

# Smartphones Promote Autonomous Learning in ESL Classrooms

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## ABSTRACT

The rapid development of high-technology has caused new inventions of gadgets for all walks of life regardless age. In this rapidly advancing technology era many individuals possess hi-tech gadgets such as laptops, tablets, iPad, android phones and smart phones. Adult learners in higher learning institution especially are fond of using smart phones. Students become passive in the classrooms as they are glued to their smart phones. This situation triggers the question of whether learning really takes place while the students are too engaged with their smart phones in the ESL classroom. In this context, the following questions are framed to investigate this issue: What type of learning skills are gained by using smartphones in ESL classrooms? Does smartphone use promote the autonomous learning process? To what extent do learners rely on the lecturers in addition to the usage of smartphones? What are the learning satisfactions gained by ESL learners using smartphones? A total of 70 smartphone users in the age range 18 to 26 years participated in this quantitative study. Questionnaires eliciting demographic details of the respondents, learning skills, learning satisfaction, students' perception on teacher's role in the ESL classroom and autonomous learning were distributed to all the randomly chosen samples. The data were then analyzed by using SPSS version 16. The findings revealed that smartphone use boosted learners' critical thinking, creative thinking, communication and collaboration skills. In fact, learners gain great satisfaction in the learning process through smartphones. Although learners have moved toward autonomous learning, they are still reliant on the teachers to achieve their learning goals..

**Keywords:** *Smart phones, Mobile learning, Autonomous learning and 21st century learning skills*

## INTRODUCTION

Today technology is transforming all walks of life regardless of age in various fields. New inventions, devices or tools increase as technology gets advanced. This advancement is filled with opportunities and challenges especially in education. New technology promotes new learning skills and English language teaching methodology. Hence novel methods are replacing the grammar- translation method, the direct method, the audio-lingual method, the silent way, desuggestopedia, communicative language learning, total physical response and communicative language teaching methods which were practised by teachers in the 19th and 20th century (Dinçay, 2010). As time passes, the trends of teaching change; instructional tools and teaching approaches once given importance have now become outdated (Prasad, 2013). Teaching methodology has been improvised in accordance with the latest technology. Technological advances have been changing ESL learners' learning skills from interactive internet to social networking sites to smartphones. Information can now be accessible at the finger tips.

## Literature Review

### *21st Century learning skills*

Mastering a language requires learning skills. As for English, it is always been referred as the four skills which are reading, writing, speaking and listening. However in this 21st century, learning skills go beyond the four skills as they focus on learning and innovation skills such as critical thinking, creative thinking, communicating and collaborating (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). The world of work demands experts with high level of critical thinking, imagination, the ability to respond to complex communication, continually invent new ideas, products and services for the global marketplace and demonstrate the ability to work effectively and respectfully in diverse teams (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

In order to amplify students' ability to think, create, communicate and collaborate, information has to be accessed efficiently and effectively. According to Trilling and Fadel (2009), 21st century learners are the 'digital natives' as they are exposed to the high-technology gadgets such as smartphones, tablets, iPads and so on from an early age. However, the question about the usage of those gadgets for autonomous learning remains unanswered.

### *Autonomous learning*

Autonomous learning refers to the ability to take charge of one's own learning (p.3) and a potential capacity to act in the learning situation (Holec, 1981). According to Van Lier (1996), autonomous learners need to make significant decisions about what, how and when to learn. Hence, in the process they establish a personal agenda for learning (Little, 1994). It sets up directions in the planning, pacing, monitoring and evaluation of the learning process. However, a gradual move from teacher-centered or teacher-directed teaching to learner-centered or learner-directed learning is essential in order to develop learner autonomy in the ESL classroom (Dam, 1995). According to Little (2007), the concept of autonomy does not mean working in isolation. Although the learners are viewed as solely being responsible for their actions in the learning process (Nor, 2013), the result of preparing learners for autonomous learning is shared between teacher and learners (Little, 2007).

