moroccan academia, with many studies relying on Western definitions and models. While theoretically sound, these models may not fully address the practical challenges in Moroccan classrooms. An emerging trend is the incorporation of self-regulated learning within autonomous learning frameworks, though its application remains underexplored. The review highlights a significant gap in research on practical strategies for fostering learner autonomy, with most studies focusing on perceptions and attitudes rather than actionable interventions. Methodologically, there is a notable dominance of quantitative approaches, which, while valuable, fail to capture the nuanced experiences of learners and educators, underscoring the need for qualitative research. The findings emphasize the necessity of a glocalized conception of autonomy, integrating local educational practices and cultural nuances to foster a more relevant approach. This review underscores the importance of engaging both teachers and students in developing and implementing autonomous learning strategies, ensuring that practices are grounded in classroom realities. By adopting a participant-centered research approach and embracing methodological diversity, more effective educational practices and policies can be developed, enhancing autonomous learning in Moroccan higher education.

| KEYWORDS

Learner Autonomy, Learner-centered Pedagogy, Self-Regulated Learning, Moroccan Higher Education.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

The international landscape of education has witnessed unprecedented dynamism in recent years, propelled by the imperatives of globalization and technological advancement. Educational systems worldwide have undergone profound scrutiny and reconfiguration to meet the evolving demands of the global market. A fundamental shift in focus has occurred, emphasizing the need for educational institutions to produce not only content-specialists but also well-rounded, skilled, and autonomous individuals capable of thriving in diverse contexts. Learner autonomy (LA) has emerged as a compelling concept in this discourse, reflecting the evolving needs of the information age characterized by a knowledge-based economy. In this context, the ability of learners to take charge of their learning processes and adapt to diverse environments has gained prominence. However, the readiness of teaching faculties to embrace the philosophy of LA remains critical.

1.1 Research Background & Rationale

Over the past two decades, Morocco has experienced notable social, economic, and technological transformations, with education emerging as a vital catalyst for national advancement. Consequently, substantial reforms have been instituted in Moroccan higher education (MHE), providing essential context for the present systematic review within the university classroom's pedagogical milieu. However, promoting autonomous learning in the Moroccan universities requires alignment between teachers' and students' conceptions of autonomy. Despite LA being portrayed as a universal capacity, teachers need to adapt the concept to fit their specific learning environments. In MHE classrooms, where there is often a disconnect between educational reforms, formal education, and learners' desires, research focusing on successful teaching strategies in low-resource settings is crucial. Adopting a participant-centered research approach involving both teachers and learners enhances their autonomy, respecting their voices and agency. Thus, this paper argues for a systematic review of Moroccan academic literature to explore the integration of LA into higher education classrooms from a glocalized perspective.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions (RQ) guiding the systematic review are as follows:

RQ1: What is the current state of learner autonomy in Moroccan higher education?

RQ2: What factors have been identified as influencing the development and effectiveness of learner autonomy in Moroccan higher education?

2. Literature Review

In the past two decades, Morocco has grappled with significant social, economic, and technological changes, recognizing education as a cornerstone for national development across various sectors (Mansouri, 2023). This acknowledgment spurred substantial reforms within MHE, warranting an examination to contextualize the current paper within the dynamic pedagogical landscape of university classrooms. An overview of these reforms is imperative, shedding light on their objectives and implications, particularly concerning the integration of a learner-centered, autonomous learning philosophy within the Moroccan socio-cultural context (Mansouri, 2023). Thus, a condensed review of Morocco's educational reforms becomes indispensable for comprehending their ramifications on LA and identifying potential areas for further investigation.

2.1 The Current landscape of Moroccan Higher Education

The reforms in Moroccan higher education can be delineated into two pivotal phases. The early 2000s witnessed a concerted effort to ensure universal access to basic education, catalyzed by initiatives like the National Charter for Education and Training (NCET) (Mansouri, 2023). This period marked a transformative shift, declaring the years 2000-2009 as a national decade for education and training, signaling a resolute commitment to educational advancement. Central to this phase was the enactment of Law 01.00, mandating a comprehensive overhaul of MHE objectives and university missions (Mansouri, 2023). This legislation introduced administrative, financial, and pedagogical autonomy, culminating in the adoption of the Licence, Master, Doctorat (LMD) system to align Moroccan higher education with international standards (CSEFRS, 2014). However, despite these efforts, challenges persisted, such as inadequate curricula and linguistic barriers, rendering many university programs incongruous with market demands (Mansouri, 2023).

