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Implementing Heutagogy in Malay Language Learning: Level of Heutagogical Practices among Primary School Student

Nor Zahid Musa[1], Zamri Mahamod[2]
[1](Fakulti Pendidikan/ Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia)
[2](Fakulti Pendidikan/ Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia)

ABSTRACT: *This study aims to examine the level of heutagogical practices in Malay language learning among Year 6 primary school pupils in Malaysia. Heutagogy, or self-determined learning, emphasizes learner autonomy, metacognitive reflection, and self-regulation—competencies that are critical for developing lifelong learning dispositions. Employing a quantitative survey design, data were collected from 352 pupils across 32 national schools using a validated questionnaire comprising six dichotomous (Yes/No) items. The instrument focused on key elements of self-directed learning, including time management, strategy selection, proactive learning, self-awareness, information seeking, and reflective practices. Data were analyzed descriptively using SPSS Version 29.0. Results indicated that pupils demonstrated very high levels in identifying personal weaknesses (90.3%) and selecting suitable learning strategies (84.9%), reflecting strong metacognitive engagement. A high proportion also reported post-lesson reflection (75.0%) and independent time planning (67.3%). However, only 34.4% engaged in learning content ahead of formal instruction, indicating a low level of proactive learning. Independent information seeking was reported at a moderate level (58.8%). These findings suggest that while foundational heutagogical behaviors are emerging, critical gaps remain in fostering initiative and resourcefulness. The study recommends pedagogical scaffolding, integration of digital learning tools, and curriculum alignment to enhance heutagogical implementation in early education.*

KEYWORDS – *Heutagogy, Malay Language Learning, Primary Education, Self-Directed Learning, Student Autonomy*

I. INTRODUCTION

The proficiency in the Malay language holds a vital position in Malaysia's national identity, cultural heritage, and effective communication within the diverse multiethnic society. As Malaysia continues to develop in a rapidly globalizing world, mastery of national languages like Malay remains a cornerstone for fostering unity, social cohesion, and cultural continuity. In the context of primary education, establishing a strong foundation in Malay language skills is essential for enabling young learners to engage confidently in social, cultural, and academic domains (Daud & Sulaiman, 2020). Language learning at this stage is crucial not only for communication but also for nurturing a sense of cultural belonging and national pride. However, despite the importance of these language skills, traditional pedagogical approaches in Malaysia's primary schools face several challenges that impede the development of learner autonomy and lifelong learning skills.

Traditional pedagogies in language education tend to adopt teacher-centered methods such as rote memorization, repetitive drills, and passive listening activities. These methods, although straightforward and easy to implement, often lead to limited student engagement, minimal critical thinking, and a lack of opportunities for independent exploration. Consequently, students may excel in examinations but fail to develop metacognitive

skills or the capacity to regulate their own learning processes. Furthermore, such pedagogical strategies do not foster the development of self-determined learning behaviors, which are essential for learners to adapt to changing educational and societal demands (Fong & Mohd Fikri, 2020; Zeckqualine & Zainal Abidin, 2020). As Malaysia transitions toward a knowledge-based economy, there is increasing recognition that language education must evolve to cultivate learners who are autonomous, self-regulating, and capable of lifelong learning.

Heutagogy, as a pedagogical philosophy, offers a promising alternative framework that promotes self-determined learning, metacognition, and learner agency. Rooted in the principles of adult education and self-directed learning, heutagogy emphasizes the importance of learners' capacity to determine what, how, and when to learn, thereby fostering intrinsic motivation and critical reflection. Blaschke (2021) advocates that integrating heutagogical strategies into language teaching can empower students to take ownership of their learning, encouraging them to set personal goals, choose appropriate learning strategies, and reflect critically on their progress. Such an approach aligns well with the objectives of the Malaysian curriculum to produce learners who are independent, responsible, and lifelong learners. Empirical studies support the effectiveness of heutagogical strategies in language education. For instance, Ekawati (2022) demonstrated that implementing heutagogical principles in online English language courses significantly improved students' motivation, independence, and metacognitive skills. Similarly, Manugaran et al. (2022) found that digital self-determined learning activities enhanced learners' autonomy and engagement in various disciplines, including language studies. These studies reveal that heutagogy can transform traditional language classrooms into learner-centered environments that foster active participation, self-efficacy, and reflective practice.