Thang and Azarina Alias (2007) investigated the readiness for autonomy by comparing three public universities of Malaysian ESL undergraduate learners' characteristics in displaying autonomy in their learning of English as a Second Language (ESL). The findings revealed that the majority of the students from all the three universities preferred a teacher-centered approach. Hence, Thang (2007) proposed to consider sociocultural factors in interpreting autonomy in the Malaysian context. Thang (2009) indeed investigated whether the same phenomenon occurs in private universities in Malaysia. The research findings revealed that teacher-centered approach became the preference of the learners. However, it was found that the private university students seemed to have moved to a more autonomous position.

A similar study was conducted by Jaafar and Thang (2013) to investigate the relationship between autonomy and attributions in the Malaysian context. A total of 169 public university students participated in this study. The findings revealed that the autonomous learners appeared rather balanced in attributing their success and failure to internal and external factors. The difference in proficiency levels has some minor influence on autonomy and attributions, and the relationship between them. According to the authors, the teacher-centered learners are likely to be self-critical.

On the other hand, Kaur (2013) conducted a study on autonomous vocabulary learners in the Malaysian ESL classroom. According to Kaur (2013), the learner variable is the utmost important factor in mastering the four skills. Lack of lexical competence eventually results in lagging proficiency levels and inability to relate to the four skills. Kaur (2013) stated that one of the ultimate goals in language teaching is to produce lifelong learners who are able to learn autonomously. Therefore, inculcating autonomous learning of vocabulary is essential to ensure fruitful learning at all stages.

### *Mobile learning*

Technology has brought a lot of changes including in education. For instance, it has transformed from desktop to laptop, in turn from laptop to palmtop devices such as mobiles and tablets, hence the concept of Mobile Learning (Pachler, Bachmair, & Cook, 2010). The most cited definition of *Mobile learning* is using mobile technologies to facilitate and promote learning anywhere and at anytime (Chuang, Hwang, & Shih, 2010). Wexler et al. (2007) defined mobile learning as “any activity that allows individuals to be more productive when consuming, interacting with, or creating information, mediated through a compact digital portable device that the individual carries on a regular basis, has reliable connectivity, and fits in a pocket or purse” (p.21). However, Aljuaid, Alzahrani, and Islam (2014) considered it as learning procedures held outside of the traditional classroom and through learning devices (computers, tablets, iPads, palm tops, and mobile phones); people keep continuing their learning activities (p. 1).

Many theories are associated with mobile learning. One of the theories which best associates with this study is constructivist learning. According to Bruner (1966), learning is a process which requires learners to construct new ideas or concepts based on their current and past knowledge. Hence, activities designed based on this concept will enable learners to think creatively. Besides that, the theory of problem-based learning aims at developing learners’ critical thinking skills. This requires learners to be reflective by identifying possible solutions to problems given (Koschmann et al., 1996). The theory of conversational learning is applied to study the mobile-based interaction and communication (Sharples, 2002). Sharples (2002) defined such learning in terms of conversations between different systems of knowledge. In addition, collaborative learning is also associated with this study as collaboration between students is promoted via mobile (Slavin, 1989). According Slavin (1989), one of the aspects of collaborative learning is working toward group goals. Bruner (1966) stated that collaborative learning promotes group diversity which can contribute positively to the learning process. In other words, learners with different interpretations, explanations and views will be able to re-formulate their ideas.

A study was conducted by Rahamat, Shah, Din and Aziz (2011) on Students’ Readiness and Perceptions towards Using Mobile Technologies for learning the English Language Literature component. This study investigated the effect of ten Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) oriented features of mobile phones in the English language classroom on the achievement of foundation-year students in King Abdul Aziz University (KAU) in General English. The study also explores students’ attitudes toward this new method of teaching. The study used an experimental design where the control group was taught through the strategies used in ELT, whereas the experimental group was taught through the same strategies in addition to using mobile phones.

