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The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Foreign Language Anxiety, and Demotivational Factors in an English Preparatory Language Program

La relación entre inteligencia emocional, ansiedad por lengua extranjera y factores de desmotivación en los programas preparatorios de inglés

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), foreign language anxiety (FLA), and demotivational factors (DF) at a foundation university in Istanbul, Turkey. 148 B1 (intermediate level) students enrolled in the English preparatory school participated in this study. Data were collected from the Turkish-adapted version of the Emotional Intelligence Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), the translated version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), and the Turkish preparatory school university student demotivational factors towards learning English scale. The findings revealed that the participants were moderately anxious and demotivated in foreign language learning. Moreover, a positive significant correlation was found among EI, FLA, and DF. This study provides pedagogical implications and suggestions for addressing EI, FLA, and DF in English language preparatory programs.

Keywords: demotivation, emotional intelligence, foreign language anxiety, EFL

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio es investigar la relación entre la inteligencia emocional (IE), la ansiedad por la lengua extranjera (FLA) y los factores desmotivación (DF) en una fundación universitaria en Estambul, Turquía. En este estudio participaron 148 estudiantes B1 (nivel intermedio) matriculados en la escuela preparatoria de inglés. Los datos se recopilaban a partir de la versión adaptada al turco del Inventario de Cociente de Inteligencia Emocional (EQ-i), la versión traducida de la Escala de Ansiedad en el Aula de Idiomas Extranjeros (FLCAS) y la escala factores desmotivacionales hacia el aprendizaje del inglés de los estudiantes universitarios de la escuela preparatoria turca. Los hallazgos revelaron que los participantes estaban moderadamente ansiosos y desmotivados en el aprendizaje de idiomas extranjeros. Además, de acuerdo con el principal objetivo del estudio, se encontró una correlación positiva

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significativa entre EI, FLA y DF en el contexto turco de EFL. El estudio proporciona implicaciones pedagógicas y sugerencias para programas de preparación de idiomas.

Palabras clave: desmotivación, inteligencia emocional, ansiedad por un idioma extranjero, EFL

Introduction

Learning a foreign language is a lengthy and difficult process. Besides, the learner is affected by many parameters during this challenging period. “Your whole person is affected as you struggle to reach beyond the confines of your first language and into a new language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling, and acting” (Brown, 2000, p.12). These parameters that affect language learning have been identified as the major elements of learning, and they include motivation, age, aptitude, and personality (Ellis, 2010). However, there is another factor that plays a vital role during the learning process: emotional intelligence (EI) (Goleman, 1995). EI is the capacity of understanding individuals in terms of emotions, feelings, and characteristics (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). According to Goleman (1995), the intelligence quotient (IQ) enables a person to find a job, yet EI allows someone to get a promotion. On the other hand, Coetzee and Jansen (2007) expressed the idea that the more the students are exposed to practices addressing their EI, the more effective results they will receive throughout the learning process. Therefore, a syllabus, which includes EI tasks, may be beneficial for the development of students during foreign language learning. López (2011) claims that supporting learners in their emotions may encourage them to cope with the difficulties of distractive and demotivational factors during the learning process. Besides, the researcher also states that stimulating emotions develop learners’ self-confidence and provides a great deal of motivation while enhancing the process. Moreover, Imai (2010) argues that emotions enable or hamper a person’s mental process, and they provide improvement, more explicitly, when learning depends on interpersonal processes. One of the most remarkable affective disorders in language classrooms is foreign

language anxiety (FLA). Previous research studies conducted on FLA (Saito et al., 1999; Young, 1986) revealed that anxiety affects language learning and suggests that highly anxious students cannot focus on the process or accomplish the objectives during the lessons (Horwitz, 2001). Learners often tend to think that there is a mental block in their minds when learning a language; while they have achievements in other subjects such as math and science, a problem arises when they start learning a foreign language. FLA leads learners to be demotivated; it hampers the process of successful language learning. On the other hand, motivation is a factor directly linked to behavior.

Additionally, motivation can be of vital importance in learning a foreign language, which affects language development. Research findings show that motivation is one of the main contributors that determines the performance of an individual in learning a second (L2) or foreign language (FL) (Dörnyei, 1990). Hence, motivation cannot be ignored when learning a foreign language. In brief, EI, FLA and demotivational factor (DF) effects on language learning has been indicated by many researchers (Goleman, 1995; Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Saito et al., 1999; Saito et al., 1999; Saito et al., 1999; Young, 1986; Horwitz, 2001; Dörnyei 1990). By managing this negative mindset, teachers play a major role in assisting students to overcome this process. Before educators blame students for their low performance because of their lack of skills, knowledge, or inadequate motivation, the explanation for this weak performance could be anxiety or demotivation (Horwitz, 1986). These variables and their relationships in foreign language learning, as well as the effects of learning, will be analyzed in the following chapters of this study.

Research questions

To meet these objectives, the following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What is the emotional intelligence (EI) level of the B1 Turkish students enrolled in an English language preparatory program?

2. What is the foreign language anxiety (FLA) level of the participants?
3. What is the demotivation factor (DF) level of the participants?
4. Is there any statistically significant relationship between EI, FLA, and DF among the students in the current program?

Literature review

This chapter establishes a basis for background information about emotional intelligence, foreign language anxiety, and demotivational factors during the foreign language learning process. The sections will be discussed in that order, and the final part focuses on recent studies.

