

Original Article**Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, Positive Orientation, and Perceived Teacher and Student Emotional Support among Iranian EFL Learners***Shiva Azizpour^{1,*}, Javad Gholami¹*¹ Department of English Language, Urmia University, Urmia, Iran.

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Abstract

Research has demonstrated that many factors underlie foreign language classroom anxiety. This correlational study is an attempt to investigate the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA), positive orientation, and perceived teacher and student emotional support among Iranian EFL learners and examine the predictive power of positivity and perceived teacher and student emotional support on FLCA of Iranian EFL learners. To this end, 213 Iranian teenage and adult beginner EFL learners (127 teenagers and 86 adults) filled out the FLCA scale (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986), the positivity scale (Caprara, Alessandri, Trommsdorff, Heikamp, Yamaguchi, & Suzuki, 2012), and the teacher and student emotional support scales (Johnson & Johnson, 1983). Afterward, the researchers examined the correlations among variables, and multiple regression was run to find out the predictive power of positive orientation and perceived teacher and student emotional support on classroom anxiety. The findings revealed that there were significant relationships among all variables. Further, positivity and perceived teacher and student emotional support significantly predicted FLCA levels of Iranian teenage and adult beginner EFL learners. It is noteworthy that EFL teachers require formal training to establish rapport and positive relationships with their students, minimize their FLCA, and create a friendly, supportive, and non-threatening learning environment in their EFL classes in Iranian language schools.

Keywords: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, Positive Orientation, Student Emotional Support, Teacher Emotional Support.

1. Introduction

Foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) has become a central point of studies of emotion in the area of second or foreign language teaching and learning since the early 1970s, when it was defined as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, emotions, and behaviors linked to classroom language learning resulting from the heterogeneity of language learning process” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). FLCA can interrupt actions and interfere with cognition, interpersonal relationships, and learning (Ji et al., 2020). Jensen et al. (2019) underscored the importance of care and closeness in the student-instructor relationship and pointed out that children are more likely to internalize the goals and expectations that significant adults admire when their relationships with them are supportive and loving, as opposed to when they are negative and critical. Thus, caring and personally supportive instructors are considered as kind, warm, attentive to the personal needs of the students, and thoughtful about the way they respond to them. Language learners who perceive themselves as personally supportive and kind might feel more secure than their classmates who perceive their instructors as less emotionally supportive (Romano et al., 2020).

Learning English as a foreign or second language has always been a controversial subject for EFL learners in the Iranian context, where students are exposed to the English language only in their language schools. Thus, many Iranian EFL learners feel anxious about learning English as a foreign language in their language classrooms, and foreign language anxiety is a big issue among Iranian teenage and adult beginner EFL learners. Foreign language classroom anxiety has a deleterious effect on students' participation, self-esteem, and motivation. Scholars have underscored the importance of negative anxiety impacts on foreign language learning in recent years (e.g., Farmer et al., 2011). Moreover, previous studies have mostly looked at teachers' views on the emotional support they provide to their students and found that teacher emotional support is of paramount importance for students' well-being, and social and academic functioning (Farmer et al., 2011). However, these studies did not look at students' experiences of teacher emotional support. Therefore, this means that a considerable amount of information is left unstudied. Besides, students' experiences of perceived student emotional support are not taken into account.

On the other hand, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, previous studies have not investigated Iranian EFL learners' foreign language classroom anxiety, positive orientation, and perceived teacher and student emotional support. Considering the significance of foreign language anxiety, it is essential to learn how Iranian EFL learners' positivity and teacher and student emotional support might influence their foreign language classroom anxiety. Accordingly, the current study aimed to examine the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety, positive orientation, and perceived teacher and student emotional support among Iranian EFL learners and investigate the extent to which positivity and perceived teacher and student emotional support predict foreign language classroom anxiety levels of Iranian teenage and adult beginner EFL learners.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study subscribes to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's foreign language classroom anxiety theory (1986) as its theoretical framework. This model confers the greatest importance to the distinctiveness of foreign language classroom anxiety from other academic anxieties. According to this model, Horwitz et al. (1986) pointed out that foreign language anxiety is "a distinct complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of language learning process" (p. 128).

2.2. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

Foreign language anxiety has been studied concerning different learner variables like age, gender, language aptitude, and second language proficiency. Gender, the essential feature of humans, has drawn much attention in foreign language anxiety research and findings of foreign language anxiety and gender demonstrated that females experience higher levels of foreign language anxiety than males (Liu, 2021). Moreover, foreign language anxiety influences the verbal and nonverbal activities of learners. Anxiety may be called a self-exacerbating condition in which responses to anxiety help to sustain a feedback loop of the anxiety, such as distracting self-focused attention, worrying about making mistakes, and becoming anxious toward others (Jin et al., 2020). Anxiety has been linked to second language development in a variety of ways. Foreign language classroom

anxiety is often perceived as a devastating factor that negatively affects second language acquisition. Besides, it has been found to negatively affect second language development (Dewey et al., 2018). Over-exposure to academic stress, a condition of physical, mental, and emotional fatigue, may result in school burnout. Students who see their teachers as emotionally supportive may feel more secure than their peers who see their teachers as less supportive and can handle academic requirements (Romano et al., 2020).