The subsequent decade brought forth urgent reforms aimed at rectifying the deficiencies of the existing educational paradigm. The Emergency Program 2009-2012 sought to bridge the chasm between educational ideals and practical realities, emphasizing a participatory vision and strategic implementation strategies (Elhassani et al., 2016). Nonetheless, pedagogical issues persisted, exacerbated by overcrowded classrooms and resource constraints, hindering the evolution of the LMD system into a globally recognized framework (Mansouri, 2022, 2023). The lacuna in communication and collaboration across educational stakeholders further compounded these challenges, highlighting systemic inefficiencies (Ghaicha, 2018).

The advent of the 2015-2030 Strategic Vision of Reform (SVR) marked a paradigmatic shift in Morocco's educational outlook. While significant strides were made in enhancing enrollment rates across education levels, issues of underachievement and employability persisted (World Bank, 2020). The SVR aimed to transcend traditional educational paradigms, pivoting towards a system that champions critical thinking, pluralism, and technological innovation (Mansouri, 2023). Emphasizing a multidimensional approach to teaching and learning, the SVR underscored the importance of learner-centered pedagogy, envisioning educational institutions grounded in equity, quality, and societal promotion (Mansouri, 2023). However, despite its lofty ideals, the translation of these principles into tangible initiatives posed challenges, necessitating radical interventions such as the proposed National Pedagogical Reform of Higher Education.

The culmination of these efforts materialized in the "National Plan to Accelerate the Transformation of the Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation Ecosystem" (PACTE - ESRI 2030), signaling yet another phase of educational restructuring

(SCDM, 2021). Rooted in Morocco's new development model, this initiative underscores the pivotal role of education in shaping the nation's economic and social landscape (SCDM, 2021). By prioritizing human capital development and embracing the principles of the knowledge and learning society, PACTE - ESRI 2030 aims to foster inclusivity, innovation, and sustainable growth (SCDM, 2021). Central to this vision is a holistic approach to education, recognizing its role in nurturing individual potential, driving economic competitiveness, and fostering societal advancement (SCDM, 2021).

In essence, Morocco's educational journey reflects a concerted effort to adapt to evolving global dynamics while remaining cognizant of its socio-cultural fabric. The ongoing reforms underscore the imperative of educational transformation in fostering national progress and positioning Morocco as a leader in the global knowledge economy. Through initiatives like PACTE - ESRI 2030, Morocco endeavors to harness the collective potential of its citizens, driving sustainable development and inclusive growth in the 21st century.

2.2 Considering Learner Autonomy in the Context of Moroccan Higher Education Reforms

The MEH reforms in Morocco can be broadly divided into two phases. The 2000s focused on universal access to education and positioning higher education as a tool for human capital development and a knowledge society. The 2010s built on this foundation by introducing a new education system and shifting the paradigm towards a learning society. This involved creating a more autonomous space for universities to promote continuous knowledge creation and lifelong learning (as outlined in the 2015-2030 Strategic Vision of the Reform (SVR)). While LA is not explicitly mentioned in these reform documents, its principles are embedded within their broader goals. The emphasis on pedagogical, organizational, and financial autonomy for universities, along with the SVR's focus on critical thinking, personal growth, and lifelong learning, all indirectly support the development of LA. The most recent reforms, encapsulated in the PACTE-ESRI 2030 plan, further emphasize human capital development, lifelong learning, and pedagogical shifts from rote memorization to active learning and critical thinking. These all contribute to empowering students to take charge of their own learning journeys.