In recent years, the integration of digital literacy with heutagogical approaches has gained prominence, especially amidst the COVID-19 pandemic which necessitated remote learning modalities. Studies indicate that the combination of heutagogical strategies and digital tools can facilitate self-paced, flexible, and engaging learning experiences (Mohamed Shuhidan et al., 2021; Kamrozzaman et al., 2020; Yusoff, 2022). For example, the use of mobile applications, social media, and online platforms allows learners to access resources independently, collaborate with peers, and reflect on their learning in real-time. These advancements suggest that heutagogy is highly relevant to Malaysia's modern educational landscape, bringing opportunities for pedagogical innovation and policy reform.

Furthermore, the Malaysian government's education policies increasingly emphasize learner autonomy, digital literacy, and teacher professional development aligned with 21st-century skills. The Ministry of Education advocates for a shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning, integrating technology and fostering lifelong learning competencies (Lastariwati et al., 2022; Ibrahim et al., 2022). Such policy directions provide a supportive environment for implementing heutagogical methods in language teaching, encouraging teachers to adopt facilitative roles and design learning experiences that promote exploration, reflection, and student agency.

Given these developments, there is an urgent need to investigate how heutagogy can be systematically integrated into Malay language teaching in primary schools. This research aims to fill the gap by examining the current practices, challenges, and opportunities associated with heutagogical strategies in the Malaysian context. Understanding students' self-determined learning behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions will inform effective pedagogical interventions and policy initiatives to enhance learner autonomy. The ultimate goal is to produce linguistically proficient, autonomous, and lifelong learners who can thrive in Malaysia's diverse cultural landscape and the digital age.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions and Concepts of Heutagogy and Self-Determined Learning

Heutagogy, often regarded as the pedagogy of self-determined learning, emphasizes learner agency, capacity for self-direction, and metacognitive reflection (Blaschke, 2021). It extends beyond traditional pedagogical models, advocating for learners to become active architects of their learning journey, making decisions about content, process, and outcomes. Blaschke (2021) describes heutagogy as a learner-centered

approach that cultivates autonomy through practices that enable learners to reflect on their learning strategies, adapt to contextual changes, and pursue lifelong learning skills.

Supporting this conceptualization, Shamila Mohamed Shuhidan et al. (2021) elaborate that heutagogy encourages learners to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-efficacy. The approach situates the learner as an essential agent in constructing knowledge, often facilitated by digital and social media platforms that provide flexibility and personalized learning pathways. The integration of heutagogy into language learning models allows learners to tailor their experiences, focusing on skills relevant to their personal and professional contexts. Empirical studies further clarify the distinctions between pedagogy, andragogy, and heutagogy. Blaschke (2021) notes that while pedagogy involves teacher-led instruction, andragogy emphasizes adult self-directed learning, heutagogy goes a step further by fostering learner capability and capacity for lifelong learning in complex, dynamic environments. Shamila Mohamed Shuhidan et al. (2021) underline that this transition from adult learning to self-determined learning suits digital contexts, where learners often navigate vast resources independently.

Impact of Heutagogy on Learner Autonomy and Motivation

The influence of heutagogical principles on learner autonomy and motivation has been empirically supported across various studies. Nuril Ham Al Hafizah Zahari et al. (2021) demonstrate that students engaging in heutagogical activities show significant improvements in self-efficacy, critical thinking, and lifelong learning orientations. Their research highlights that students who participate in self-directed learning environments tend to develop stronger motivation and independence, which are vital for language acquisition.

Similarly, Glassner (2022) argues that heutagogical environments foster intrinsic motivation by empowering learners to select topics that resonate with their interests and goals. His findings suggest that autonomy-supportive practices can lead to increased engagement, persistency, and overall achievement in language learning tasks. Such findings are crucial for primary language education, where motivation often diminishes due to perceived irrelevance or lack of learner control.

Additional insights from Blaschke (2021) indicate that learner agency inherently enhances motivation, especially when learners perceive their choices as meaningful and aligned with their life goals. The integration of digital tools further boosts this effect by providing learners with immediate feedback, diverse resources, and collaborative platforms.