Botes et al. (2020) pointed out that foreign language learners experience a particular kind of anxiety during the language learning process: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA). One aspect that has unfailingly attracted attention is FLCA anxiety. In applied linguistics, anxiety has become the most studied emotion, making positive emotions such as happiness isolated. Because positive emotions in foreign language learning are as relevant as negative ones, we should not lose deep insights into them. This does not, however, mean dismissing the meaning of negative feelings as well. Shirvan and Talebzadeh (2020) stressed the significance of positive and negative feelings that refer to them regularly as language learners. Foreign language classroom anxiety is one of the major causes of the weakness in the output of EFL university students. Gawi (2020) pointed out that language anxiety is troubling among university students and can hinder their learning process. For many people worldwide, learning a foreign language is essential because of science, industry, tourism, and technology. However, in addition to certain linguistic variables such as language anxiety, cultural context, and learning methodology, many psychological factors affect the EFL learning process, such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, motivation, and attitudes. FLCA has negative effects on Iranian EFL learners' achievement and performance (Motallebzadeh et al., 2020; Rajabi et al., 2021; Rastegar & Karami, 2015).

Researchers attempted to define foreign language classroom anxiety, a significant psychological difference in individuals in foreign language learning and teaching. Foreign language classroom anxiety is a special kind of anxiety, and it is different from personality anxieties (Horwitz et al., 1986). Besides, Horwitz et al. (1986) pointed out that FLCA is a set of learners' beliefs, behaviors, and emotions related to language classrooms and the unique process of language learning. Exam anxiety and the fear of negative evaluation are possible causes of foreign language classroom anxiety. Besides, the relationship between foreign language teachers and students is a crucial issue in increasing or decreasing

students' anxiety levels (Horwitz et al., 1986). EFL instructors are expected to lower the levels of anxiety of their students by assisting them in identifying their feelings of being worried and developing logical expectations of learning a language. Besides, EFL instructors should correct their learners' errors kindly, make a non-threatening classroom environment, and put learners in small groups with their classmates to make them less nervous (Horwitz, 2008).

2.3. Positive Orientation

Another concept that deserves attention is positive orientation or positivity, that is, “a basic disposition predisposing people to appraise life and experiences with a positive outlook” (Caprara et al., 2012, p. 702). Positivity is at the center of humans' confidence in their lives (Alessandri et al., 2012). Moreover, people with a more positive outlook have higher self-confidence, a more optimistic outlook for the future, and a greater appreciation for life. Students with a greater degree of positivity are more likely to have positive attitudes toward their instructors, classmates, and class activities (Alessandri et al., 2012). Further, positive orientation is an essential component of life balance because it reflects people's perceptions about life and themselves. Positivity is an optimistic personal outlook that represents how people think about themselves and the future, and how happy they are with their present circumstances. Their positivity explains people's adjustment and success, which is a beneficial mechanism for mental health and helps individuals see the bright side of life (Karaman & Sari, 2020).

Positive orientation is a dominant form of appraising, viewing, and understanding that profoundly affects how people predispose themselves to experiences and actions. Besides, humans need a considerable amount of positivity to deal with life's unavoidable adversities, defeats, and losses (Caprara et al., 2012). Alessandri, Caprara, and Tisak (2012) and Caprara et al. (2010) demonstrated that the underlying idea of positive orientation is a positive attitude related to experience, and therefore views an individual, life, and the future from a positive perspective. Furthermore, Caprara et al. (2010) noted that the term positivity (POS), positive thinking, or positive orientation is a common latent in individuals but cannot be seen. Further, positivity predicts measures of positive and negative emotions and depression. Moreover, individual differences in positive orientation exert significant social and biological factors in balancing approach and prevention

tendencies to innovation and risk, and earlier cross-cultural and longitudinal studies proved that the strength of positivity across different countries in terms of Italy, Canada, Japan, and Germany varies significantly in terms of ways of life, and cultural issues (Caprara et al., 2009).

On the other hand, Alessandri et al. (2012) pointed out that positivity can account for a noticeable variance of positive and negative influence. In contrast, life satisfaction and self-confidence can account for an unimportant proportion of variance of the same constructs once individuals control positivity. Positive orientation can show the sufficient cause of a “syndrome of optimal functioning” and can be considered as a protective factor to cope with depression and mental illnesses (Caprara et al., 2010). Ultimately, interest in the positive features of individual functioning has received much attention over recent years, mainly because of its association with the positive psychology movement (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

2.4. Perceived Teacher and Student Emotional Support

The lack of emotional support harms children's social growth, whereas good emotional support appears to improve the social skills of children. In addition to being of importance to the social development of children, clear evidence indicates that a teacher's emotional support develops children's academic success and learning (Jensen et al., 2019). Students feel relaxed in their relationship with their instructors when they believe that their instructors trust them, understand their emotions, and care about their growth and learning (Han et al., 2019).