The concept of LA can be viewed with some skepticism in non-Western contexts, potentially seen as a Western construct incompatible with local educational environments. However, Little (1999) challenges this view, arguing that LA is a fundamental human capacity for successful learning. He cites historical examples of self-directed learners and researchers throughout time, and strengthens his argument by drawing on the socio-constructivist framework of child development. While acknowledging the role of adults in education, Little emphasizes a child's inherent ability to use tools autonomously within their environment. Astington's (2005) research further supports this notion of intentionality as a hallmark of human autonomy. Astington demonstrates that children as young as three exhibit "first-order intentional systems," meaning they can distinguish between intentional human actions, desires, and beliefs. By age five, children develop "second-order intentional systems," signifying the ability to understand the connection between internal thoughts and actions, culminating in the capacity to reflect on their own goals and how to achieve them. This aligns with Little's (1999) definition of LA as "acceptance of responsibility for one's own learning" (p. 11), a continuous process of self-evaluation and understanding the "what, why, and how" of learning. However, to fully understand LA in the Moroccan context, we need to consider the concept of glocalization.

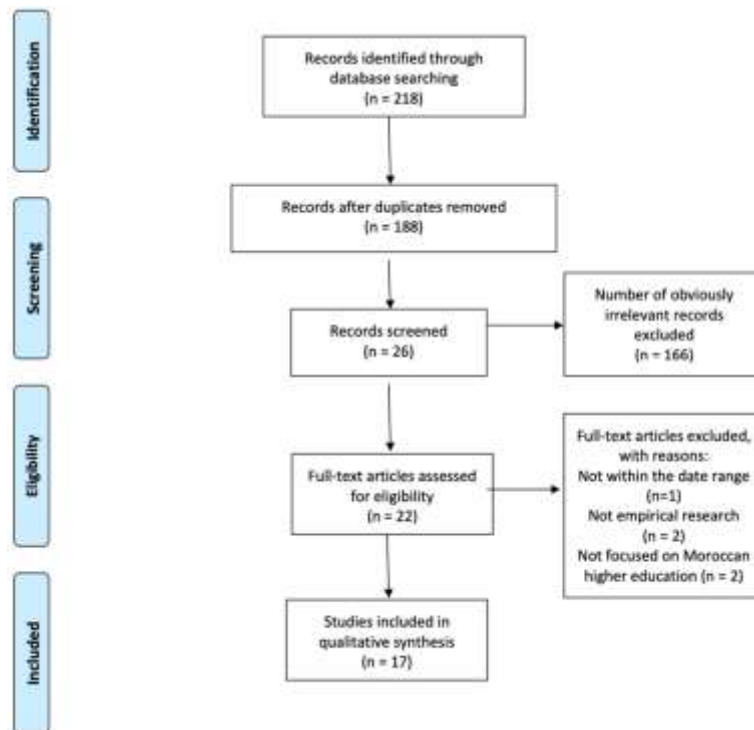
Globalization can introduce ethnocentric bias by overlooking the cultural roots of concepts like LA and promoting them without considering the specific cultural contexts of learners (Schmenk, 2005). Globalization can be seen as a two-fold process: promoting homogeneity in some areas (e.g., economic globalization) and fostering heterogeneity through glocalization, where global and local practices blend to create increasingly diverse environments. Glocalization is crucial when adopting globalized pedagogies like LA. In the classroom, this means acknowledging that autonomy is not a universal concept but one that requires critical awareness of individual possibilities and limitations within specific contexts.

Effectively promoting LA in Moroccan universities requires aligning teachers' and students' conceptions of autonomy. While LA is often viewed as a universal learner capacity (Palfreyman & Smith, 2003; Little, 1999), teachers need to critically examine their own understanding of the concept and redefine it to fit their specific learning environment (Blidi, 2017). This is particularly important in MHE classrooms due to the potential disconnect between the goals of the reforms, the realities of formal education, and "what learners want and actually attempt to gain for themselves" (Smith et al., 2018, p. 11). There is a critical need for research on successful teaching strategies in low-resource classrooms to develop effective methodologies from a bottom-up perspective. Analyzing these success stories can also provide insights into how to foster "social autonomy" in specific contexts. A participant-centered research approach, actively involving both teachers and learners, is crucial in these settings. This approach respects and enhances their autonomy by allowing them to express their voices and engage their agency, rather than simply conducting research "on" or "into" them (Smith et al., 2018, p. 22). In light of this, this review argues for a systematic review of Moroccan academic literature to explore the glocalized integration of LA into MHE classrooms.