Heutagogical Strategies in Language Learning Contexts

Implementing heutagogical principles in language learning requires strategic pedagogical shifts. Arifah Fasha Rosmani et al. (2021) observe that learner-centered activities such as project-based learning, problem-solving, and reflection journals are effective in promoting autonomy. Their study emphasizes that empowering students to design their learning activities—such as choosing topics, setting goals, and assessing their progress—aligns with heutagogical ideals.Complementing this, Ekawati (2022) advocates for constructing learning environments where students initiate their inquiry and lead peer discussions. She suggests that digital platforms like online forums, blogs, and social media can facilitate interactive, learner-led activities that foster self-efficacy and collaborative learning.Furthermore, the literature highlights the importance of scaffolding and mentorship in heutagogical language programs. Blaschke (2021) notes that teachers and peer facilitators serve as guides rather than directors, supporting autonomous learners in navigating resources and overcoming challenges.In the context of digital literacy, Widiaty et al. (2020) and Kung-Teck et al. (2020) explore how mobile and multimedia tools support heutagogical practices. Their research illustrates that tools like mobile apps, online dictionaries, and interactive quizzes provide learners with the means to customize language exercises and reflect on their progress.

III. PROBLEM OF STATEMENT

The problem statement in the context of Malay language learning at the primary school level reveals several interconnected issues that hinder optimal educational outcomes. Central among these are low levels of learner engagement and motivation, which have been widely documented as significant barriers to effective language acquisition. Ahmad Mursyidun Nidhom et al. (2019) highlighted that learner anxiety during traditional assessments could negatively impact student performance in subjects like Geography and, by extension, language learning. Their research demonstrated that gamification, specifically through Java 3D-based educational games, could effectively reduce anxiety and improve learning accuracy. This finding underscores the potential of engaging, interactive pedagogical tools to boost motivation and interest in Malay language learning, especially when learners are overwhelmed or disengaged. Similarly, Halimah Ma'alip et al. (2021) emphasized that students' perceptions of their learning environment, digital literacy, and teacher support significantly influence their motivation. When students perceive teaching methods as stimulating and relevant, their intrinsic motivation tends to increase, which positively correlates with better language skills. Nevertheless, many primary school learners still experience boredom or disinterest, partly due to monotonous instructional strategies that do not cater to their diverse needs or take advantage of digital tools.

In addition to engagement issues, there is a notable gap in the development of learner autonomy and self-directed learning skills. Nuril Ham Al Hafizah Zahari et al. (2021) indicated that the current Malay language curriculum often emphasizes rote memorization and passive learning rather than fostering independent inquiry and reflective skills. The lack of learner autonomy hampers students' ability to take control of their language development, resulting in superficial mastery and low motivation for extended language use outside classroom settings. Similarly, Amiruddin et al. (2023) argued that for learners to become effective language users, they need opportunities to explore the language through personalized, self-guided activities that align with heutagogical principles. Yet, many primary classrooms do not effectively incorporate strategies that promote metacognitive reflection, problem-solving, or independent planning, which are essential outcomes of heutagogical approaches.

The pedagogical challenges extend beyond curriculum content to include infrastructural and technological gaps. Widiaty et al. (2020) emphasized how mobile and ubiquitous learning environments could support heutagogical practices if properly implemented. Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) and online platforms offer flexible avenues for learners to pursue self-directed inquiry, reflection, and collaboration. Nevertheless, in the primary school context, the digital divide remains a critical issue, with unequal access to devices and reliable internet hampering the implementation of innovative, student-centered pedagogies (Husnul et al., 2022). As Yu and Teng (2022) noted, even where devices are available, teachers often lack the pedagogical expertise to design meaningful, auto-initiated learning experiences aligned with heutagogy. This gap hampers the integration of digital tools that could otherwise enhance motivation and autonomy.

Furthermore, the limited research on applying heutagogical strategies specifically to primary Malay language education reveals a significant gap. Although studies such as those by Blaschke (2021) and Mohamed Shuhidan et al. (2021) explored the broader application of heutagogy in higher education and teacher training, there remains a dearth of empirical evidence and practical models tailored for primary-level language learning contexts. Theories around self-determined learning and learner agency need contextualization within the Malaysian primary curriculum to account for learners' developmental stages, cultural factors, and infrastructural realities. Without such focused research, educational practitioners and policymakers lack clear guidelines or evidence-based frameworks to implement heutagogical practices effectively.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study proposes the following research objective:

I. To examine the level of implementation of heutagogical elements among primary school pupils in the learning of Malay Language

V. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a survey research design. This design was selected as it enables data collection on a large scale and allows for statistical analysis to identify relationships and assess the level of implementation of a given phenomenon comprehensively (Eyisi Daniel, 2016). The research utilized a questionnaire instrument adapted from the study by Nur Aisyah et al. (2019). The questionnaire was divided into two sections: A and B which is state below :

I. Section A focused on respondents' demographic information.
II. Section B examined the level of self-directed learning implementation based on the elements of heutagogy.