Teachers' emotional support has traditionally been conceptualized as either a human construct representing how warm and welcoming a teacher is to individual students, as viewed by the teacher or pupil, or as a classroom construct reflecting how attentive a teacher is to all students, as assessed by external observers using the classroom assessment tool (Serdiouk et al., 2019). The dynamic environment that teachers build in their classrooms varies significantly. Healthy relationships and mutual respect between teachers and students characterize an emotionally supportive classroom. Teachers communicate personally with students and with the classroom as a whole, and both forms of interactions contribute to the classroom atmosphere of emotional support (Shin & Ryan, 2017). Schools should pay more attention to enhancing the emotional support of teachers for

adolescents and addressing the basic psychological needs of students, which would improve the positive effect of appreciation on learning participation. A significant source of school support is teachers. Teachers' emotional support can serve as an efficient buffer resource for students to solve problems and enhance their ability to cope with difficulties (Jin & Wang, 2019). The social learning process helps children improve social maturity and emotional comprehension through formative experiences with teachers. Adolescents are more able to cope with situations and relationships with others in a more constructive and contusive way (Pakarinen et al., 2020).

Furthermore, emotional support is significant to students because EFL learners spend considerable time together on language learning, and they face similar difficulties in learning the language. Further, learners should realize their instructors' support, kindness, and attention in the language classroom and should be able to make important decisions for themselves (Horwitz, 2008). Emotional support from instructors and learners is an essential factor in language learning that can affect learners' development (Whitlock, 2006). Likewise, learners liked language school better if they felt personally and emotionally supported with encouragement from their instructors (Hallinan, 2008). Despite the social advantages enjoyed by learners who receive high degrees of support from their instructors, studies proved that many of the learners in Canada and the US became discouraged when they entered school (Whitlock, 2006).

2.5. Empirical Studies

Different researchers and scholars have examined foreign language classroom anxiety, teacher emotional support, and positive orientation from a diverse range of aspects. For instance, Ghorbandordinejad and Ahmadabad (2014) studied the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety and EFL achievement among 400 female and male high school students in Urmia, Iran. They assessed the students' FLCA levels using a relevant Scale. The students' final exam scores were also employed to measure their EFL achievement. The results demonstrated that gender differences were significantly correlated with EFL achievement and foreign language classroom anxiety. Moreover, female students had higher anxiety levels than male ones.

In the same vein, Ghorbandordinejad and Ahmadabad (2015) examined the relationship between EFL achievement and autonomy among 400 Iranian high school students as mediated

by FLCA. The researchers employed the FLCAS and Autonomy Questionnaire to assess the participants' foreign language classroom anxiety and autonomy levels. Further, they used the students' final English test scores as a measurement of their EFL achievement. The findings of the study revealed that FLCA significantly mediated the relationship between the participants' EFL achievement and autonomy. Further, there was a strong correlation between the students' English achievement and autonomy. Besides, their foreign language classroom anxiety significantly and negatively correlated with EFL achievement.

Serdiouk, Wilson, Gest, and Berry (2019) investigated the function of observed teacher personal support in children's preferences for crossover same-ethnic friendships in elementary school classrooms. The effects of grade, gender, and ethnicity on teacher personal support and children's friendship preferences were also investigated. Participants were 1227 first, third, and fifth-grade African American and European American students from 80 classrooms. The students were taught for a year by their instructors. The findings demonstrated that just fifth-grade boys showed a favorable association between teacher emotional encouragement and the relationship between teacher emotional support and cross-ethnic friendship interests was not moderated by race. Moreover, the study revealed that instructor warmth and responsiveness have positive impacts on students.

In another study, Shirvan and Talebzadeh (2020) employed the innovative approach of retrodictive qualitative modeling to identify the signature dynamics of foreign language enjoyment and foreign language anxiety. Having explored the learner archetypes of the two variables via focus-group interviews with a group of instructors regarding their students' anxiety and enjoyment experiences, in-depth interviews were conducted with one prototypical student from each archetype to identify the trends and trajectories leading to a specific outcome or attractor state by tracking and exploring the dynamic occurrences backward. The findings provided the researchers with new insights into the dynamic trends leading to different archetypes of foreign language enjoyment and foreign language anxiety, as well as, the adaptability of the retrodictive qualitative modeling to studies on the dynamics of anxiety and enjoyment.

On the other hand, Pakarinen et al. (2020) examined the relationships between instructors' emotional support and social competence among preschoolers in Finland. The researchers used Classroom Assessment Scoring System Pre-K to assess the level of emotional care in 47 preschool classrooms twice during the preschool year. Instructors

used the Multisource Measure of Social Competence Scale (MASCS) to measure participants' social competence in the fall and spring, yielding sum ratings for cooperating abilities, empathy, impulsivity, and disruptiveness. The findings revealed that a higher level of emotional support in the fall of the preschool year was linked to more prosocial classroom behaviors in the spring of the preschool year. Children's antisocial behaviors, which are common in preschool classrooms, were not linked to emotional service quality or vice versa. The findings highlight the significance of attentive and receptive classroom experiences in fostering prosocial behavior.