3. Methodology

This systematic review paper provides an in-depth investigation into the current state of LA in Moroccan higher education by systematically examining empirical research conducted between 2015 and 2023. The initial search identified 218 journal articles from five databases: Google Scholar, Web of Science, ERIC, ScienceDirect, and Semantic Scholar, using keywords such as "learner autonomy," "self-regulated learning," "self-directed learning," "Morocco," and "higher education." Applying filters for date range, language (English), and open access, titles were screened for relevance, narrowing the count to 26 articles. After removing duplicates, 22 articles remained. Full-text screening based on inclusion criteria—empirical research within Moroccan higher education—resulted in the exclusion of 5 articles, leaving 17 articles for qualitative synthesis. This systematic review adheres to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, ensuring a thorough and transparent examination of learner autonomy in Moroccan higher education. The process of selecting the articles according to PRISMA is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Article selection process according the PRISMA approach



3.1 Phase 1: Identification

The systematic literature review was conducted by a single researcher, a PhD candidate with five years of active engagement in learner autonomy research. Her qualifications are further bolstered by her tenure within the English Department of University Mohammed I, providing a solid foundation in educational research methodologies and subject expertise.

The existing literature related to learner autonomy in Moroccan higher education was systematically reviewed using five databases: Google Scholar, Web of Science, ERIC, ScienceDirect, and Semantic Scholar. Keywords were carefully selected to characterize the topic, including "learner autonomy," "self-regulated learning," "self-directed learning," "Morocco," and "higher education." Filters were applied for the date range (2015–2023), language (English), and open-access articles with PDF availability. This comprehensive search yielded a total of 218 articles.

3.2. Phase 2: Screening

A meticulously planned three-week search process, spanning January 1st to January 28th, ensured thorough exploration of the selected databases. This systematic approach involved two distinct phases. Phase 1, termed Flexible Inclusion, initially identified 218 potentially relevant articles through a database search. Duplicate removal reduced this number to 188. Subsequently, a stringent screening process based on predefined criteria excluded 166 articles, focusing on removing obviously irrelevant studies (188 identified - 166 excluded = 22 articles remaining).

3.3 Phase 3: Eligibility

In the eligibility phase, the remaining 22 articles were thoroughly assessed to ensure they met the inclusion criteria. This phase of the search process incorporated a manual screening component, underscoring the meticulousness of the approach. This involved a careful examination of each title and abstract, with the investigator documenting the rationale for inclusion or exclusion in a notepad. The hand search facilitated a nuanced evaluation of each article, considering factors such as the target population, pedagogical methodologies, and the utilization of educational tools in the studies.

Articles were included if they were empirical research studies and specifically focused on learner autonomy within Moroccan higher education. The abstracts of the selected articles were reviewed to confirm their relevance to the research questions. Articles that did not meet these criteria were excluded, resulting in a final selection of 17 articles for the systematic review.

3.4 Phase 4: Inclusion

The final phase involved a detailed analysis of the 17 articles that were included. The studies were examined to identify how learner autonomy is implemented and perceived in Moroccan higher education. The analysis focused on the various approaches and contexts in which learner autonomy is fostered, as well as the outcomes and challenges reported in the literature.

To ensure the reliability of the abstract review phase, the investigator conducted the screening process independently, mitigating the risk of bias. Each inclusion/exclusion decision was meticulously documented and color-coded, delineating the database searched and the criteria applied. This systematic approach enhanced consistency and transparency in the selection process, thereby bolstering the rigor of the review. This process provided a comprehensive understanding of the state of learner autonomy in Moroccan higher education, addressing the research questions.

4. Results and Discussion

To answer the research questions guiding this embedded review of Moroccan literature, a thematic analysis was conducted on the 17 articles using the Nvivo software. Recurring themes were hand coded into the software and exported for further in-depth analysis. These themes are elaborated here in a manner that answers the research questions that focus on the current Moroccan perspective on LA, and on the implementation processes adopted in MEH to promote LA. In doing so, this review identifies research gaps in the field and further argue for a globalized theoretical framework for fostering autonomous learning in the context of the MHE classroom. The first area of inquiry of the thematic analysis was the research questions and methodologies elaborated in the literature.