Emotional intelligence (EI)

EI is an approach that gained popularity in the 1990s within contexts such as education, technology, psychology, work, and so forth ([Gök, 2020](#); [Hafizoğlu, 2007](#), [Şakrak, 2009](#); [Mayer et al., 2008](#)). As EI is a rather wide term to identify, there are several interpretations and prototypes from different points of view, which can be seen in the literature. [Bar-On \(1988\)](#) propounds the term of Emotional Quotient (EQ), which was in line with IQ according

to him. EQ was seen as a variety of emotional and social skills that help people address their needs. Furthermore, a couple of years later, [Salovey and Mayer \(1990\)](#) introduced the phrase emotional intelligence, which has a different perspective in comparison to Bar-On's model. It was identified as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" ([Salovey and Mayer, 1990, p. 189](#)). From these perspectives, it can be deduced, from the sense of EI, that curricula should promote emotional skills management; factors like self-control, analytical thinking, cooperative learning, and the need to concentrate on targets must be included. Learners may even make tremendous improvement if the instructors recognize and are responsive to learners who are shy, aggressive, weak, or pessimistic, particularly when they can observe and believe that such concepts can have an underlying problem. Therefore, with EI, learning is possible on a broader scale in both the learner and the instructor.

The major hypothesis of EI

The ability model by Mayer and Salovey (1990)

The theoretical aspects of EI were founded by [Mayer and Salovey \(1990\)](#). To formalize the hypothesis, the terms were analyzed individually as

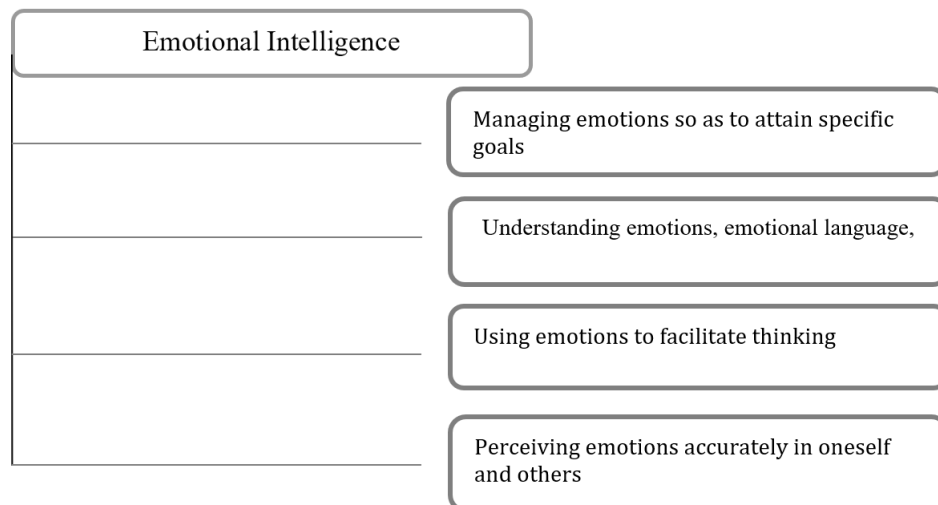


Figure 1. The four-branch model of emotional intelligence

Source: Mayer and Salovey (1997)

emotion and intelligence to shape the definition and grasp the notion of emotional intelligence ([Salovey and Mayer, 1997](#)). Several elaborative kinds of research were conducted to identify the underlying components of EI and the connection between emotions and intelligence. EI has to do with the individual receiving information about emotion and the responses of emotion. How individuals feel was pondered and examined, which consisted of the mental skills necessary in identifying and classifying emotions. [Salovey and Mayer \(1997\)](#) established the description of EI as “the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (p. 35). They classified EI in four main categories, symbolizing a collection of skills ranging from bait to more challenging tasks:

The mixed model by Goleman (1998)

[Daniel Goleman \(1998\)](#) is an impressive instance in promoting EI. The idea of emotional intelligence is known throughout the world because of [Goleman \(1995\)](#). Goleman’s EI model is a mixed model that includes both mental skills and individual characteristics ([Bar-On and Parker, 2000](#)). The four main constituents of EI (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) were identified by [Goleman \(1998\)](#). In addition, [Goleman \(1995\)](#) suggests that emotional skills can be taught, learned, and developed, and they are not intrinsic skills. Individuals may have some of these abilities, but they can afford to establish their skills as they come of a particular age. In this mixed model of EI, Goleman prioritized self-awareness. He assumes that self-consciousness is an essential component of EI. This provides the ability to consider our intrinsic minds, decisions, and perspectives.

The mixed model by Bar-On (1998)

[Bar-On \(1988\)](#) was the pioneer scholar who coined the term Emotional Quotient (EQ). [Bar-On \(1997a\)](#), defines EQ as “an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence

one’s ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures (p. 14). The model that Bar-On proposed is called *The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligences* (ESI). According to this model, EI is a mixture of abilities that allow people to understand others and themselves, as well as to assess how effective they are in solving the challenges involving the requirements and problems that they experience in their daily lives. This model’s main emphasis is on emotional and social skills, which is why the model is called the mixed model. In it, five meta-factors were listed: interpersonal, intrapersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general mood.