Afendi Hamat, Mohamed Amin Embi, and Haslinda Abu Hassan (2013) surveyed the level of lecturers’ readiness for mobile learning at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). Survey questionnaires were distributed to 374 lecturers in the age range of 25 to 50. The findings revealed that although 79% of the respondents have never employed it as a teaching method, 85.7% of them believe that mobile learning would be useful for their students. Indeed, 85.7% of them think that mobile learning will enhance their students’ learning experience.

Besides that, Tan, Ng and Lee (2013) carried out research on the readiness for mobile learning in a public university in east Malaysia. Survey questionnaires were administered to 900 undergraduate students. The results indicated that the majority of students had either tablet or smart phone with wi-fi access capability. Generally students viewed mobile learning as beneficial and useful. Overall, it was found that their readiness was at an acceptable level.

On the other hand, Rashidah Rahamat, Parilah Mohd Shah, Sharifah Nor Puteh, Aidah Abdul Karim, Rosseni Din, Junaidah Abd Aziz and Zamri Mohamod (2013) researched on students’ perceptions of a mobile learning environment through mobile technology applications. The findings revealed that, since the Malaysian school system does not allow mobile phone use in school, an alternative way of using mobile phones for learning purpose is needed. Indeed, participants had positive attitude to the idea and they agreed that receiving messages from their teacher would have a positive impact on their learning.

According to Trilling and Fadel (2009), the internet, pen and paper, cell phones, educational games, tests and quizzes, a good teacher, educational funding and loving parents are the important tools we need to support the 21st Century approach to learning and teaching. Smart phones offer a great opportunity to get learners practice and learn English language through a great source of information on useful apps (Zilber, 2013).

### Conceptual framework

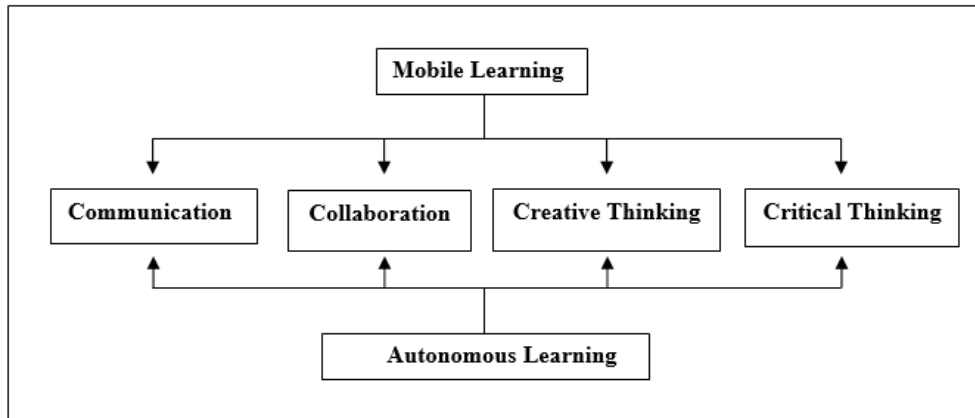


Figure 1: 4Cs Model of Autonomous Learning through Smartphones

Figure 1 shows the 4Cs Model of Autonomous learning through smartphones. This conceptual framework is framed based on mobile learning theory which includes the theories of problem-based learning, collaborative learning, conversational learning and constructive learning. In this study, these four theories are associated with autonomous learning to investigate to what extent the learners take charge of their language learning especially in terms of 21st century learning and innovation skills such as communication, collaboration, creative thinking and critical thinking.

### Statement of Problem

The rapid development of high-technology has caused new inventions of gadgets for all walks of life regardless of age. In this rapidly advancing technology era every individual possesses hi-tech gadgets such as laptops, tablets, iPad, android phones and smart phones. Adult learners in higher learning institutions especially are fond of using smart phones. Learners become passive in the classrooms as they are glued to their smart phones. This situation triggers the question of whether learning really takes place while the students are too engaged with their smart phones in the ESL classroom.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research questions

1. What type of learning skills are gained by using smartphones in ESL classrooms?
2. Does using the smartphone promote the autonomous learning process?
3. To what extent do the learners rely on the lecturers in addition to the usage of smartphones?
4. What learning satisfaction is gained by ESL learners using smartphones?