4.1 Integration of Technology and Active Learning

A significant focus within the literature revolves around integrating online resources and employing active learning techniques to promote learner autonomy among Moroccan university students. Studies by Bouhafa and Hochberg (2022) and Rahmani (2021) highlight the pivotal role of online tools in fostering metacognitive skills such as planning, monitoring, and self-evaluation among EFL learners. These inquiries underscore the importance of leveraging technology to create interactive and self-directed learning environments, especially within the context of Moroccan higher education. Additionally, research by El Hammoumi et al. (2021) and Lamkhanter (2022) emphasizes the transition from traditional lecturing to active learning methods, showcasing how collaborative group tasks and student-led discussions empower students to take ownership of their learning processes. The convergence of these studies suggests a paradigm shift towards learner-centered approaches that harness technology and active learning methodologies to enhance learner autonomy in Moroccan educational settings.

4.2 Individual Factors Shaping Autonomy

Another prominent theme within the literature pertains to individual characteristics and attitudes that influence LA. Investigations by Bourrouk (2021) and Mtalsi (2023) delve into factors such as conscientiousness, self-regulated learning, and self-efficacy beliefs among Moroccan undergraduate students. Through regression analysis and questionnaire surveys, these studies explore the complex interplay between individual traits and academic performance or readiness for autonomous learning. By unpacking the influence of these individual factors, researchers gain insights into the mechanisms through which learner autonomy is shaped within Moroccan educational contexts. Moreover, these findings underscore the importance of personalized interventions and support systems tailored to students' unique needs and characteristics to foster a culture of autonomy and self-directed learning. Furthermore, as was discussed before, a key factor in the successful promotion of LA is the coherence of the conception of LA between teacher and learner. This conception is well elaborated in the Moroccan literature and subsequently provides key themes for discussion.

4.3 Integration of Technology and Responsibility in Promoting Learner Autonomy

In its conception of LA, Moroccan literature underscores the pivotal role of technology and online resources which highlights a research trend reflective of global educational paradigms. Bouhafa and Hochberg (2022) highlight how internet-based tools, such

as reading comprehension exercises and blogs, significantly enhance English as a Foreign Language (EFL) skills autonomously, empowering students to take control of their learning processes. This aligns with Safsouf et al.'s (2020) e-Learner Success Assessment Model (e-LSAM), which integrates social interactions, course flexibility, and diverse assessments to support autonomous learning by offering personalized experiences and continuous feedback. Such technological interventions resonate with Nunan's (1997) stages of learner autonomy, emphasizing the transition from teacher-led instruction to student-centered learning where learners progressively take control of their educational objectives.

The theme of responsibility and self-regulation also permeates this discourse, emphasizing the necessity for learners to set goals, make decisions, and critically reflect on their progress. Bouhafaf and Hochberg (2022) argue that developing capacities for detachment, critical reflection, and independent action is crucial for autonomy. This sentiment is echoed by Bourrouk (2021), who links self-regulated learning to academic success, suggesting that students who manage their learning processes effectively tend to perform better. The integration of technology thus serves as a critical enabler, providing the tools and resources necessary for students to exercise responsibility and self-regulation, ultimately promoting learner autonomy in Moroccan educational contexts.

4.4 Teacher's Role and Active Learning in Fostering Autonomy

Another significant theme is the evolving role of teachers from traditional knowledge transmitters to facilitators of autonomous learning environments. Moroccan literature consistently highlights the importance of teacher support and scaffolding in fostering LA. El Hammoumi et al. (2021) describe teachers as helpers, planners, and guides who assist students in developing problem-solving skills and becoming independent learners. This shift is further supported by Zhiri (2019), who emphasizes the importance of creating opportunities for student independence and gradually expanding their autonomy, aligning with Nunan's (1997) model where teachers facilitate various levels of learner autonomy.