The questionnaire consisted of 6 structured items, presented in dichotomous format, and written using simple and clear language to ensure comprehension among Year 6 primary school pupils. The dichotomous question format was chosen to allow researchers to gather rapid feedback on pupils' understanding and perceptions of specific topics, offering clear insights into their attitudes and emotions (Ng et al., 2023). The questionnaire items were reviewed by three experts in the field of Malay language education and underwent reliability testing using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20). A purposive sampling method was employed, involving Year 6 pupils who were formally studying the Malay language in national primary schools. The study involved 352 respondents selected from a population of 3,516 Year 6 pupils across 32 national schools in the Hulu Selangor district. The sample size was determined based on the Krejcie & Morgan Table (1970) as cited in Memon et al. (2020), which recommends a minimum of 346 respondents for a population of 3,500.The data were analyzed descriptively using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 29.0. Frequencies, percentages, and mean scores were used to interpret the findings derived from the questionnaire.

Statistical Treatment of the Data

Presented below are the statistical tools utilized in the treatment and analysis of the data gathered

Percentage Range	Interpretation
81–100%	Very High
61 – 80 %	High
41-60 %	Moderate
21-40%	Low
0-20%	Very Low

In this study, responses were measured using a dichotomous scale, where each item was scored as either 0 ("No") or 1 ("Yes"). To enhance the interpretability of the results, the frequencies of positive responses were converted into percentages. These percentages were then categorized using a standard interpretation table, with defined ranges such as 81–100% being interpreted as "Very High," 61–80% as "High," 41–60% as "Average," 21–40% as "Low," and 0–20% as "Very Low." This categorization approach aids in communicating results clearly and aligns with established practices in educational and social science research for presenting frequency data (Joshi et al., 2015). Using this method, researchers and readers can readily understand the magnitude and significance of the observed response patterns.

VI. RESULTS

Demographic Analysis

Table VI-1 *Demographic Profile of Respondents by Gender, Ethnicity, and Bahasa Melayu Mastery Level (Year 5)*

Demography	Category	Frequency (People)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Boy	164	46.6
	Girl	188	53.4
Race	Malay	298	84.7
	Indian	46	13.1
	Others	8	2.3
BM Mastery Level Year 5	TP 3	15	4.3
	TP 4	92	26.1
	TP 5	157	44.6
	TP 6	88	25.0

Looking at the demographic breakdown in the table, the study involved a total of 352 Year 6 pupils. Gender-wise, the group was fairly balanced: 164 boys (46.6%) and 188 girls (53.4%). That slight female majority isn't unusual—it reflects a pattern often seen in Malaysian primary schools, where girls tend to outnumber boys by a small margin (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020).As for ethnicity, most respondents identified as Malay, comprising 298 pupils (84.7%). Indian pupils made up the next largest group with 46 individuals (13.1%), followed by a small portion (n = 8; 2.3%) from other ethnic backgrounds. This pattern mirrors the broader demographics of Hulu Selangor, a district known for its predominantly Malay population. Including students from various ethnicities, though, adds a layer of inclusivity. It also helps paint a fuller picture of how heutagogical approaches might resonate across Malaysia's diverse learning communities.

When it came to Malay Language (BM) Mastery Levels based on Year 5 data, things got a bit more interesting. The largest group—157 pupils, or 44.6%—fell into TP 5, suggesting a strong grasp of the language under the national curriculum. Following that, 92 pupils (26.1%) were at TP 4, and 88 (25.0%) reached TP 6, which is the highest possible proficiency. Only a small subset, 15 pupils (4.3%), were at TP 3. That last group might reflect learners facing challenges or still catching up in certain linguistic areas. Taken together, the numbers point toward a relatively high level of BM proficiency in this sample, even before the pupils entered /p

Year 6. That's significant. In the context of heutagogy, such foundational language skills are often linked to stronger readiness for self-driven learning (Hase & Kenyon, 2000). The better students understand and use the language, the more likely they are to engage meaningfully in activities that require autonomy, reflection, and initiative.

Altogether, the demographic data suggest a sample that's diverse not just in background but also in learning readiness. That diversity adds both depth and validity to the study. It also sets a meaningful context for interpreting pupils' self-directed learning behaviors as they unfold. In a way, this variety becomes an asset—strengthening the case for heutagogy as a flexible, learner-centered approach in Malaysian primary classrooms.