In another recent study, Liu (2021) examined the quasi-causal relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety and English performance concerning gender and discipline via cross-lagged regression analyses. At the beginning and end of a semester, 934 Chinese university students from a well-known state-owned university in Beijing completed FLCA Scale along with a background questionnaire. The results of their English tests in both phases were also collected. For all students, foreign language classroom anxiety was found to be strongly negatively correlated with English test results. Another significant result was that, based on gender and discipline, the overall foreign language classroom anxiety, low self-confidence in speaking English, and concern about English classroom results influenced participants' test performance.

Moghadam et al. (2021) investigated the effect of the mindfulness-cultivation intervention on EFL learners' positive orientation, reflective thinking, and language achievement. The researchers evaluated the participants' proficiency levels before the treatment. It should be noted that the mindfulness-cultivation techniques employed in the experimental group involved observance of all experiences, fantasizing, planning, reasoning, analyzing, and judging. Moreover, Langer Mindfulness, reflective thinking, and positivity scales were employed before and after the treatment. The findings indicated that about 50% of the variance in reflective thinking was predicted by the mindfulness-cultivation techniques. Besides, positive orientation and language achievement were developed in the experimental group. Therefore, the intervention executed in the experimental group helped promote the learners' positivity and language achievement.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no investigation has been conducted to examine Iranian EFL learners' foreign language classroom anxiety, positive orientation, and perceived teacher and student emotional support. Accordingly, the current study makes

a unique contribution to this field. In this study, two research questions were formulated by the researchers that had received little or no attention in the earlier studies:

RQ1: Is there any relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety, positive orientation, and perceived teacher and student emotional support among Iranian teenage and adult beginner EFL learners?

RQ2: To what extent do positive orientation, perceived teacher emotional support, and perceived student emotional support predict foreign language classroom anxiety levels of Iranian teenage and adult beginner EFL learners?

3. Methodology

3.1. Design and Context of the Study

This correlational study was conducted to explore the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety, positive orientation, and perceived teacher and student emotional support among EFL learners at different English language institutes in Tehran, Karaj, and Urmia, Iran, in the summer of 2021.

3.2. Participants

The participants of the study were 213 Iranian teenage and adult beginner EFL learners (127 teenagers, and 86 adults) who were studying English at different English language institutes in Tehran, Karaj, and Urmia, Iran. The participants comprised 178 males and 35 females. The teenage participants' ages ranged from 12 to 15, with a mean age of 13, and the adult participants' ages ranged from 18 to 20, with a mean age of 19. It is worth noting that the participants of this study were selected based on purposeful sampling. To this end, the researchers selected the students who had studied English for almost one year by the time of data collection. The teenage participants have been studying the Family and Friend series, and the adult participants have been studying Top Notch Fundamental book.

3.3. Instruments

To answer the research questions of this study, the researchers employed four questionnaires in terms of the foreign language classroom anxiety scale, the positivity scale, the teacher personal support scale, and the student personal support scale.

3.3.1. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

The foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) was adopted from Horwitz et al. (1986). The scale included 11 multiple-choice items rated on five points labeled strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree. Thus, when scoring, the researchers assigned 1-5 for positively worded items and 5-1 for negatively worded items. The scores on this scale ranged from 33 to 165, and higher scores revealed a higher general anxiety level in the foreign language classroom. Three sample items from the FLCA scale are: <<It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language, I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions that I haven't prepared in advance, and during the language class, and I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course>>.

3.3.2. The Positivity Scale

The positivity scale (POS) was adopted from Carpara et al. (2012). POS included eight multiple-choice items rated on five points labeled strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree. It should be noted that one of the items was worded negatively. According to Carpara et al. (2012), the positivity scale represents learners' confidence in the future or others, their regard for themselves, and their satisfaction with their lives. Two sample items from the positivity scale are: I have great faith in the future, and on the whole and I am satisfied with myself. The researchers assigned 1-5 for positively worded items and 5-1 for the negatively worded item when scoring. It should be noted that the scores on this scale ranged from 8 to 40, and the higher scores indicated a higher level of positivity.

3.3.3. The Teacher Personal Support Scale

The teacher personal support scale was adopted from Johnson et al. (1983). The questionnaire included four positively worded multiple-choice items that were rated on five points labeled strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree. The items in this questionnaire were assigned 1 to 5. Besides, the scores fell into the range of 4 to 20. Therefore, the students who obtained higher scores on the scale perceived more emotional support from their teachers. Moreover, two sample items from the TPSS are: Our teachers treat us fairly and our teachers are nice and friendly.

3.3.4. The Student Personal Support Scale

The Student Personal Support Scale (SPSS) was adopted from Johnson et al. (1983). This scale included four positively worded multiple-choice items that were rated on five points labeled strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree. The researchers assigned 1-5 items when scoring. It is worth noting that the scores on this scale ranged from 4 to 20. Thus, the learners who got higher scores on the scale perceived more emotional support from their classmates. Besides, the students in my class enjoy being together, and when a classmate is upset, other students comfort him/her are two sample items from this scale.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

To achieve the desired goals of the study, the foreign language classroom anxiety scale (Horwitz et al., 1986), the positivity scale (Carpara et al., 2012), and the teacher and student personal support scales (Johnson et al., 1983) were translated from English into Farsi by the researchers to facilitate the participants' understanding of the items.

