

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN READING COMPREHENSION PERFORMANCE: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT: Emotional intelligence has been a well-researched topic for the past few decades. The role of emotional intelligence in reading comprehension performance has been explored extensively. The basic objective of this literature review paper is to draw attention to studies conducted in the last twelve years regarding the role of emotional intelligence in reading comprehension achievement. Previous reviews have focused on the relationships between emotional intelligence and a diverse range of academic achievements. However, there is a dearth of reviews on the relationship between emotional intelligence and reading performance. A total of fourteen studies were reviewed based on two key aspects, firstly, ‘variables’ and secondly, ‘research design’. Variables included context of studies, gender, and ethnicity, whereas, research design included research approaches and quasi-experimental studies. This study also provides recommendations for future research regarding emotional intelligence and reading comprehension performance. It is the aim that potential researchers would benefit from this paper’s analysis of the current research trends regarding reading emotional intelligence.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, reading comprehension, research variables, research design, systematic review.

1. Introduction:

1.1 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) was defined by Mayer and Salovey (1997) as the high cognitive ability of recognizing emotions of oneself and others’. Three dominant pioneers have theorized and contributed to the concept of EI, i.e., Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004, 2008). They offered the first formal definition of EI, which they later refined in 1997. Mayer and Salovey (1997) stated that EI refers to specific “abilities to perceive emotion, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thoughts, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (p. 5). This definition entailed that someone’s ability in perceiving emotional input would speculate the changes in thoughts and results in intelligence and vice versa. In simple words, controlled emotions help install intellectual growth and intelligence generates emotional growth.

According to Goleman (1995), emotions are the “impulse to act, the instant plans for handling life that evolution has instilled in us” (p. 6). As a result of combining emotions with intelligence, an individual would be able to establish various skills and competencies (Butcher & Harvey, 1998). In Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), the role of personal trait (i.e., EI) is clearly found factorial in determining performance on reading tasks. This theory is quite different as compared to earlier theories. Old theories are of the view that the behaviour of a person is a reaction of environmental provocations (Bandura, 2006; Dierker, et.al 2018; Shehzad, Alghorbany, Lashari, & Lashari, 2019). Whereas, SCT focuses on the association between a person, their behaviour, and environment around him/her (Herz,

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Schunk & Zehnder, 2014; Shehzad, Alghorbany, Lashari, Lashari, & Razzaq, 2019). The association between these three elements of SCT is shown in the model of triadic reciprocity in Figure 1. below. Therefore, the definition of Goleman (1995) is adopted in this study as it falls in the scope of the theoretical framework of this paper.

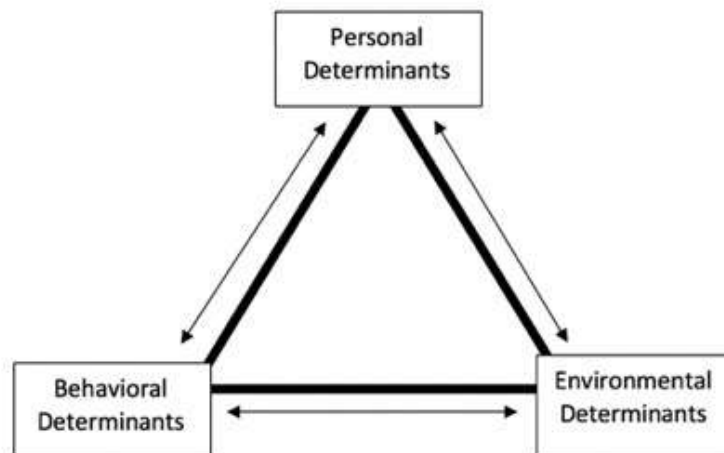


Figure 1. Model of triadic reciprocity (adopted from Bandura, 1986).

1.2 Reading Comprehension

There are many definitions of reading comprehension posed by different authors. Anderson (1985) has defined reading comprehension as the procedure of creating a sense from written texts. This specific complicated skill requires the synchronisation of several interconnected information sources. Similarly, according to Wixson, Peters, Weber, and Roeber (1987), reading comprehension is a method of formation of meaning with the help of a forceful collaboration between a reader's past knowledge about the content, information presented in the text, and the background of the reading situation. Likewise, Smith (1973) is of the viewpoint that reading comprehension is like a communication process which consists of the transmission of a message from an informer to a receiver.

The language experts have tried to explain the reading process in many ways. Several theories and models regarding reading comprehension have been presented. To date, several reading researchers (e.g., Anderson & Pearson, 1988; Goodman, 1967; Gouch, 1972; Grabe & Stroller, 2002; Stanovich, 1980) have tried to construct a model to represent an authentic reading process. These models are known as process models (Urquhart & Weir, 1998). The three most famous models of reading are known as bottom-up, top-down, and interactive process models. A bottom-up model considers text as a series of words in which the reader is supposed to decode each word separately. This model lays stress on knowledge related to word identification and phonics (Hardin, 2001; Davidovitch, 2018). A bottom-up model has been used generally by foreign language learners who were taught Grammar Translation Method (GTM) for reading comprehension (Sidek, 2012). On the other hand, a top-down model is opposite to the bottom-up model, in which a reader needs to activate schemata (i.e., background knowledge) about content, structure and their own experience. The interpretation of the content depends upon the schemata of a reader (Alderson, 2000). The third model, i.e., an interactive model is a combination of both bottom-up and top-down models. In this model, a reader needs to decode every word separately as well as use the background knowledge to comprehend the text successfully (Bensoussan & Kreindler, 1990; Ghanney, 2018).