Active learning techniques also play a critical role in this process. El Hammoumi et al. (2021) and Lamkhanter (2022) observe that collaborative group tasks and student-led discussions significantly empower students to take charge of their learning processes. These methods underscore the need for a learning environment that supports responsibility and self-regulation, facilitated by teacher interventions. However, the literature also identifies a gap in practical implementation, with a predominance of studies focusing on perceptions and behaviors rather than concrete strategies for promoting autonomy in the classroom. This suggests a need for future research to explore effective pedagogical approaches and interventions that operationalize LA in practical terms, thereby enhancing the educational outcomes in Moroccan settings. Notwithstanding this conceptual gap, the findings of the research endeavors in the Moroccan literature still highlight significant insights into the status quo.

4.5 Communication and Support in Education

A significant theme from the findings of the literature revolves around the challenges and needs in communication and support within educational systems, especially highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fathi and Moummou (2021) emphasize the lack of effective communication between educational authorities and teachers, with less than 5% of respondents feeling supported by educational bodies. This communication gap was exacerbated by the pandemic, leading to debates among teachers about the need for more effective communication between policymakers and local agents. Teachers argued that in times of crisis, there should be a delegation of powers to local authorities to manage the situation more effectively (Fathi & Moummou, 2021). Similarly, Khoudri and Zerriouh (2023) highlight that insufficient guidance and direction in the classroom led to students describing their experiences as difficult and stressful, particularly during the global shift to emergency remote teaching. The transition to postsecondary education, especially during the pandemic, revealed significant challenges impacting students' mental and physical health (Khoudri & Zerriouh, 2023). These findings collectively underscore the critical need for improved communication and support structures within educational systems to better navigate crises and support both educators and students.

4.6 Autonomous Learning and the Role of Digital and Sociocultural Factors

The second major theme in the findings of the research papers encompasses the promotion of autonomous learning alongside the influence of digital and sociocultural factors in education. Chrifi et al. (2021) report that Moroccan higher education students are making significant use of digital devices and online resources, although they often depend on resources provided by their teachers, indicating a blend of autonomy and guided learning. The importance of fostering autonomous learning is further supported by Lamkhanter (2022), who finds that most students consider themselves autonomous learners and are motivated to take charge of their learning. Teacher encouragement is crucial in this context, as both self-motivation and external motivation significantly contribute to autonomous learning (Lamkhanter, 2022). Oussou (2020) also highlights that EFL teachers are generally ready to promote learner autonomy, emphasizing collaborative autonomy where teachers learn from and with their peers, thus positively influencing their students' autonomy (Oussou, 2020). Additionally, the sociocultural environment significantly influences educational practices, who describe Moroccan English language instructors' adoption of a post-method pedagogy informed by their specific contexts. This "principled pragmatism" allows for adaptive teaching practices tailored to unique challenges.

Collectively, these studies illustrate the intertwined roles of digital tools, sociocultural factors, and teacher support in shaping modern educational practices and promoting autonomous learning.

5. Conclusion

The rationale behind conducting this systematic review was to identify a glocalized conception of learner autonomy (LA) in Moroccan Higher Education (MHE). The literature reviewed illustrates a theoretical oscillation between definitions of LA, descriptions of the ideal autonomous learner, and theoretical foundations and models for fostering LA. This multiplicity in the Moroccan academia's conception of LA can create a fragmented foundation that hinders the practical implementation of autonomy. A significant part of the reviewed literature adopts Western definitions of autonomous learning (Benson, 2014; Holec, 1981; Little, 1991). While these definitions are theoretically sound, they can be empirically limiting in promoting autonomy in the Moroccan classroom. Furthermore, an interesting theoretical stance in the literature (Bourouk, 2021; Khoudri & Zeriuoh, 2023) is the evocation of self-regulated learning (SRL) in the theoretical conceptions of autonomy. The reviewed literature does not clearly situate SRL within both the conception and process of fostering autonomy in learning.

