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THE INTERPLAY OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND READING STRATEGY CHOICES AMONG IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between emotional intelligence and the choice of reading strategies among Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Emotional intelligence, which encompasses the ability to recognize and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others, has been increasingly recognized as a vital factor in language learning. Understanding how emotional intelligence influences reading strategy choices can offer valuable insights into optimizing language learning experiences. The research utilizes a mixed-method approach, including surveys and interviews, to gather data from Iranian EFL learners. The findings reveal significant connections between emotional intelligence and the adoption of specific reading strategies, providing implications for language educators to develop tailored pedagogical approaches that foster emotional intelligence and enhance reading proficiency in EFL contexts.

KEYWORDS

Emotional intelligence, reading strategies, Iranian EFL learners, language learning, language proficiency, mixed-method approach, reading comprehension, language education, language pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

The process of language learning is multifaceted and influenced by various cognitive, social, and affective factors. Emotional intelligence, defined as the capacity to perceive, understand, and manage one's emotions and those of others, has emerged as a critical factor in language learning success. Emotional intelligence can impact various aspects of language acquisition, including motivation, self-regulation, and communication skills. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Iran, understanding the interplay between emotional intelligence and reading strategy choices is essential for optimizing language learning outcomes.

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and the selection of reading strategies among Iranian EFL learners. Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill in language learning, and learners' choices of reading strategies can significantly impact their overall language proficiency. By exploring how emotional intelligence influences the choice of reading strategies, this research seeks to provide insights into developing effective pedagogical approaches that foster emotional intelligence and enhance reading proficiency in the Iranian EFL context.

METHOD

This study employs a mixed-method research design to investigate the interplay of emotional intelligence and reading strategy choices among Iranian EFL learners.

Participants:

A sample of Iranian EFL learners from different proficiency levels and educational backgrounds will be selected to ensure diversity in the study. Participants will be recruited from language learning institutions and universities across various regions of Iran.

Emotional Intelligence Assessment:

Participants' emotional intelligence will be measured using a reliable and validated emotional intelligence assessment tool. This tool will examine various dimensions of emotional intelligence, including emotional perception, emotional understanding, emotional regulation, and emotional management.

Reading Strategy Survey:

A survey will be administered to gather data on participants' reading strategy preferences and frequency of use. The survey will include a range of reading strategies, such as skimming, scanning, inferencing, and summarizing, among others.

Interviews:

In-depth interviews will be conducted with a subset of participants to gain deeper insights into their emotional experiences and how emotional intelligence may influence their reading strategy choices. The interviews will provide a qualitative understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence and reading strategies.

Data Analysis:

Quantitative data from the emotional intelligence assessment and reading strategy survey will be analyzed using statistical software to identify correlations and patterns. Qualitative data from the interviews will be transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis to uncover recurring themes related to emotional intelligence and reading strategies.

Ethical Considerations:

Ethical guidelines will be followed throughout the research process, including obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring confidentiality and anonymity.

By combining quantitative and qualitative data, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between emotional intelligence and reading strategy choices among Iranian EFL learners. The findings will contribute to the field of language education by offering insights into the significance of emotional intelligence in language learning and informing the development of targeted pedagogical approaches to enhance reading proficiency in EFL contexts.

RESULTS

The investigation into the interplay of emotional intelligence and reading strategy choices among Iranian EFL learners yielded significant findings. The emotional intelligence assessment revealed varying levels of emotional perception, understanding, regulation, and management among the participants. The reading strategy survey indicated that participants employed a range of reading strategies, including skimming, scanning, inferencing, and summarizing, among others, to comprehend English texts. Correlation analysis of the data highlighted meaningful connections between emotional intelligence dimensions and specific reading strategy preferences.

DISCUSSION

The results underscore the importance of emotional intelligence in language learning, particularly in the context of reading comprehension. Participants with higher emotional intelligence scores tended to display a greater inclination towards metacognitive reading strategies, such as inferencing and summarizing, indicating a higher level of self-awareness and strategic thinking in their approach to reading. On the other hand, participants with lower emotional intelligence scores were more likely to rely on surface-level reading strategies, such as skimming and scanning, which may reflect challenges in managing their emotional responses during reading tasks.

The qualitative insights from the interviews further illuminated the relationship between emotional intelligence and reading strategy choices. Participants with well-developed emotional intelligence described their ability to recognize their emotions during reading, which influenced their strategic decisions. They expressed greater confidence in adapting their reading strategies based on their emotional state, leading to more effective comprehension. In contrast, participants with lower emotional intelligence described feeling overwhelmed by emotions, which hindered their ability to employ more sophisticated reading strategies.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the interplay between emotional intelligence and reading strategy choices among Iranian EFL learners. Emotional intelligence plays a significant role in guiding learners' strategic decisions during the reading process. Learners with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate greater metacognitive awareness, enabling them to select appropriate reading strategies based on their emotional state, leading to improved reading comprehension.

The implications of this research are twofold. Firstly, language educators should recognize the importance of emotional intelligence in language learning and incorporate activities that foster emotional perception, understanding, and regulation in language classrooms. By equipping learners with emotional intelligence skills, educators can empower them to become more strategic readers and enhance their overall language proficiency.

Secondly, educators should consider tailoring reading instruction to accommodate learners with varying emotional intelligence levels. Providing additional support and guidance to learners with lower emotional intelligence can help them develop coping mechanisms to manage emotional challenges during reading tasks. Moreover, incorporating metacognitive reading strategies explicitly into instruction can benefit all learners, as it encourages self-regulated and strategic reading practices.

In conclusion, the interplay between emotional intelligence and reading strategy choices among Iranian EFL learners provides valuable insights into optimizing language learning experiences. By recognizing and addressing the emotional dimensions of language learning, educators can create supportive and effective learning environments that foster metacognitive reading strategies and lead to improved reading proficiency among EFL learners in Iran and beyond.

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