The role of EI in foreign language learning

[Goleman \(1995\)](#) pointed out the connection between academic performance and emotional and social capacities. He indicated that EI is more important than IQ when it comes to forecasting success in life, including academic performance. Additionally, the argument that EI represents a major difference in academic achievement and the concept that EI can be taught and hence take place in educational curricula is still commonly considered in educational literature ([Parker et al., 2009](#)). According to Goleman, EI is essential for individual and institutional development, as it deals with the awareness and assessment of the behavioral model. In the educational context, EI supports academic achievement while decreasing anxiety and negative emotions in the learning process for the school, educators, and learners.

Foreign language anxiety (FLA)

During language learning, students evaluate their abilities. This self-esteem can usually promote learning by supporting them to improve techniques to increase their language skills ([MacIntyre et al., 1997](#)). However, it can be frustrating and demotivating for highly anxious learners to recognize their potential weaknesses ([MacIntyre and Gardner, 1989](#)). The term FLA was first launched by [Horwitz et al. \(1986\)](#) as a divergent and parted hypothesis for foreign language learning (FLL). In addition, the term was broadened, supported, and developed by [MacIntyre and Gardner’s \(1989\)](#) study. According

to obtained results, a weak correlation was found between general anxiety and FLA. It was recognized as a separate type of anxiety and was categorized as communicative. Likewise, [Gardner \(1991\)](#) widened the term of classical intelligence and stated that language development is not confined to syntax, phonetics, and meaning. As [Ellis \(1994\)](#) reports, many other parameters, especially second language learning, may trigger language acquisition. These parameters also include effective variables such as anxiety. For language classes, FLA is a significant issue that needs to be well described and clarified ([Horwitz et al., 1989](#)). Even though learners are proficient in other subjects at school, they become nervous and anxious during foreign language learning. Students have indicated that they tend to sweat or freeze during English classes. Moreover, they can easily forget their previous knowledge of some grammar rules because of their high degree of anxiety ([Horwitz et al., 1986](#)). This insecurity can arise from the fact that students see themselves as vulnerable towards their friends and teachers during language lessons ([Tsui, 1996](#)).

According to [Horwitz et al. \(1986\)](#), FLA is “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128). [Horwitz and Young \(1991\)](#), postulated two approaches to identifying FLA. The first one, the transfer approach, FLA was identified as the manifestation of another sort of anxiety. The second approach, named the unique approach, was identified as the accomplishment in foreign languages connected to FLA and not to other sources of anxiety. As a result, examining various measures of competence, various studies, and even several different theoretical approaches, anxiety has shown a detrimental impact on FLL success. Anxiety generates some of the strongest simple causal relationships between attitudes and proficiency in various circumstances. The next part of this article discusses the role of FLA in language learning.

The role of FLA in language learning

The presence of anxiety has progressively become a significant problem within the learning environment. The results of previous research

have revealed that anxiety is one of the major parameters which affects language learning in terms of distracting learners while performing their tasks ([Tse, 2000](#); [Wörde, 2003](#)). The impact of anxiety is adverse and has a deteriorative effect on learners' achievements. For students of a foreign language, anxiety raises some potential issues, as it can conflict with the acquisition, retention, and development of the language ([MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991](#)). Regarding the urgency of the levels of anxiety and to define the term thoroughly, [Horwitz et al. \(1986\)](#) defined FLA as *situation-specific anxiety*. Moreover, the sub-factors of FLA were also identified to assess learners in a social and academic setting. These were communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. On the other hand, [Young \(1991\)](#) stated potential reasons for FLA in terms of triggering factors during the language learning process, namely personal and interpersonal anxieties, learner beliefs about FLL, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interaction, classroom procedures, and language testing. [Horwitz and Cope \(1986\)](#) suggested that instructors help their students to reduce their anxiety levels by dealing with situations that lead to anxiety so that classes can become anxiety-free spaces. According to [Price \(1991\)](#), it was revealed that educators have an essential mission to aid in dealing with the anxieties of their learners. Educators should be familiar with the concept of FLA; instead of covering the problem or accusing the learner, educators should help learners cope with the problem ([Horwitz and Cope 1986](#)).

Motivation and Demotivation

Recent research has shown that motivation is a crucial element in language acquisition which demonstrates its essential function for efficient and productive English language teaching (ELT) ([Aygün, 2017](#)). [Dörnyei \(1994\)](#) emphasized the significance of motivation in language learning and identified it as “one of the main determinants of second/ foreign language achievement” (p. 273). In another study, [Dörnyei \(1998\)](#) reported that, despite appropriate curriculum and education programs, learners experienced difficulties to achieve the language objectives without adequate motivation. Apart from motivation, demotivation

was recently introduced by [Dörnyei \(2001\)](#) as “the specific external forces” which reduce or lessen motivation during the learning process (p.143). In line with this definition, demotivation is a decrease or drop in the level of motivation starting from an external force before being an internalized process (Ghadirzadeh et al., 2012). [Dörnyei and Ushioda \(2013\)](#) proposed three components to deal with demotivation during the learning process. These components are *powerful distractions*, *the gradual loss of interest*, and *difficulties in achieving goals*. *Powerful distractions* cannot be seen as a demotivating factor. In other words, rather than decreasing the existing motivation for the main activity, their distracting impact is because they offer more conspicuous alternatives. *The gradual loss of interest* should not be associated with demotivation, since it can be due to multiple factors such as exhaustion or aging. As the third component on difficulties in achieving goals, there are situations in which a student realizes the discomfort or high cost of achieving the objective. The explanation of why this should not be considered as demotivation is because it requires inner contemplation procedures, and there are not any external inductions. The outcome would have been different if someone else persuaded the

student that it requires too much to achieve the goal. This other individual could then be considered an external force that demotivates the learner.