This postulation is further elaborated by the recurring adoption of David Nunan's stages of learner autonomy (Khoudri & Zeriuoh, 2023; Moudden & Lamkhater, 2023; Oussou, 2020). While this model has been instrumental in shaping the discourse on learner autonomy, its predominant focus in Moroccan literature can be argued as limiting for the theoretical exploration of a glocalized formulation of LA. Moreover, although Moroccan literature often highlights the importance of cultural context in shaping learner autonomy (Bourouk, 2021; Fathi & Moummou, 2021; Rahmani, 2021), the reliance on Nunan's model may not adequately capture these nuances. These conceptual and theoretical limitations evidently bleed into other aspects of the research conducted in the Moroccan university.

The research questions and objectives explored in Moroccan literature predominantly focus on perceptions and behaviors rather than practical implementations of autonomy in the classroom. While understanding student and teacher attitudes towards learner autonomy is essential, there is a noticeable lack of emphasis on how autonomy is actively promoted and supported within educational settings. Most research questions center around students' awareness, readiness, and attitudes towards autonomy (Khoudri & Zeriuoh, 2023; Moudden & Lamkhater, 2023; Oussou, 2020), but there is limited exploration of specific strategies or interventions aimed at fostering autonomy in practice. Objectives often focus on individual characteristics and attitudes, neglecting the practical implications for teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the exploration of LA in Moroccan higher education reveals several methodological limitations that need addressing to foster a more comprehensive understanding and effective implementation of autonomy in educational settings. Apart from Rostom (2019), there is a noticeable predominance of quantitative research methods in Moroccan studies. While quantitative approaches are valuable for understanding relationships between variables, they often fall short of capturing the nuanced experiences and perspectives of students and educators. This methodological gap suggests a need for more qualitative research to explore the complex socio-cultural factors influencing learner autonomy in Moroccan educational contexts. Qualitative methods can provide deeper insights into the lived experiences of learners and teachers, uncovering the subtleties that quantitative data might miss. Addressing this gap could lead to a more holistic understanding of the factors that promote or hinder learner autonomy, thereby informing more effective educational practices and policies.

6. Implications

The findings of this systematic review carry significant implications for the promotion and implementation of learner autonomy (LA) in Moroccan Higher Education (MHE). Firstly, the need for a glocalized conception of LA is evident. The reliance on Western definitions and models, such as those by Benson (2014), Holec (1981), and Little (1991), highlights the importance of contextualizing these theories within the Moroccan socio-cultural landscape. By integrating local educational practices and cultural nuances, educators can foster a more relevant and effective approach to LA, aligning with the principles of the PACTE - ESRI 2030 reforms.

Secondly, the incorporation of SRL within the framework of LA provides a more comprehensive understanding of autonomy in learning. The theoretical integration of SRL emphasizes the importance of fostering skills such as goal-setting, self-monitoring, and self-reflection, which are crucial for autonomous learning. This approach can enhance the effectiveness of LA initiatives by providing students with the tools and strategies necessary to manage their learning processes.

Additionally, the review underscores the importance of adopting a participant-centered research approach. Engaging both teachers and students in the development and implementation of LA strategies ensures that the practices are grounded in the realities of the classroom. This collaborative approach can lead to more sustainable and impactful educational reforms, as it respects and enhances the autonomy of all stakeholders involved.

The review also highlights the need for methodological diversity in researching LA. The predominance of quantitative methods in current studies suggests a gap in capturing the lived experiences of learners and educators. Emphasizing qualitative research can provide deeper insights into the socio-cultural factors influencing LA, offering a more nuanced understanding of how autonomy can be effectively promoted in Moroccan higher education.

7. Limitations

This systematic review is not without limitations. One primary limitation is the potential bias in the selection of literature. The focus on publications available in academic databases may have excluded relevant studies published in non-traditional formats or local journals that are not indexed internationally. This limitation could result in an incomplete picture of the current state of LA in Moroccan higher education.

The review's scope is confined to higher education in Morocco, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts or regions. While the focus on MHE is deliberate, future research could benefit from comparative studies examining LA across different educational levels and countries, providing a broader understanding of how autonomy in learning can be fostered globally.

Despite these limitations, the systematic review provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state and influencing factors of LA in Moroccan higher education, offering valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers committed to enhancing autonomous learning in this context.

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ORCID iD : <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2515-4924>

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