Level of Heutagogical Practices Among Primary School Student in Malay Language Learning

Table VI-2 Level of Heutagogical Practices Among Primary School Student

No	Item	Yes (Percentage%)	No (Percentage%)	Mean	Interpretation
1	I plan my own time to learn Bahasa Melayu like making my own timetable.	67.3 237	32.7 115	0.67	High
2	I have chosen the right way for me to understand and learn a title in Bahasa Melayu	84.9 299	15.1 53	0.85	Very High
3	I learned Bahasa Melayu titles in advance before being taught by my teacher in class	34.4 121	65.6 231	0.34	Low
4	I know what my weaknesses are in Bahasa Melayu and always try to improve the weaknesses myself	90.3 318	9.7 34	0.90	Very High
5	I like to find additional information and training in Bahasa Melayu on my own without being asked by my teacher or parents	58.8 207	41.2 145	0.59	Moderate
6	After studying at school, I looked back at what I had understood and did not understand	75.0 264	25.0 88	0.75	High

Planning Own Study Time

The data indicates that 67.3% of students, equating to 237 out of the sampled population, reported that they actively plan their study time. This behavior reflects a high level of autonomy in managing their learning schedules. Planning study time is a core component of self-regulated learning and is closely associated with the development of learner agency, which heutagogy emphasizes (Blaschke, 2021). Such behavior suggests that these students have begun to take responsibility for their learning processes, engaging in metacognitive control over their activities.

The importance of time management in fostering autonomous learning cannot be overstated. Possessing the ability to organize and allocate time effectively allows learners to set goals, monitor progress, and adjust strategies as needed—key facets of self-determined learning. This behavior also has pedagogical implications; educators should encourage and scaffold students planning skills through digital tools like calendar applications or learning management systems, which can promote structured autonomy. When students are equipped with technology-supported planning strategies, their capacity for self-regulation and independent learning can be significantly enhanced (Putro, 2019)

Choosing the Right Learning Strategy

An impressive 84.9% of students, or 299 respondents, expressed confidence in selecting appropriate learning strategies. This high confidence level indicates a strong metacognitive capability in strategy formulation—a critical element in heutagogical learning environments. The ability to choose effective strategies aligns with the concept of learners as active agents who regulate their learning through reflection and decision-making (Blaschke, 2021).

When learners are confident in their strategy selection, they are more likely to engage in deliberate practice, self-assessment, and continuous improvement. Digital literacy and access to varied learning resources

further support this behavior, allowing students to experiment with different approaches, such as flashcards, online quizzes, or collaborative platforms. Mannan et al. (2023) highlight that digital literacy plays a vital role in empowering students to seek, evaluate, and utilize information independently.

Preparing Before Class

Contrasting with the previous behaviors, only 34.4%, or 121 students, reported preparing their lessons or materials before attending classes. This relatively low percentage signals a need for pedagogical interventions to foster proactive learning habits. Pre-class preparation is a hallmark of self-regulated learners and is crucial in flipped classroom models or blended learning environments (Irvansyah, 2022). The lack of such behavior could impede the development of deep understanding and critical thinking in language learning.

Several factors may contribute to this low propensity for preparation, including cultural attitudes, motivation levels, or lack of awareness about the benefits of pre-class engagement. For educators, integrating gamification and interactive media can motivate learners to participate actively in preparation activities (Nidhom & Putro, 2019). Digital platforms such as quizzes, story-based apps, or social media groups can serve as scaffolds that make pre-class activities engaging and accessible.

Awareness of Personal Weaknesses

An outstanding 90.3%, or 318 students, demonstrated awareness of their weaknesses related to Malay language learning and actively sought ways to improve. This high level of self-awareness aligns with the core tenets of heutagogy, which advocate for reflection, capability development, and self-assessment (Blaschke, 2021). Such awareness is fundamental in fostering metacognitive skills, enabling learners to identify gaps, set personalized goals, and pursue targeted improvement.

This behavior indicates that learners are engaging in critical reflection, a process supported by digital tools that track performance and provide feedback. Evidence suggests that digital literacy enhances learners' ability to monitor their progress and utilize online resources effectively (Mannan et al., 2023). Therefore, integrating digital self-assessment tools, online portfolios, or reflective journaling in language learning can further reinforce this positive behavior.

Seeking Additional Information Independently

A majority of 58.8%, or 207 students, reported actively seeking supplementary resources independently. This moderate initiative highlights the learners' motivation and capability for autonomous learning, although room for enhancement remains. In heutagogic frameworks, fostering such initiative is vital for developing self-determined learners who can navigate a vast landscape of digital resources.