### Research objectives

Hence, this study is carried out in order to investigate whether smartphones promote autonomous learning in the ESL classrooms.

The objectives of the study are to:

1. identify the type of learning skills gained using smartphones in the ESL classroom.
2. investigate whether smart phones promote the autonomous learning process.
3. investigate learners’ reliance upon the lecturers.
4. determine the learning satisfaction gained by ESL learners using smartphones.

**Participants**

Randomly selected smartphone users from International College of Automotive (ICAM) which offers diploma and degree in business and engineering programmes participated in this study. To be specific, a total of 70 diploma students, in the age range of 18 to 26 years, participated in this study.

**Instruments**

Questionnaires consisting of three parts were distributed to all the randomly chosen samples. Part A contained demographic details of the respondents, and Part B contained 20 statements. These 20 statements were categorized into four main learning skills using a 5-point Likert scale depicting frequency of use: always, often, sometimes, rarely and never. Part C contained 30 statements developed based on students’ learning satisfaction, students’ perception on teacher’s role in the ESL classroom and autonomous learning. This questionnaire was actually adopted from a study conducted by Kshefian (2002) on learner autonomy’. Statements related to learner autonomy were adapted to suit the present study using 5-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree.

**Data Collection**

The questionnaires were distributed to all the randomly chosen students from different diploma programs of third semester. They were statistically analyzed using SPSS 16 to answer the research questions.

**Data Analysis**

**Table 1 Cross Tabulation of Age and Gender**

		Age			Total
		18-20	21-23	24-26	
Gender	Male	49	4	4	57
	Female	7	5	1	13
Total		56	9	5	70

Table 1 shows the cross tabulation of gender and age. A total of 57 male and 13 female students participated in this study. The majority of the students were from the age range of 18 to 20 (49 males and 7 female students). A total of 9 students from the age range of 21 to 23 and only 5 students were from the age range of 24 to 26.

**Table 2 Cross Tabulation of Home Language and Income**

		Income					Total
		RM2000- RM4000	RM4000- RM6000	RM6000- RM8000	RM8000- RM10000	Above RM10000	
Home language	Malay	43	11	3	2	4	63
	English	1	0	1	0	2	4
	Chinese	3	0	0	0	0	3
Total		47	11	4	2	6	70

Table 2 depicts the language spoken by the participants at home and total parental income. As shown above, majority of the participants generally use Malay as their home language. Only one participant uses English and the remainder uses Chinese. Basically these participants come from various socio-economic groups. Their total family income ranges from a minimum RM2000 to above RM10000. However, the majority falls under RM2000 to RM4000 which is considered middle class. Overall, it can be concluded that these participants can afford Smartphone regardless of their family’s total monthly income.

**Table 3 Critical Thinking**

Statements	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
I use smartphone to find or explain definition of words.	70	0	2.400	1.2899
I use smartphone to search for evidence to argue logically.	70	0	2.586	1.0967
I analyze the causes and effects of a problem by comparing and contrasting it with two or more subjects through smartphone.	70	0	2.471	1.2479
When I am uncertain about why something is happening, I use smartphone to find out what could result from it.	70	0	2.386	1.0672
Smartphone helps me to decide on the worth of something by comparing it against an accepted standard of value.	70	0	2.300	1.0948

Table 3 depicts smart phone use in developing learners’ critical thinking. The usage of smartphones to search for evidence to argue logically has recorded the highest mean which is 2.586 with a standard deviation of 1.0967. Analyzing the causes and effects of a problem by comparing and contrasting it with two or more subjects through smartphone is ranked as the second highest with a mean of 2.471 and a standard deviation of 1.2479. Students use smartphones to find definitions of words recorded a mean of 2.400; followed by students use smartphones to find out what could result from their uncertainty ( $M = 2.386$ ), and the lowest mean was for use of smartphones to decide on the worth of something by comparing it against an accepted standard value ( $M = 2.300$ ).