Furthermore, the researchers calculated and reported the reliability of the Farsi versions of the scales through Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The reliability of the positivity scale was estimated to be 0.86. Moreover, the teacher personal support scale with the reliability of 0.82, the student personal support scale with the reliability of 0.84, and the foreign language classroom anxiety scale with the reliability of 0.96 demonstrated good degrees of reliability.

Afterward, 213 Iranian teenage and adult beginner EFL learners from different English language institutes filled out the Farsi versions of the questionnaires. It is worth noting that the questionnaires were administered to the participants by the researchers during the participants' regular class time, and before distributing the questionnaires, the researchers encouraged the participants to read the items carefully and give honest answers. Besides, it must be noted that the researchers who collected the data were not the participants' teachers. Thus, the participant's responses to the questions could not have been biased. The participants spent approximately 30 minutes answering the questions.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

The questionnaires' data were subjected to descriptive and inferential analysis and were analyzed using SPSS software version 21. The researchers examined the correlations among variables and multiple regression was run to find out the predictive power of positive orientation, perceived teacher emotional support, and perceived student emotional support as the independent (explanatory) variables on classroom anxiety as the response or dependent variable.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistics

The first research question of the current study was an attempt to examine the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety, positive orientation, and perceived teacher and student emotional support among Iranian teenage and adult beginner EFL learners. Table 1 depicts the number of participants. Besides, descriptive statistics of the four sets of scores are provided by the researchers in Table 2.

Table 1.

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	<i>N</i>	Percent	<i>N</i>	Percent	<i>N</i>	Percent
Classroom anxiety	213	100.0%	0	.0%	213	100.0%
Positivity	213	100.0%	0	.0%	213	100.0%
Teacher personal support	213	100.0%	0	.0%	213	100.0%
Student personal support	213	100.0%	0	.0%	213	100.0%

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics

			Statistic	Std. Error
Classroom Anxiety	Mean		108.3709	4.09083
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	100.3070	
		Upper Bound	116.4348	
	5% Trimmed Mean		109.4121	
	Median		149.0000	
	Variance		3564.536	
	Std. Deviation		59.70374	
	Minimum		33.00	
	Maximum		165.00	
	Range		132.00	
	Interquartile Range		128.00	
	Skewness		-.334	.167

		Statistic	Std. Error	
	Kurtosis	-1.802	.332	
Positivity	Mean	21.3146	.99649	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	19.3502	
		Upper Bound	23.2789	
	5% Trimmed Mean	21.0266		
	Median	11.0000		
	Variance	211.509		
	Std. Deviation	14.54335		
	Minimum	7.00		
	Maximum	40.00		
	Range	33.00		
	Interquartile Range	31.00		
	Skewness	.323	.167	
	Kurtosis	-1.815	.332	
Teacher p support	Mean	10.5164	.49898	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	9.5328	
		Upper Bound	11.5000	
	5% Trimmed Mean	10.3516		
	Median	5.0000		
	Variance	53.034		
	Std. Deviation	7.28244		
	Minimum	4.00		
	Maximum	20.00		
	Range	16.00		
	Interquartile Range	16.00		
	Skewness	.392	.167	
	Kurtosis	-1.749	.332	
Student p support	Mean	10.6385	.49466	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	9.6634	
		Upper Bound	11.6136	
	5% Trimmed Mean	10.4872		
	Median	6.0000		
	Variance	52.119		
	Std. Deviation	7.21933		
	Minimum	4.00		
	Maximum	20.00		
	Range	16.00		
	Interquartile Range	16.00		
	Skewness	.377	.167	
	Kurtosis	-1.760	.332	

Table 3.

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Classroom anxiety	.273	213	.000	.718	213	.000
Positivity	.287	213	.000	.717	213	.000
Teacher p support	.278	213	.000	.710	213	.000
Student p support	.261	213	.000	.722	213	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Furthermore, as evident in Table 3, since the normality tests reveal that the performance of the learners on all scales is not normal ($\text{sig} < 0.05$), the researchers had to resort to non-parametric statistics. In so doing, instead of Pearson correlation, Spearman correlation was run.

4.2. Correlations among Variables

As Table 4 reveals, classroom anxiety is correlated significantly with the other three variables ($\text{sig} < 0.05$). Positivity is also correlated positively with the other three variables ($\text{sig} < 0.05$). Moreover, teacher personal support is also significantly and positively correlated with other variables ($\text{sig} < 0.05$). In addition, student personal support also was positively correlated with other variables. Thus, the researchers concluded that there were positive relationships among all variables in the study. Besides, Figure 1 depicts the correlations between different variables in the study.

Table 4.