The role of DF in foreign language learning

Learner demotivation is a factor that has not been thoroughly investigated, and research has not developed a specific structure to address this issue. Demotivation concerns negative forces or demonstrators that affect the learning experience of students. [Dörnyei and Ushioda \(2013\)](#) relate demotivation to several negative factors that affect students’ motivation. In contrast to motivation, demotivation and the related factors have been ignored, particularly in the language teaching context. The major components of student demotivation were identified by [Dörnyei \(1994\)](#) at the levels of learners, language, and learning situation. According to [Gorham and Christophel \(1992\)](#), the behaviors of instructors are the major determinants of learner demotivation. Zhang (2007) supported the hypothesis that the incompetence of an instructor has a great deal of impact on learner demotivation. In addition to instructor inadequacy on teaching, [Dörnyei \(1998\)](#) listed certain demotivation factors as shown in [Figure 2](#):

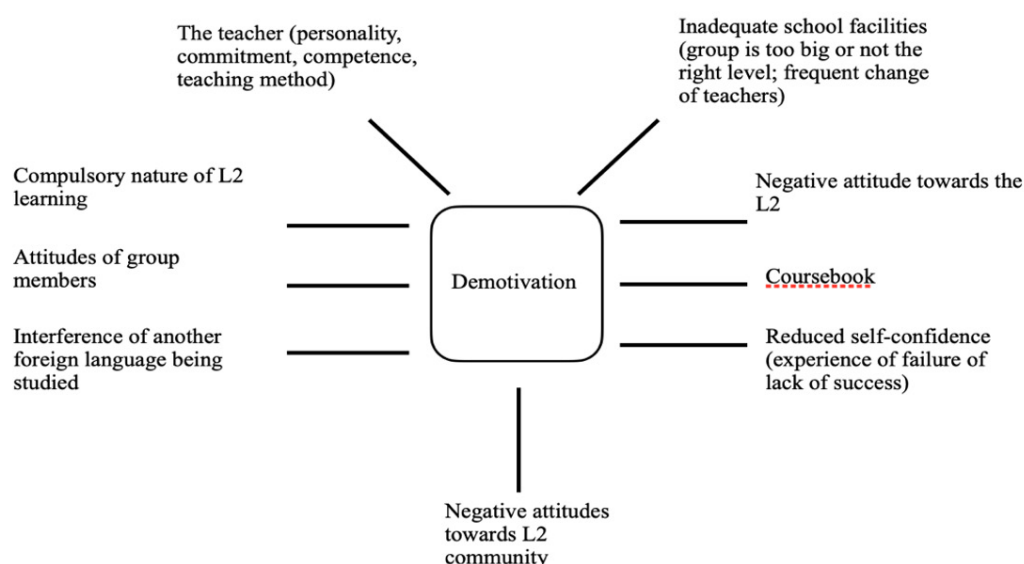


Figure 2. Main demotivating factors identified by Dörnyei (1998)

Source: Authors

The relationship between EI, FLA, and DF

The performance of learners in a FL class can be influenced by various parameters such as peer pressure, readiness for the lesson, and the level of support provided. Moreover, several conditions such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety may influence students' participation during the lessons ([Méndez and Cárdenas, 2014](#)). The study aimed to find out the effect of emotions among Mexican FL learners on their motivation towards English. The researchers attempted to reveal the affecting factors of emotions and the influencing factors related to the social context during the FLL process. Although there was not an adequate number of studies investigating these three variables, the findings of the studies showed that the variables have a coherent connection, and each of them can affect one another. Therefore, they cannot be seen as totally independent and disparate. However, in the literature, there were no studies conducted that covered EI, FLA, and DF together yet. [Chao \(2003\)](#) was the first researcher who concentrated solely on EI and FLA, looking at their relationship among foreign language learners in Taiwan. The study consisted of 306 English students in compliance with their research criteria. The focus of the research was to investigate the connection between FLA and EI skills. For data collection, the FLA scale (FLCAS) ([Horwitz et al., 1986](#)) and the Exploring and Developing EI Skills scale (EDEIS) were used. According to the results, Taiwanese students who had a high degree of FLA had less control of their EI abilities. The findings revealed that there is a connection between EI and FLA. Nevertheless, the study's results were accurate only for Taiwanese learners and cannot become a sweeping statement for other communities.

[Rouhani \(2007\)](#) indicates that learners' EI levels may trigger their FLA. The study aimed at exploring the impact of a cognitive-affective curriculum that involved literary quotations included as reading resources, group and pair work tasks, and discussion sessions both on EI and FLA. The learners were allowed to empathize with the people in the reading texts or construed to situations and contexts and display their emotions and thoughts by using their emotional ability to solve and identify the issues. The research revealed that not only the EI skills but also

the FLA results of the learners in the experimental group underwent significant change in comparison with the control group. The results showed that the EI scores of participants dramatically improved, but their FLA scores considerably decreased. Therefore, it can be inferred that FLA and EI contributed to each other. [Ergün \(2011\)](#) carried out a study aimed to investigate the relationship between EI skills and the FLA of university students. The data were collected from 436 students, and the Turkish-adapted FLCAS and EQ-i were the data collection tools used to examine the relationship between the variables of age, gender, FL backgrounds, anxiety levels, and the students' previous language exposure. According to the results, background knowledge of FL, gender, and EI levels were found to have an impact on FLA.