**Table 4 Creative Thinking**

Statements	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Smartphones help me to imagine the unknown and impossible.	70	0	2.2714	1.1786
Smartphone help me to actively reach into what is unknown to make it known.	70	0	2.2000	1.0015
I entertain others (telling stories, making jokes, singing songs) through smartphones.	70	0	2.3857	1.1953
The new applications and features in smartphones trigger my mind to design something new.	70	0	2.7000	1.2551
The use of smartphone encourages me to find a new way of creating or improvising something.	70	0	2.4857	1.1131

Table 4 illustrates creative thinking skills gained by the ESL learners. Students admitted that the new applications and features in smartphones trigger their mind to design something new (mean of 2.700 with a standard deviation of 1.255). In addition, smartphone encourages students to find a new way of creating or improvising something obtained a mean of 2.486 (standard deviation 1.113) Similarly, entertaining others through smartphones recorded a mean of 2.386 with a standard deviation of 1.195. However, using smartphones to imagine the unknown and impossible and to actively research into what is unknown to make it known only recorded a total mean of 2.271 and 2.200 respectively.

**Table5 Communication**

Statements	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Smartphones enhance my speaking, writing, reading and listening.	70	0	2.4000	1.0687
My friends understand me better when I discuss ideas through smartphone.	70	0	2.7143	1.1935
I can engage well in a group chat (wechat/whatsapp/facebook) by paying more attention in questioning and note taking.	70	0	2.4714	1.1512
I can effectively switch from receiving ideas to providing ideas, back and forth between those in the communication situation.	70	0	2.5857	1.0285
Smartphones help me to analyse a situation and provide a better understanding of the sender, purpose, message, context, receiver and the medium of communication.	70	0	2.4714	1.0864

Table 5 shows the usage of smartphones for communication. The majority of the students (mean of 2.714) agreed that their friends understand them better when they discuss ideas through smartphone. Students agreed that they can effectively switch from receiving ideas to providing ideas, back and forth between those in the communication situation (mean of 2.5857 and standard deviation of 1.0285). However, students admitted that smartphones help them in engaging well in a group chat by paying more attention in questioning and note taking as well as in analyzing a situation and provide a better understanding of the



sender, purpose, message, context, receiver and the medium of communication ( $M = 2.4714$ ). As for students agreeing that smartphones enhance their speaking, writing, reading and listening, this recorded a mean of only 2.4000.

**Table 6 Collaborating with Smartphones**

Statements	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Smartphones help me to get resources and ensure all team members work optimally.	70	0	2.4143	1.0834
I use smartphone to resolve conflicts among team members.	70	0	2.6571	1.1904
I can manage my time very well as smartphone helps me in scheduling, creating timeframe, recording and tracking progress of our team members.	70	0	2.5286	1.1637
Smartphone enhances teamwork among group members as it enables them to contribute according to their abilities.	70	0	2.6000	.9691
A better understanding is gained by having a personal chat with team members and this helps in task-delegation.	70	0	2.4571	1.1757

Table 6 illustrates learners who gained collaboration skills through smartphones. Based on the analysis, it is found that the highest mean is recorded for the usage of smartphones to resolve conflicts among team members ( $M = 2.6571$ ,  $SD = 1.1904$ ). Students agreed that smartphones enhance their teamwork among group members as it enables them to contribute according to their abilities ( $M = 2.60$ ). The statements that smartphones enable the users to manage time effectively, establish a better understanding by having a personal chat and ensure all team members to work optimally recorded a mean of 2.529, 2.457 and 2.414 respectively.