Correlations among Different Variables of the Study

		Classroom anxiety	positivity	Teacher p support	Student p support	
Spearman's rho	Classroom anxiety	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.871**	-.888**	-.887**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	213	213	213	213
	positivity	Correlation Coefficient	-.871**	1.000	.930**	.919**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	213	213	213	213
	Teacher p support	Correlation Coefficient	-.888**	.930**	1.000	.931**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	213	213	213	213
	Student p support	Correlation Coefficient	-.887**	.919**	.931**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	213	213	213	213

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

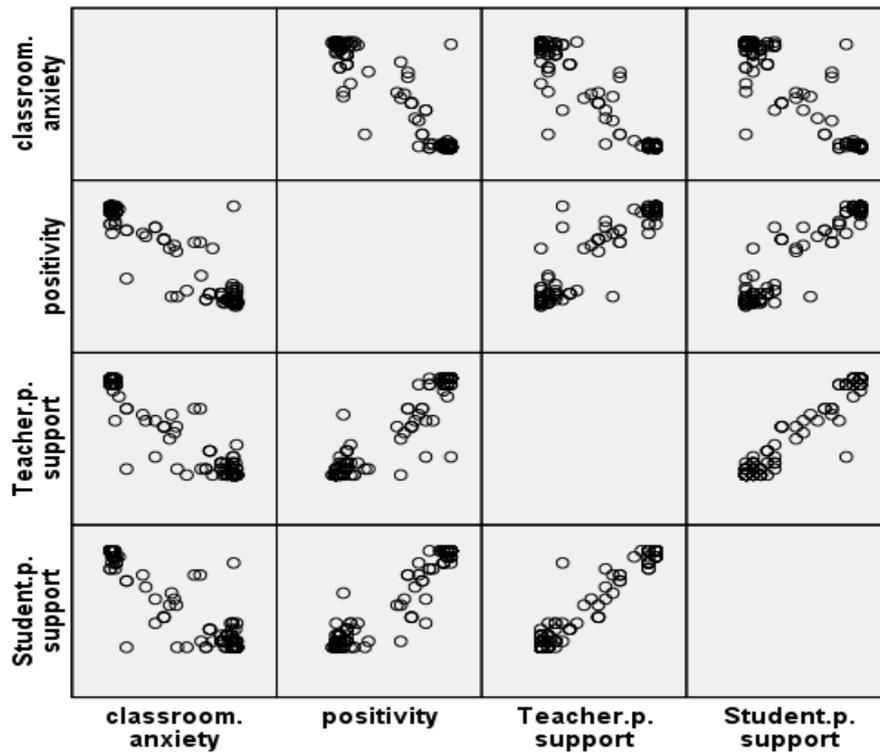


Figure 1. *Correlations between Different Variables in the Study*

4.3. Multiple Regression

The second research question of the present study was an attempt to investigate the extent to which positive orientation, perceived teacher emotional support, and perceived student emotional support predict foreign language classroom anxiety levels of Iranian teenage and adult beginner EFL learners. Thus, in this phase of the analysis of the data, multiple regression is run to find out the predictive power of positive orientation, perceived teacher emotional support, and perceived student emotional support as the independent (explanatory) variables on classroom anxiety as the response or dependent variable.

Table 5.

Variables Entered/ Removed^b

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Positivity ^a	.	Enter
2	Teacher.p.support ^a	.	Enter
3	Student.p.support ^a	.	Enter

a. All requested variables entered.

b. Dependent variable: classroom anxiety

Table 5 indicates that the only three variables considered as the predictor variables are perceived positivity, teacher personal support, and student personal support, which might cause variation in the dependent variable, which is classroom anxiety.

Table 6.

Model Summary^d

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.969a	.938	.938	14.87780	.938	3202.986	1	211	.000
2	.979b	.958	.958	12.23027	.020	102.239	1	210	.000
3	.981c	.962	.962	11.70733	.004	20.180	1	209	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), positivity

b. Predictors: (Constant), positivity, Teacher.p.support

c. Predictors: (Constant), positivity, Teacher.p.support, Student.p.support

d. Dependent Variable: classroom.anxiety

As Table 6 shows, the first model ($r^2=0.93$; $sig.<0.05$) is a good predictor of the response variable (classroom anxiety). The second model ($r^2= 0.95$; $sig. <0.05$) is a good predictor of classroom anxiety. The third model, student personal support is also a good predictor of the response variable ($r^2= 0.96$; $sig <0.05$). R square change also reveals that the first model accounts for 0.93 of the variation in the response variable while the second model and third model account for 0.020 and 0.004 of this variation.

Table 7.

ANOVA Table of Regression

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	708977.098	1	708977.098	3202.986	.000 ^a
	Residual	46704.601	211	221.349		
	Total	755681.700	212			
2	Regression	724269.990	2	362134.995	2421.019	.000 ^b
	Residual	31411.709	210	149.580		
	Total	755681.700	212			
3	Regression	727035.827	3	242345.276	1768.149	.000 ^c
	Residual	28645.872	209	137.062		
	Total	755681.700	212			

a. Predictors: (Constant), positivity

b. Predictors: (Constant), positivity, Teacher.p.support

c. Predictors: (Constant), positivity, Teacher.p.support, Student.p.support

d. Dependent Variable: classroom.anxiety

Table 7 checks if the regression model is a good fit to the data. The table shows that the first model ($F(1,2) = 3202.98, p < 0.05$), the second model ($F(2,210) = 2421.01, p < 0.05$), and the third model ($F(3,209) = 1768.14, p < 0.05$), all very well fit the data.