Furthermore, gender and high-school factors made significant differences in the result of EI skills of the learners. In a similar study, [López and Tun \(2017\)](#) conducted research aimed to determine the obstacles in oral participation, as well as motivating and demotivating factors for students during speaking sessions. Data were collected from the students' emotions journals to define the reasons that hampered learner engagement. Moreover, the students' ideas were elicited by the interviews to expand on the results. The results revealed that male participants felt a broad range of negative emotions, whereas female participants coped with a limited amount. In contrast, female participants often feel negative feelings while male participants rarely feel them. The findings also indicated that the way men and women interpret and confront situations differs, as well as how they control the emotions produced by the context. In contrast, [Kılıç \(2018\)](#) examined the relationship between the FLA and EI levels of preparatory students at a public university. The data were collected from 158 A1 level students via the FLCAS and the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue). The participants' responses were analyzed regarding their gender and their success levels. The results showed that there was a weak negative correlation between EI and FLA. Based on these overviews, the purpose of this study is to contribute to the existing literature by investigating the connection between EI, FLA, and demotivation among language learners enrolled in English preparatory program at a Turkish university.

Methodology

Research design

In this study, a correlational quantitative method approach was employed, which was based on a survey. The data were collected to find the levels of EI, FLA, and DF separately, as well as to find the relationship between them in foreign language learning among the preparatory, intermediate-level foundation university students in İstanbul, Turkey. For the data collection procedure, Aygün's demotivation scale (2017) was used to determine the DF among the participants, whereas Acar's (2001) Emotional Intelligence Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), adapted and translated into Turkish, was administered to examine the students' EI level. Finally, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz et al. (1986) was given to the participating students to reveal their FLA level. The obtained data were analyzed via SPSS 28.

Settings and participants

This study was conducted at the English Preparatory Program of a foundation university (non-profit and private) located in İstanbul, Turkey. At the beginning of the academic year, the preparatory program requires all learners (whose majors are English) to take an English proficiency exam to assess them at the appropriate level (from A1 to C1) for the preparatory year. The learners are placed according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels at the end of the proficiency test. There were 61 females (41%) and 87 males (59%), whose age range was between 18 to 23 years old. The total number of the participants was 148, and they were placed in the intermediate level after the module exam (Table 1)

Table 1. Demographic profile

	<i>f</i>	%
Female	61	41
Male	87	59
<i>Total</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: Authors

Data collection instruments

Emotional Intelligence Quotient Inventory (EQ-i)

The Emotional Intelligence Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) was developed by Bar-On in 1980 to measure individuals' EI levels and constitute a way of self-reporting. The questionnaire contains 133 questions, which includes 5 meta-factors and 15 sub-factors of EI as displayed in Table 2:

Table 2. EQ-i Scale

EQ-i Scale		
Intrapersonal EQ	→	Self-Regard Assertiveness Emotional Self Awareness Independence Self-Actualization
Interpersonal EQ	→	Empathy Social Responsibility Interpersonal Relationship
Stress Management	→	Stress Tolerance Impulse Control
Adaptability	→	Reality Testing Flexibility Problem Solving
General Mood	→	Happiness Optimism

Source: Bar-On (1980)

As shown in the table, the first meta-factor, intrapersonal EQ, consists of five sub-factors (self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self-actualization) in 40 questions. The second meta-factor, interpersonal EQ, consists of three sub-factors (empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationship) in 29 questions. The third meta-factor, stress management, consists of two sub-factors (stress tolerance and impulse control) in 18 questions. The fourth meta-factor, adaptability, consists of three sub-factors (reality testing, flexibility, and problem-solving), and it involves 26 questions. Finally, the last meta-factor, general mood, consists of two sub-factors (optimism and happiness), and it has 15 questions. The scale was designed as a Likert scale, which includes five different answers ranging from

1 (very seldom or not true for me) to 5 (very often for me or true for me). The test-retest reliability and the consistency were assessed, and the coefficients ranged from 0,78 to 0,92 and from 0,55 to 0,82, thus showing a high consistency ([Bar-On, 1997a](#)).

This study used [Bar-On's \(1997\)](#) EQ-i, which was adapted into Turkish by Acar (2001) by eliminating some items which were neither relevant to the sub-factors nor clear enough for Turkish participants to respond appropriately. The questionnaire included 88 items based on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

The FLCAS was developed by [Horwitz et al. \(1986\)](#) and includes 33 questions to measure the participants' foreign language anxiety. The scale is a Likert-type scale with five different answers ranging between 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Nevertheless, there were some negative expressions on the scale, so the scores of those expressions were reversed. The grading process was arranged considering the reversed items. For instance, in the question "I do not worry about making mistakes in language class", the participants had 5 points for "strongly disagree" instead of "strongly agree". Regarding the validity and reliability of the FLCAS, various studies have been conducted by [Horwitz et al. \(1991\)](#). According to the results, the scale proved to have internal reliability by Cronbach-alpha coefficient of .93 and test-retest reliability of .83, thus showing high reliability ([Horwitz et al., 1986](#)).