**Table 7 Autonomous Learning**

Statements	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Having my works evaluated by others is helpful.	70	0	2.1000	.98024
Having my works evaluated by others is scary.	70	0	2.4857	1.18863
I know how to check my works for mistakes through smartphones.	70	0	2.3857	1.03969
I have a clear idea of what I need of English.	70	0	2.4429	1.01633
I take pictures of notes and read them on my own.	70	0	2.4000	1.22060
My language learning success is depends on my smartphone.	70	0	2.6571	1.20248
My own efforts play an important role in successful language learning.	70	0	2.5000	1.12611
I search more information through smartphone while learning in the classroom for better understanding.	70	0	2.4000	1.23241



I know how to plan my learning through smartphone.	70	0	2.6000	.90730
I know how to ask for help when I need it though smartphone.	70	0	2.3714	.96566
I can find out how to set my learning goals through smartphones.	70	0	2.4000	.96909
I know how to study languages through smartphones	70	0	2.2857	.96523
I have the ability to write accurately in English with the help of smartphone.	70	0	2.2429	1.09592
I know how to find an effective way to learn English through smartphone.	70	0	2.3000	1.12095

Table 7 shows the degree of autonomy shown by the learners for their own learning. Majority of the students, with a mean of 2.657, rely on their smartphones for their learning success. The analysis above indeed shows that learners know how to plan their learning through smartphones ( $M = 2.600$ ).

In addition, students believe in their own efforts which play an important role in successful language learning ( $M = 2.500$ ). Learners agreed that they set their learning goals through smartphones, search more information through smartphone while learning in the classroom for better understanding, take pictures of notes and read them on their own, have a clear idea of what they need of English and find it scary to have their works evaluated by others (from the mean range of 2.400 to 2.486). However, students generally did not find having their works evaluated by others is helpful ( $M = 2.100$ ). Nevertheless, knowing how to find an effective way to learn English and knowing how to check their works for mistakes and ask for help when needed through smartphones recorded means of 2.300, 2.386 and 2.371 respectively. Learners agreed that they know how to study languages through smartphones ( $M = 2.286$ ), and also admitted that they have the ability to write accurately in English with the help of smartphone ( $M = 2.243$ ).

The mean autonomy taken by the students classified into comparison scales such as very poor (0 -1.0), poor (1.1-2.0), fair (2.1-3.0), good (3.1-4.0) and excellent (4.1-5.0). Hence, it can be concluded that learners have fairly moved forward to take up autonomy for their learning with the help of smart phones.

**Table 8 Students' Perception of Teacher's Role in ESL Classroom**

Statements	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
The teacher should offer help to me	70	0	2.3714	1.10560
The teacher should tell me what my difficulties are.	70	0	2.2571	1.03119
The teacher should tell me how long I should spend on an activity.	70	0	2.4000	1.05501
The role of the teacher is to tell me what to do.	70	0	2.4857	1.17637
The teacher should always explain why we do an activity in class.	70	0	2.3000	1.14651
The role of the teacher is to help me learn effectively.	70	0	2.1714	1.14172
The role of the teacher is to create opportunities for me to practice.	70	0	2.2571	1.11233
The role of the teacher is to set my learning goals.	70	0	2.2429	.99907
The teacher should be an expert at showing learners how to learn.	70	0	2.1571	1.00196
I need the teacher to tell me how I am progressing.	70	0	2.1000	1.02363
The teacher should give me regular tests.	70	0	2.3286	1.03169

As shown in Table 8, for students' perception on the teacher's role in ESL classroom, a large number of learners admitted that they need the presence of the teacher to tell them what to do ( $M = 2.486$ ). Learners completely expect the teacher to tell them the duration to be spent on an activity ( $M = 2.40$ ). In fact, learners rely on the teachers for regular tests and help with means of 2.329 and 2.371 respectively. Needless to say, learners in the mean range of 2.100 to 2.257 agreed teacher has to create opportunities for the learners to practice, teacher is expected to be an expert at showing them how to learn, and help them to learn effectively, teacher should set their learning goals, tell them what their difficulties are as well as their progress. The mean perception of students on the teacher's role classified into frequency scales such as never (0 -1.0), rarely (1.1-2.0), sometimes (2.1-3.0), often (3.1-4.0) and always (4.1-5.0). Hence, it can be concluded that learners sometimes do rely on teachers besides using smartphones.