4.4. Results Obtained for Coefficients

Unstandardized coefficients show how much of our response variable varies with an explanatory variable, while all other explanatory variables are held constant.

Table 8.

Coefficients Table

Model		Standardized										
		Unstandardized Coefficients					95.0% Confidence Interval for B			Collinearity Statistics		
		Std. Error		Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Tolerance	VIF
		B										
1	(Constant)	193.12	1.812		106.60	.000	189.554	196.69				
	positivity	-3.97	.070	-.969	-56.59	.000	-4.115	-3.838	-.969	-.969	-.969	1.000
2	(Constant)	193.84	1.491		130.01	.000	190.901	196.77				
	positivity	-1.57	.245	-.383	-6.416	.000	-2.053	-1.088	-.969	-.405	-.090	.056
	Teacher.p.sup	-4.94	.489	-.603	-10.11	.000	-5.908	-3.980	-.975	-.572	-.142	.056
3	(Constant)	193.14	1.436		134.54	.00	190.313	195.97				
	positivity	-2.19	.272	-.534	-8.055	.00	-2.726	-1.654	-.969	-.487	-.108	.041
	Teacher.p.sup	-7.25	.695	-.884	-10.43	.00	-8.619	-5.880	-.975	-.585	-.141	.025
	Student.p.sup	3.58	.798	.434	4.492	.00	2.013	5.161	-.961	.297	.060	.019

a. Dependent Variable: Classroom.anxiety

As evident in Table 8, the unstandardized coefficient for model one is (-3.97, sig<0.05), which shows that positivity can predict the response variable or account for the variation in the response variable. The second and third models can also predict the response variable with their unstandardized coefficients being (-4.94, 3.58, respectively;

sig<0.05). Therefore, the researchers concluded that positive orientation, perceived teacher emotional support, and perceived student emotional support predict foreign language classroom anxiety levels of Iranian teenage and adult beginner EFL learners.

5. Discussion

The current study aimed to investigate the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety, positive orientation, and perceived teacher and student emotional support among Iranian teenage and adult beginner EFL learners, and find out the predictive power of positive orientation, perceived teacher emotional support, and perceived student emotional support on foreign language classroom anxiety levels of Iranian EFL learners.

As a result of conducting this research, the researchers found that Iranian teenage and adult beginner EFL learners' high levels of positivity and teacher and student emotional support can significantly decrease their foreign language classroom anxiety. Besides, students with higher degrees of foreign language classroom anxiety do not have a positive orientation and cannot experience teacher and peer emotional support in their English classroom. Further, few instructors undergo behavioral practice instruction as part of their teacher training programs. Teachers are largely left on their own to learn about the impact of foreign language anxiety on their students' behaviors and learning, as well as how to manage it in the classroom. This is echoed in the literature by some scholars (e.g., Ginsburg et al., 2019). In the same vein, Ginsburg et al. (2019) asserted that instructors lack the expertise and abilities required to assist students in minimizing their classroom anxiety.

One plausible justification for the findings of this study is that worry about a teacher's judgment causes foreign language classroom anxiety for students, particularly when EFL learners assume that their performance might be judged as poor by the teacher. Another primary source of foreign language anxiety might be teachers' manner of correcting students' errors. Thus, EFL learners may worry about what their peers think of their performance while being corrected in front of their friends in the class. On the other hand, how teachers assign and introduce a task might maximize students' anxiety and negative feelings. Some teachers do not break down the required tasks into smaller pieces for beginner EFL learners, and as a result, they trigger their students' negative thoughts and anxiety. Besides, anxiety is characterized by ruminating and having negative feelings,

and a rise in arousal and physiological symptoms (Vytal et al., 2012). Moreover, it is linked to poor performance in various school-related activities (Moran, 2016).

Such findings emanate from the fact that some EFL teachers are unaware of what foreign language classroom anxiety is and how it affects their learners. Moreover, teachers who are threatening, rigid, and have poor and ineffective communication skills maximize foreign language classroom anxiety in their students. Thus, they cannot build positive relationships with students struggling with anxiety. Besides, a student's learning style and classroom mismatch might lead to foreign language classroom anxiety. Some students learn better by listening, others by seeing, others tend to learn by doing. Therefore, ignoring different students' language learning styles creates an anxiety-provoking experience for them. Further, students might experience long-term negative feelings about their classroom or abilities if there is a mismatch between them and their teacher. While most instructors do their best to provide EFL learners with a positive educational experience, some learners are better suited to certain teaching styles and classroom types than their peers.

These findings are in line with some previously conducted studies (e.g., Dewaele et al., 2018). In the same vein, Dewaele et al. (2018) underscored the importance of having a positive perception in the language class and demonstrated that positively oriented language learners reported significantly less foreign language classroom anxiety and more foreign language enjoyment. These language learners may have gained a more profound desire to learn a foreign language and a greater willingness to invest the effort and time required to achieve the goal.