Demotivational factors questionnaire

Previous studies on demotivation ([Gardner 1985](#); Deci & Ryan, 1985; [Gorham and Christophel, 1992](#); Chambers, 1993; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; [Christophel and Gorham, 1995](#); Ushioda, 1996a; [Gorham and Millette, 1997](#); Vallerand, 1997; Williams & Burden, 1997; Dörnyei, 1998b; Oxford, 1998; Dörnyei, 2001a) were analyzed in-depth by [Aygün \(2017\)](#), who determined the affecting factors that cause demotivation among the participants during the language learning process. Next, 60 students were asked to express their opinions by

answering several questions (*Are you motivated to learn English? What demotivates you while learning English? What would motivate you more?*) writing an essay. The interviews were conducted with twelve academic practitioners with at least five years of professional experience in the influencing factors of learner motivation and demotivation to seek an expert opinion. As a result, the questions in the pool were verified, and the questionnaire was completed. One of the researchers met with an experienced specialist who was working within the same framework to evaluate and reconstruct the issue of reliability. After building up reliability and validity, four main schemes namely, personal reasons, past experiences, features of the preparatory school program, and the form of instruction were constructed. These schemes and the distribution of the questions can be seen in [Figure 3](#).

For this study, the theoretical background of the demotivation questionnaire was based on [Aygün's \(2017\)](#) research. The questionnaire was based on a Likert-type scale which consisted of five answers ranging from strongly disagree= 1 to strongly agree= 5. Concerning participants' language proficiency in English, the investigator opted for using the Turkish edition which was translated by the researcher to ease the understanding and to avoid confusion. Before distributing the scales to the participants, the researcher obtained permission from Aygün to use the Turkish translated version of the scale was used as the data collection.

Data analysis

For this study, the quantitative data were collected through an online survey platform (Google Forms) and descriptive and inferential statistics were analyzed through the SPSS. First, descriptive statistics were calculated to find the mean values of EI, FLA, and DF. In addition, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to find out the relationship between EI and FLA, as well as between EI and DF.

Findings

The main objective of this study was to investigate the relationships between EI, FLA, and

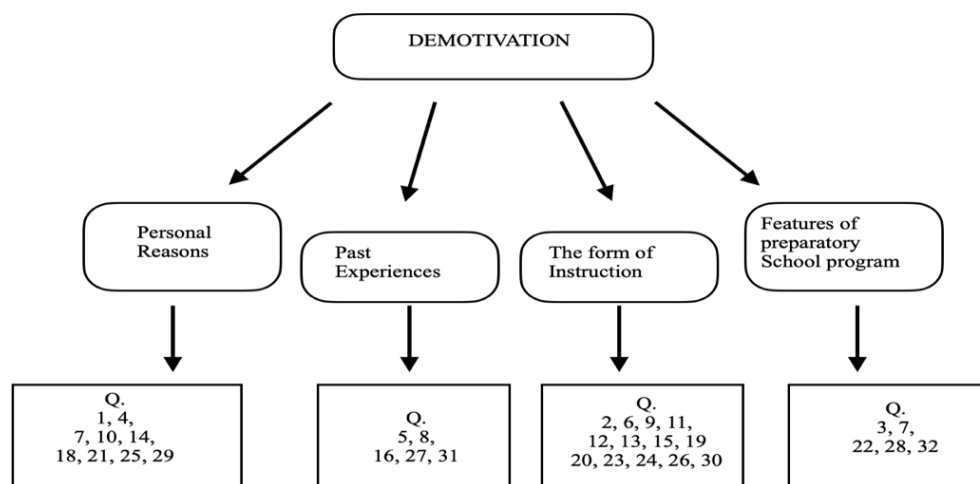


Figure 3. The main schemes of demotivation and question distributions

Source: Aygün (2017)

DF in English-language preparatory programs offered at a Turkish university. The data relating to EI, FLA, and DF scales were collected and analyzed through SPSS. The differences in DF were investigated as well. Finally, the possibility of predicting changes in DF as a result of changes in EI and FLA was assessed. This section reports the findings of the quantitative data analysis, which are presented by the research questions.

Findings regarding the EI level of the participants

Considering the findings of the EI level of the participants, the mean values of the Emotional Intelligence scale's meta-factors, which are intrapersonal (80 ± 7.39), interpersonal (40.95 ± 5.46), stress management (36.87 ± 5.81), adaptability (40.79 ± 4.42), and general mood (29.5 ± 3.83). In other words, the participants showed a high level of intrapersonal skills, but a medium level of interpersonal, stress management, and adaptability skills. Finally, the general mood was the weakest EI meta-factor (See [Table 3](#)).

Findings regarding the FLA level of the participants

Regarding the obtained results concerning the FLA level of the participants, a high score ($99.19 \pm$

16.81) was detected, indicating a moderate level of anxiety (See [Table 4](#)).

Findings regarding the DF level of the participants

As for the DF level of the participating students, [Table 5](#) reports the mean value of the DF scale scores. According to the results, the average score was 79 ± 22.83 . This shows that the participants experienced a medium level of demotivation.

Additionally, the mean values of the demotivation sources ranged from Min = 2.27 to Max = 2.82. Past experiences had the highest mean value with 2.82, while the form of instruction had the lowest mean value with 2.27 (See [Table 6](#)).