Reflecting After Lessons

Finally, 75.0% of students, or 264 respondents, engaged in post-lesson reflection activities. This high engagement indicates a maturing self-directed learning attitude and aligns with the reflective practices emphasized in heutagogical environments. Reflection allows learners to consolidate knowledge, analyze their processes, and plan subsequent learning steps (Blaschke, 2021).Digital platforms such as blogs, discussion forums, or e-portfolio systems serve as conducive environments for reflection. The availability of these tools supports continuous improvement and metacognitive development, ensuring that learners internalize their learning experiences.

The combination of self-regulation, metacognitive skills, and digital competency creates a robust foundation for lifelong learning and adaptable skills development. Further, studies demonstrate that teacher facilitation, through scaffolding, feedback, and motivational strategies, enhances these individual behaviors. Incorporating blended learning, gamification, and peer collaboration can further elevate these autonomous practices, ensuring that students are prepared for future educational and occupational challenges.

VII. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Heutagogy, originally conceptualized as the pedagogy of self-determined learning, extends the traditional notions of pedagogy and andragogy by emphasizing learner agency, capability, and reflection (Widiaty et al., 2020). This approach shifts the focus from teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered practices that promote independence and resilience. Such practices are particularly relevant in primary education, where establishing a foundation for autonomous learning behaviors contributes significantly to academic success and personal growth (Ahmad Mursyidun Nidhom, 2019).In practice, self-regulation is a fundamental indicator of heutagogical practices among young learners. It involves learners' ability to set goals, monitor their progress, and evaluate outcomes (Istiqomah & Suharyanti, 2020). For instance, children engaged in activities such as planning their daily study schedules or reflecting on their understanding of a topic tend to develop better metacognitive awareness and intrinsic motivation (Nuril Ham, 2021). Such skills are cultivated when educators intentionally scaffold opportunities for students to engage in self-assessment and reflection, even at a young age.

The development of self-planning and effective time management skills among primary school students remains a critical area of exploration within the broader context of fostering self-directed learning at early educational stages. According to recent empirical data, approximately 67.3% of primary school learners exhibit a high level of self-time planning, indicating an emerging capacity for autonomous scheduling but also highlighting the scope for pedagogical interventions to enhance these skills further. This statistic underscores the importance of nurturing planning behaviors from a young age, as early development of these competencies can serve as a foundation for lifelong learning and personal development. Research by Tricahyono (2021) emphasizes that self-regulation is a fundamental component of successful autonomous learning, involving learners' ability to set goals, organize tasks, and monitor their progress. In the context of primary education, fostering self-regulation begins with cultivating metacognitive awareness—prompting students to reflect upon their learning processes and adjust strategies accordingly. Hafizah et al. (2021) further reinforce this perspective by asserting that metacognition enables young learners to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, thereby supporting the development of self-efficacy and independence in task management. Both studies advocate that deliberate scaffolding and guided practices can gradually shift students from externally driven behaviors to internalized, self-directed scheduling.

In line with these insights, the importance of developing autonomous scheduling skills in early education is widely recognized as a necessary step in preparing learners for the demands of higher education and professional environments. Blaschke and Marín (2020) highlight that lifelong learning is predicated on individuals' capacity to self-manage their educational trajectories, which begins with cultivating habits such as time management, prioritization, and resourcefulness early on. When students learn to plan their study schedules independently, they are practicing the metacognitive processes critical to self-regulation. For example, the ability to allocate sufficient time for different subjects or tasks fosters discipline and enhances learning efficiency, particularly as students transition from rote memorization to strategic, reflective learning modes.

In addition, the development of self-time planning is closely linked to learners' self-awareness and reflective skills. Hamdan et al. (2021) argue that metacognitive activities—such as reviewing one's progress, setting future goals, and evaluating strategies—are integral to cultivating autonomous learners. By engaging in regular self-assessment, students become more conscious of how they allocate time and resources, which further reinforces their ability to plan effectively. Sujati et al. (2023) also emphasize that reflection after learning activities enhances learners' understanding of their strengths and gaps, fostering a growth mindset necessary for independent scheduling.