The results of the study revealed that perceived teacher emotional support significantly predicts foreign language classroom anxiety. This finding is in contrast with some previously conducted studies (e.g. Jin et al., 2017). In this regard, Jin et al. (2017) explored the impact of teacher support and learner cohesiveness on foreign language learning outcomes and compared their effects with foreign language classroom anxiety. They selected 146 first-year Chinese undergraduates, who were also learning the English language, and administered FLCAS, the Teacher Support Scale, the English Proficiency Scale, and the Japanese Proficiency Scale. It was found that student cohesiveness was a positive predictor of foreign language proficiency. However, teacher support was

negatively related to foreign language classroom anxiety and did not directly relate to foreign language classroom anxiety.

The findings also suggest that student personal support could cause variation in the classroom anxiety. Thus, student personal support is a good predictor of foreign language classroom anxiety. In the same vein, Jin and Dewaele (2018) pointed out that language learners' thoughts and behaviors could be significantly influenced and shaped by their peers' perceptions. Besides, language learners' feelings and attitudes toward their peers are important in terms of psychological comfort as indexed by lower foreign language classroom anxiety.

Further, the findings of the study revealed that positivity was found to be another good predictor of foreign language classroom anxiety. In the same vein, Caprara et al. (2010) asserted that positively oriented students are more receptive to pleasant moments, more alert to signs of reward from their instructors or classmates, and less concerned about learning setbacks. They will also recover more quickly from disappointments. This leads to higher-positive orientation language learners' subjective well-being, as reflected by lower anxiety, and, as a result, optimum foreign language classroom performance. Positivity's impact on foreign language classroom anxiety can also be explained from the standpoint of foreign language enjoyment. That is, it is extremely likely that the present participants with positive attitudes enjoyed their English classes more. In this regard, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) noted that good feelings could help to neutralize negative emotions to some degree.

On the other hand, students who think less positively are more likely to notice negative implications of incidents or individuals and view something excellent or neutral as unfavorable. These language learners tend to believe that their instructors or peers are unsupportive, which exacerbates their foreign language classroom anxiety.

Several studies aimed to investigate the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety and gender and found that female language learners have been discouraged from sharing their opinions and thoughts. As a result, they experience more foreign language classroom anxiety than male language learners. Moreover, female students are more hesitant to voice their opinions in class because they are afraid of making a negative impression (Mesri, 2012). For instance, Mesri (2012) employed the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) to examine the relationship between 52 Iranian EFL

learners' foreign language classroom anxiety concerning their gender, and the results of her study reported a significant relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety and females.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, EFL teachers have an essential role in minimizing the unwelcome FLCA of their students. Therefore, they are expected to create a positive and encouraging classroom environment characterized by friendship and support among their students. Since language learners with higher levels of positivity have lower anxiety levels in the foreign language classroom, it is crucial to nurture students' positivity. Further, learners might appreciate and learn more from the instructors who assist them in overcoming their anxiety. In contrast, students are irritated by threatening and unsupportive teachers. Moreover, because of the significant role of instructors' support in decreasing language learners' anxiety levels, they should be formally trained to show support for their learners, and help their students acknowledge, discuss, and cope with FLCA. Furthermore, to decrease students' anxiety and make the input as comprehensible as possible, teachers should reduce the rate of their speaking in the classroom. Besides, to fight against the high levels of anxiety, instructors should provide more positive speaking experiences rather than anxiety-provoking ones, which can make the language learners feel more confident and comfortable.

The results of this study provide some pedagogical implications that could be of benefit for EFL teachers and learners in Iranian language schools. EFL instructors are expected to be aware of their students' foreign language classroom anxiety, its results, and its causes. Besides, they should improve their communication skills to decrease the foreign language classroom anxiety of their students. Instructors' training for effective communication has a vital role in successful communication between EFL instructors and learners. Therefore, there should be specific formal training opportunities for teachers. Foreign language classroom anxiety could lead to poor English learning results. Thus, when dealing with anxious language learners, EFL teachers should assist them in coping with their anxiety, employ less anxiety-provoking teaching materials, and create a stress-free learning environment to promote their students' learning. Moreover, teachers can reduce their students' anxiety and increase their learning opportunities by creating

supportive and non-threatening environments. Further, EFL teachers should focus on learner-centered instruction. In student-centered learning classes, language learners might have more opportunities to interact with their peers, and as a result of these interactions, they would experience less foreign language anxiety and more enjoyment in their class and gain more control over their learning process. Ultimately, some strategies for improving students' positivity, and teacher or peer personal support should be exercised.

The current study faced certain limitations throughout its conduction that need to be considered in interpreting the findings. The first limitation concerns the data collection technique in that the researchers employed four questionnaires to collect the data from the participants. Therefore, future studies could include other data collection techniques, for instance, semi-structured interviews, to yield more in-depth results. Then, the participants of this study were selected from language schools in Tehran, Karaj, and Urmia, Iran. Thus, further research can replicate this study with EFL learners from different cities of Iran or even other countries to make the results more generalizable.

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