Considering the first sub-factor of demotivation, the mean values of the elements in the personal reasons category are presented in [Table 7](#). These values ranged between Min. = 1.78 and Max. = 3.32. The statement *I have the feeling that I just study to pass the preparatory class* had the highest mean value with 3.32, and *I am not in favor of having English as the medium of instruction in my department* had the lowest mean value with 1.78 (See [Table 7](#)).

Table 3. Mean values of the emotional intelligence scale's meta-factors

	M	SD	Mdn.	Min.	Max.
<i>Intrapersonal</i>	80	7.39	80.5	50	107
<i>Interpersonal</i>	40.95	5.46	40	30	58
<i>Stress Management</i>	36.87	5.81	37	20	51
<i>Adaptability</i>	40.79	4.42	41	26	49
<i>General Mood</i>	29.50	3.83	29	18	43

Source: Authors

Table 4. Mean value for the foreign language anxiety score

M	SD	Mdn.	Min.	Max.
30.00	.50	2.98	1.88	4.06

Source: Authors

Table 5. Mean value for the demotivating factors score

M	SD	Mdn.	Min.	Max.
79	22.83	79	39	144

Source: Authors

Table 6. Descriptive statistics for sources of demotivation

	N	M	SD
<i>Personal reasons</i>	148	2.54	.79
<i>Past experiences</i>	148	2.82	.93
<i>Features of preparatory school programs</i>	148	2.48	.95
<i>The form of instruction</i>	148	2.27	.79

Source: Authors

Table 7. Mean values for elements of personal reasons

Personal reasons	M	SD
1. I do not have activities to practice outside of class .	2.61	1.21
4. The preparatory school program does not appeal to my needs.	2.71	1.26
7. I do not have any sources to study outside of class .	2.08	1.31
10. My family puts pressure on me to complete the preparatory school program within one year.	2.94	1.78
14. I find it boring to learn English all year round.	2.27	1.51
18. I do not have sufficient time to practice outside of class .	2.49	1.26
21. I have the feeling that I just study to pass the preparatory class.	3.32	1.56
25. I am not in favor of having English as the medium of instruction in my department.	1.78	1.13
29. The number of words to learn decreases my motivation.	2.64	1.41

Source: Authors

Furthermore, [Table 8](#) presents the mean values for the elements within past experiences as a sub-factor of demotivation. According to the results, the values ranged from Min. = 2.27 to Max. = 3.24. The statement *I have not learned anything as to English since primary school* had the highest mean value with 3.24, and *I have not been informed about how to study English so far* had the lowest mean value with 2.27.

Additionally, the mean values concerning the features of the preparatory school programs are presented. According to the results, the mean values ranged between Min. = 2.03 and Max. = 2.93. *Compulsory attendance decreases my motivation* had the highest mean value with 2.93, and *Weekly syllabi are quite intensive* had the lowest mean value with 2.03 ([Table 9](#)).

Finally, the mean values for the elements concerning the form of instruction as a sub-factor of demotivation are presented in [Table 10](#). According to the results, the mean values ranged between Min. = 1.56 and Max. = 2.85. The statement, *The English that I learn here does not prepare me for academic English in my department* had the

highest mean value with 2.85, and *Teachers who do not encourage us to participate in the lessons* had the lowest mean value with 1.68.

Findings regarding the relationship between EI, FLA, and DF

The correlation coefficients of the obtained findings revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between the two datasets. The correlation coefficient between DF and FLA is $r = .585$, $p = .000 < .05$, $r = .236$, $p = .004 < .05$ between DF and EI, and $r = .442$, $p = .000 < .05$ between FLA and EI ([Şakrak \(2009\)](#)).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the relationship between EI, FLA, and DF in FLL in English language preparatory programs. To measure the levels of EI, FLA, and DF of the participants, three Likert scale-type questionnaires were administered to 148 B1 level students. The findings of the study will be addressed in-depth in this section concerning each research question.

Table 8. Mean values for elements of past experiences

Past experiences	M	SD
5. I have not learned anything as to English since primary school.	3.24	1.43
8. I have not been informed about how to study English so far.	2.27	1.35
16. I have always had difficulty with learning English.	2.71	1.35
27. My past teachers were incompetent at teaching.	2.91	1.51
31. We have been learning the same things since primary school.	2.95	1.46

Source: Authors

Table 9. Mean values for elements of preparatory school programs

Features of preparatory school programs	M	SD
3. Compulsory attendance decreases my motivation.	2.93	1.57
17. The great number of exams affects my motivation negatively.	2.79	1.48
22. Course hours are quite a lot.	2.08	1.32
28. Weekly syllabi are quite intensive.	2.03	1.22
32. There is a gap between what we learn in the class and the difficulty level of the exams.	2.56	1.33

Source: Authors

Table 10. Mean values for elements of the form of instruction

Form of instruction	M	SD
2. The English that I learn here does not prepare me for academic English in my department.	2.85	1.19
6. I find the lessons quite boring.	2.35	1.09
9. Teachers give the lessons in a dull way.	2.12	1.14
11. We always study grammar.	2.58	1.28
12. The classrooms are very crowded.	2.74	1.46
13. The lessons are given beyond our proficiency level.	2.23	1.18
15. What we cover in the class does not correspond to the real life.	2.22	1.51
19. Teachers give the lessons in a complicated way.	2.17	1.12
20. Our preferences are not taken seriously through the teaching process.	2.64	1.43
23. We are not provided with a variety of grammar exercises in the lessons.	2.18	1.21
24. Teachers do not benefit from technology during the lessons.	1.56	.95
26. Teachers do not encourage us to participate in the lessons.	1.68	1.01
30. Teachers do not do interesting activities in the lessons.	2.41	1.36