The high engagement of students in selecting their learning methods exemplifies the operationalization of figurative and literal aspects of heutagogical theory. It embodies the transition from teacher-centered to learner-centered environments, fostering a culture of lifelong, autonomous, and capable learners who are prepared to navigate an increasingly digital and information-rich world. When students actively pursue resources, evaluate different approaches, and reflect on their learning strategies, they manifest the core image of heutagogy—self-

driven, capable, and reflective learners who take charge of their educational journeys (Blaschke, 2021). This practice aligns with the broader educational goal of empowering students not merely as recipients of knowledge but as active shapers of their learning paths, thereby realigning the roles of learners and educators within the contemporary educational landscape.

However, challenges remain in translating these theoretical principles into practice at the primary level. Many students still rely heavily on external prompts from teachers and parents due to limited experience in self-managing their time. Progressing in learning before formal instruction is a crucial indicator of self-directed educational practices among primary school students. The finding that only 34.4% of students actively engage in learning ahead of prescribed classroom activities suggests that a significant majority of young learners have yet to develop strong habits of autonomous learning—an essential element of heutagogy. This behavior, or the lack thereof, can be examined within the broader framework of self-regulation and metacognition, which are foundational to lifelong learning. Nuril Ham (2021) highlighted that early development of self-awareness, reflection, and the ability to select appropriate strategies are pivotal in cultivating autonomous learners. Her research emphasized that learners who recognize their weaknesses and actively seek to improve show higher levels of metacognitive awareness, an essential attribute in proactive learning contexts. In her study, a substantial proportion of students demonstrated a clear understanding of their learning gaps and took tangible steps to address them, illustrating nascent self-regulation. Such behaviors align with the principles outlined by Blaschke & Marin (2020), who argued that metacognitive activities like self-monitoring and reflection are vital in fostering learner agency, especially in early education stages. The literature indicates that guided scaffolding, such as providing checklists, visual timetables, and structured planning activities, can bridge this gap. Moreover, ongoing support and positive reinforcement are essential in gradually shifting learners towards greater autonomy. For instance, integrating digital tools that gamify time management can motivate students to practice planning behaviors consistently, thus reinforcing their metacognitive skills. Moreover, the limited practice of learning ahead of instruction could also be associated with classroom environmental factors and teacher practices. When teachers foster an environment that values curiosity and independence, and provide guiding frameworks for self-regulated learning, students are more likely to develop early habits of proactive learning. Conversely, in settings where educator-led instruction dominates and autonomous activities are limited, students may not feel confident or encouraged to initiate learning activities independently.

In conclusion, the significant proportion of young learners demonstrating moderate self-time planning underscores the ongoing need to embed strategies that develop autonomous scheduling within early education curricula. Approaches that combine metacognitive training, digital literacy, and scaffolded practice have been shown to effectively foster self-regulation. As students cultivate these skills early, they are better equipped for complex, self-directed learning tasks in higher education and their future careers, reflecting the broader educational aim of nurturing lifelong, independent learners (Blaschke & Marín, 2020; Yusoff, 2021; Hafizah et al., 2021; Hamdan et al., 2021). This integration not only enhances academic outcomes but also instills essential skills for managing personal responsibilities and adapting to the evolving technological landscape.

Implication and Future Recommendation

The observed practices among primary school students reveal diverse levels of engagement with self-directed learning and heutagogical principles. These practices serve as indicators of how deeply heutagogical paradigms are embedded within early education contexts, and understanding these implications is crucial for devising strategies to foster autonomous learning (Blaschke, 2021). Current literature suggests that while many students demonstrate key characteristics such as self-regulation, resourcefulness, and reflective habits, the extent and quality of these behaviors vary significantly across different settings and educational systems. The high percentage of students who recognize their weaknesses and actively seek to improve—up to 90.3% according to recent surveys—illustrates a promising trend toward metacognitive awareness among young learners. This aligns with the findings by Ahmad Mursyidun Nidhom (2019) and Widiaty et al. (2020), which emphasize

that early development of self-awareness and self-regulation are foundational for long-term autonomous learning. These behaviors suggest that when students are equipped with the right tools and environment, they tend to adopt more proactive learning strategies, consistent with the tenets of heutagogy.

Moreover, data from studies by Danan (2021), Nuril Ham (2021), and Mohamad & Masek (2020), indicate that autonomous decision-making in selecting learning strategies is prevalent among students, with approximately 84.9% actively choosing methods appropriate to their understanding of Malay Language. Such resourcefulness demonstrates an embracement of learner agency—one of the core principles of heutagogy—where learners are empowered to tailor their learning paths based on personal preferences, prior knowledge, and available resources. This development is instrumental for nurturing lifelong learners capable of adapting to varying educational and professional landscapes.