**Table 9 Learning Satisfaction**

Statements	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
I feel satisfied when I find the right words when needed.	70	0	2.0429	1.14760
I am satisfied when I get more information through smartphones.	70	0	2.1000	1.10532
I am satisfied when I get solution for a problem.	70	0	2.1857	1.23115
I am satisfied when I get ideas through group chatting in whatsapp /wechat /facebook and etc.	70	0	2.2143	1.20257
I feel satisfied when I keep myself updated with latest news.	70	0	2.1429	1.21924

Table 9 shows the learning satisfaction gained by the ESL learners. The majority of them admitted that they get ideas through group chat in whatsapp/wechat/facebook and so forth. Learners get highly satisfied when they get a solution to a problem ( $M = 2.214$ ). In addition, learners feel satisfied when they keep themselves updated with latest news ( $M = 2.143$ ). Learners agreed that they are satisfied when they get more information through smartphones ( $M = 2.100$ ). Getting the right word when needed makes the learners satisfied and it recorded a mean of 2.043. The mean satisfaction was classified into intensity scales such as Not at all satisfied (0 -1.0), slightly satisfied (1.1-2.0), moderately satisfied (2.1-3.0), Very satisfied (3.1-4.0) and extremely satisfied (4.1-5.0). Therefore, it can be concluded that the learners are moderately satisfied with the usage of smart phones in the learning process.

## DISCUSSION

In this article the type of learning skills gained by using smart phones in ESL classroom, autonomous learning through smart phones, learners' reliance upon the lecturers and the learners' satisfaction level were investigated.

The results of this study revealed that smart phones enable learners to acquire learning and innovation skills such as critical thinking, creative thinking, communication and collaboration to a certain degree. To be specific, smart phone use leads one towards a self-reliant lifelong learner. According to Trilling and Fadel (2009) to create new knowledge and innovation, learners have to possess the ability to ask and answer important questions, provide critical review, generate solution for a problem, communicate and work with others in learning. Engaging in group and personal chats does not only enhance one's communication skills but collaborative skills too.

Based on the analysis, most of the learners agreed that they realize their own effort plays an important role in successful language learning, and they know how to set their own goals. According to Joshi (2011) learners' awareness and the desire to master English language are among the factors leading to autonomous learning. It is proven in this study as the majority of the learners agreed that they are aware of what they need of English. Smart phones aid them in seeking help and correction for their mistakes.

Most learners still rely on the teacher's expertise, instruction, assistance, setting their learning goals and evaluation on their performance. Although these learners own smart phones they are still reliant on the teacher. In fact, Aoki (1999) stated that learners need a teacher for a variety of reasons even though other resources are accessible at any point of time. First, teachers have to help the learners to feel that they are autonomous. Secondly, the development of autonomy requires practice. Hence, according to Aoki (1999) learners have to be involved in the decision making process. Thirdly, this enables the learners to establish interaction with the teacher which differs from the traditional classroom. Finally, teacher has to provide acknowledgment and support throughout the learning process. Nevertheless, smart phones will not replace good teachers (Zilber, 2013).

According to Jones, "a student-centred classroom is not a place where the students' decide what they want to learn or what they want to do" (Jones, 2007, p. 2). The teacher plays an important role in facilitating, guiding and coaching the learners towards achieving the learning outcomes. Therefore, although the majority of learners have moved towards autonomous learning, they still rely on the teachers to achieve learning goals despite the available resources and opportunities at their fingertips.

## CONCLUSION

Effective learning takes place when the learners' satisfaction level is high (Ali & Ahmad, 2011). The findings revealed that learners were moderately satisfied when they use smart phones for their learning purpose. The process of learning gets easier when the learners get quick access to additional resources while they are learning in the classrooms; for instance, finding definitions of the unknown words, examples and further explanations help them to compare ideas. In fact, accessing information through smart phones encourages meaningful communication between teacher and learners. Eventually, this enables them to produce creative and high quality work.

Hence, it can be concluded that smart phones usage boost learners' critical thinking, creative thinking, communication and collaboration skills. Although learners have moved toward autonomous learning, they are still reliant on the teachers to achieve their learning goals.

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