Source: Authors

Table 11. Correlations between EI, FLA, and DF

		DF	FLA	EI
DF	Pearson correlation	1	.585**	.236**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.004
	N	148	148	148
FLA	Pearson correlation	.585**	1	.442**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	148	148	148
EI	Pearson correlation	.236**	.442**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.000	
	N	148	148	148

** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Authors

The first research question aimed to find out the preparatory students' EI levels in an EFL context at a foundation university. The variable was examined under five main dimensions (intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, and general mood). The results show that the participants have a high level of intrapersonal skills, but a medium level of interpersonal, stress management, and adaptability skills. The general mood was the weakest EI meta-factor. As for the

findings of the first variable's overall score, it was found that the participants have a moderate level of EI. In a similar study, [Sakrak \(2009\)](#), conducted a study to find out the EI levels of the preparatory students at Akdeniz University. Similar results were found in [Hafizoğlu's research \(2007\)](#), which was conducted at a preparatory school at a foundation university. According to the results of the study, the learners were found to have a moderate EQ-i score and EI level. Moreover, in the studies conducted

by [Kılıç \(2018\)](#) and [Gök \(2020\)](#), the overall score found meant that the participants were moderately emotionally intelligent. In addition, in a study carried out by [Gök \(2020\)](#), the results revealed that the participants' EI levels were moderate. Finally, [Mayer et al. \(2003\)](#) revealed that it is possible to develop emotional intelligence skills, which were identified as the four-branch model.

The second research question investigated the FLA levels of intermediate-level preparatory school students at a foundation university. The results for the second variable revealed that the participants had a moderate FLA level. Considering the average results of the findings, it can be inferred that the students are moderately anxious in FLL environments. A combination of various factors causes FLA. However, some of these factors play a more important role in the learning process. To exemplify, learners' past experiences and anxieties have an effective role in their learning. According to [Wörde \(2003\)](#), anxiety can also emerge by the students' negative experiences of FLL. [Tse \(2000\)](#) also acknowledges that a huge number of factors can shape the experiences of learners in FLL. This may contain instructor perspectives, perspectives on educational practices, and strategies and behaviors.

The third research question aimed to examine the demotivation levels of intermediate-level preparatory school students at a foundation university. The DF data was examined through descriptive and inferential statistics, and an analysis was conducted based on the four main reasons for demotivation developed by [Aygün \(2017\)](#) (personal reasons, past experiences, features of the preparatory school program, and the form of instruction). Based on the overall findings of the demotivation survey, it was found that the students had a medium level of demotivation. According to the subheadings of DF, the most demotivating factor was related to the past experiences of the students. The participants' self-reports revealed that the statement *We have been learning the same things since primary school* had the most influence among other relevant items. Additionally, personal reasons were found to be the second DF. The answers given by the participants showed that *I have the feeling that I just study to pass the preparatory class* was found the most influential

DF within the personal reasons category. The features of preparatory school programs were found to be the third DF factor. Regarding the participants' answers, *Compulsory attendance decreases my motivation* was the most influential DF factor. This demonstrates that restrictions and imposed tasks impede learning. As for the last subheading, the form of instruction was found to have the least influence among the students. According to the results, the students suffer from the inadequacy of teaching for learning another language, since *The English that I learn here does not prepare me for academic English in my department* was the most chosen answer.

Furthermore, in this study, EI was analyzed regarding its meta-factors (intrapersonal EI, interpersonal EI, stress management, adaptability, and general mood), and the results are examined one by one in this section. Firstly, the results demonstrated that, at a medium level, there is a positive correlation relationship between FLA and DF. These two variables have an impact on each other in the learning environment. Secondly, the results concerning the relationship between EI, and DF revealed that there is only a statistically significant relationship found between stress management skills and demotivational factors. Stress management has two sub-factors: stress tolerance and impulse control. For the rest of the meta-factors, a positive weak relationship was found in the data analysis. As for another correlational test, an analysis was carried out between EI and FLA. The results showed that the only statistically significant regression relationship was found between anxiety and stress management skills. Considering the results of the study, a relationship was found between EI, FLA, and DF which will shed light on future research.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This study has some limitations to be considered. First and foremost, the data were collected quantitatively only from 148 participants who were studying at the same university. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools switched to online education which limited the number of participants in this study.

Secondly, the data were only collected only from B1 (intermediate level) students and one university due to time constraints. Therefore, reaching a larger sample, adding different proficiency levels and contexts would lead to more generalizable and comparative findings. Lastly, data were gathered only from quantitative measurements. Integrating qualitative data such as interviews and observations into future studies would provide a deeper understanding of the potential causes of FLA and DF and ways of increasing the EI levels of the learners.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between EI, FLA, and DF in foreign language learning concerning preparatory students at a foundation university in Turkey. The results revealed that show the participants were moderately anxious during the process of foreign language learning. Similarly, their DF level was also found to be moderate. Additionally, a significant relationship was detected between the variables, which need to be supported by further studies. Based on the gathered results, EI should be closely addressed in current language programs to help learners during the FLL process. Finally, avoiding repetitive activities and re-designing the content of the current English preparatory programs can also decrease FLA and DF among language learners.

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