However, despite these positive indicators, the relatively low number of students (34.4%) who proactively learn ahead of formal instruction signals a gap in fully adopting a self-determined learning mindset. These behaviors are less ingrained, potentially due to factors such as limited access to digital resources, lack of guidance, or cultural attitudes towards teacher-centered education. This observation resonates with the challenges identified by Nuril Ham (2021) and Mohamad & Masek (2020), who point out that infrastructural limitations, such as insufficient devices and internet connectivity, hinder consistent engagement with self-directed activities.To address these challenges, future research should explore the enhancement of digital literacy among early learners and their teachers. This could involve designing age-appropriate ICT tools that promote exploration, resourcefulness, and self-regulation. For instance, gamified learning environments, as discussed by Yusoff (2021), can incentivize autonomous exploration while providing immediate feedback that reinforces self-reflection and metacognitive skills.Teacher facilitation remains vital in nurturing heutagogical practices. Strategies like professional development programs that focus on integrating self-directed pedagogies, fostering a classroom culture that values student agency, and utilizing technology to support personalized learning experiences are potential avenues to accelerate heutagogical adoption (Blaschke, 2021; Agarwal, 2019). Teachers must be equipped not only with technological skills but also with an understanding of how to scaffold autonomous behaviors, gradually shifting away from traditional didactic roles. The leadership in schools can incorporate policies that embed heutagogical principles into curriculum design and assessment practices, ensuring that student agency is recognized and cultivated from an early age.

Research on implementing these strategies should also examine the cultural contexts affecting learner autonomy. In settings where teacher-centered pedagogy is deeply entrenched, shifting towards self-directed paradigms requires not just infrastructural improvements but also cultural change supported by parental involvement, community engagement, and policy reforms. Studies by Hamdan et al. (2020) and Sujati et al. (2023) highlight that community support systems, including positive reinforcement from parents and peer groups, significantly influence young learners' motivation to practice independent learning.

Expanding the scope of future research, systematic reviews and meta-analyses should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of various digital interventions and pedagogical models that foster heutagogical behaviors among primary students. Exploring the integration of emerging technologies like augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and adaptive learning systems can open new pathways for engaging young learners in self-regulated and personalized learning experiences. For example, the work of Yusoff (2021) on innovative digital tools presents opportunities to develop age-appropriate, engaging, and accessible platforms that promote autonomous learning.Furthermore, longitudinal studies tracking students' development from early education into secondary and tertiary levels will provide insights into how early heutagogical practices influence lifelong learning attitudes and skills. Such studies could investigate the transferability of autonomous behaviors across different subjects and contexts, and how early interventions impact future academic and professional success. The influence of cultural, socio-economic, and infrastructural factors warrants particular attention to understand the barriers and facilitators for widespread adoption.

Future research should also emphasize teacher training and curriculum reform aligned with heutagogical principles. This can include designing modules that instill metacognitive strategies, digital literacy, and reflective

practices within teacher education programs. As Blaschke (2021) articulates, empowering teachers to act as facilitators rather than mere transmitters of knowledge is fundamental for scaling up self-directed learning practices.

In conclusion, fostering higher levels of heutagogical practices in primary education requires a concerted effort across infrastructural, pedagogical, cultural, and policy domains. The integration of ICT, active teacher facilitation, community involvement, and ongoing research into effective interventions are instrumental in advancing this paradigm. As educators and researchers continue to explore these avenues, the potential for cultivating autonomous, reflective, and resourceful learners at an early age remains promising and essential for preparing learners for the complexities of lifelong learning in the digital age (Blaschke, 2021; Agarwal, 2019)

VIII. CONCLUSION

The study reveals a varied landscape of heutagogical practices among primary school students, with strong levels of self-awareness and reflection contrasting with limited proactive learning and resource-seeking behaviors. These findings underscore the importance of fostering comprehensive self-directed learning skills early in education to promote lifelong learning traits. The high percentage of students recognizing personal weaknesses and engaging in reflection demonstrates foundational metacognitive development, yet the lower engagement in proactive behaviors suggests room for pedagogical enhancement. Future efforts should focus on designing interventions that strengthen autonomous planning, resourcefulness, and proactive learning, leveraging digital literacy and resource exploration. Addressing these gaps can significantly advance the integration of heutagogical principles in primary education and support the development of independent, reflective learners.

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