EI is considered an important construct. It has been found from the meta-analysis of more than 100 research studies which were carried out in the time span of last twenty years that EI is among the strongest forecaster of learners' achievement and accomplishment (Alghorbany & Hamzah, 2020). Due to the vital importance of EI in academic achievement, many authors have conducted systematic literature reviews of EI with several academic outcomes including academic achievement, writing achievement, science achievement (Festus, 2012; McCleskey, 2014; Colomeischi & Colomeischi, 2015; Musonda, 2017; Tariq, Qualter, Roberts, Appleby, & Barnes, 2013; Yeigh et al., 2016). However, little attention was given to reading achievement. Therefore, considering the importance of EI variable, the current paper will present a systematic review of the literature involving EI and reading comprehension performance.

2. Research Questions

Precisely, the current systematic literature review sought to address the subsequent research questions:

RQ1: What do the outcomes of the previous studies indicate regarding the association between EI and reading comprehension?

RQ2: What is the role of the variables (i.e., context of the studies, gender, and ethnicity) regarding the association between EI and reading comprehension?

RQ3: What are the specific research designs employed by the past studies in determining the association between EI and reading comprehension?

3. Method

3.1 Eligibility Criteria and Selection

The eligibility criteria regarding the insertion of studies in this review was limited to only those studies which are published, refereed journal articles and doctoral dissertations between a time frame of fifteen years, i.e. 2005 to 2020. The reason for selecting refereed journal articles and doctoral dissertations was that they are more reliable as compared to non-refereed journal articles and master dissertations. A time frame of fifteen years was selected because it involves more current research that has been carried out regarding EI and reading performance and pinpoints the general research tendencies in the existing literature. Out of 30 studies, sixteen were rejected: ten were non-refereed journal articles, four were conference papers and two were master dissertations. Within fourteen refereed journal articles, seven were Scopus-indexed journal articles. The author used ULRICHSWEB to differentiate between refereed and non-refereed journal articles. The Scopus website was used to determine Scopus-indexed journal articles.

Regarding the methodology of the studies, no limitations were applied. The current review tended to include all the studies irrespective of any specific method used in the reviewed studies, i.e. quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods. Also, no restrictions regarding sample were applied. Therefore, a diverse range of participants was achieved including, teachers, incarcerated adults and kindergarten students to university level students. Similarly, no participants were excluded on the basis age, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status.

3.2 Search Strategy

To determine the studies, a systematic review of the electronic databases was conducted by the authors. The search terms used while searching the studies include, 'emotional intelligence', 'reading', 'reading comprehension performance', 'reading achievement', 'relationship between emotional intelligence and reading comprehension', 'relationship between emotional intelligence and reading accomplishment'. These search terms were inserted in databases including Science Direct, Scopus and Web of Science, ERIC, which employed Ebsco platforms. Also, for thesis abstraction, ProQuest database was utilised. A final search was performed on June 23, 2020. Figure 2. below illustrates the full strategy employed while searching.

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Figure 2. Example of the Full Search Strategy.

3.3 Data Abstraction

To summarise the key elements of research studies, it was decided that this research would use a matrix table for the current research article and a data abstraction table was created to show the related information of the review in a systematic and summarized way. All gathered data was organized and integrated manually. For the purpose of information abstraction, the following factors were considered in completion of the data abstraction table: country in which study was performed, sample attributes (containing sample size, gender and average age), outcome instruments, research approach, and important findings.

4. Literature Review

The review of the literature referenced in this article includes fourteen studies (see Table 1 for an overview of the studies). The review has been presented on the basis of two main aspects, i.e., variables and research design. Variables include, context of studies, gender, and ethnicity, whereas, research design consists of research approaches and experimental studies involving quasi design.

4.1 Variables

4.1.1 Context of Studies

In this literature review, out of fourteen research studies, ten were conducted in Iran, two in USA, one in both UK Taiwan, and Hong Kong, and one in each of the following countries: Norway, Sweden, Singapore, Indonesia, Canada, and Malaysia. Out of ten studies conducted in Iran, eight studies indicated that there was a significant correlation between EI and reading comprehension (Abdolrezapour, & Tavakoli, 2012; Abdolrezapour, 2017; Abdolrezapour, Tavakoli, & Ketabi, 2014; Dehkordi, & Bidabadi, 2015; Fani, 2015; Ghabanchi, & Rastegar, 2014; Motallebzadeh, 2009; Talebinejad, & Fard, 2012). Conversely, two studies indicated an insignificant relationship between EI and reading comprehension (Izadi, & Nowrouzi, 2016; Rahimi, Sadighi, & Fard, 2012).

A total of two studies were conducted in the USA. Only one study indicated that there was a significant correlation between EI and reading comprehension (Ramsay, Sperling, & Dornisch, 2010). On the other hand, one study revealed that there was a moderate correlation between EI and reading comprehension (Peters, Kranzler, & Rossen, 2009). Moreover, one study was conducted in UK. Mavroveli and Sánchez- Ruiz (2011) investigated the role of EI in boosting the academic achievement as a whole. In the same manner, one study was performed in Malaysia. The study showed a positive significant correlation between EI and reading performance (Mohzan, Hassan, & AbdHalil, 2013).

4.1.2 Gender

The role of gender in students' EI and reading comprehension performance has merely never been highlighted in any study in the last fifteen years. Only one study by Mavroveli and Sánchez- Ruiz (2011) has investigated the role of gender in EI and reading comprehension. Their data findings showed a significant difference in gender regarding the correlation between EI and reading comprehension. This finding draws a great deal of attention to the need of more studies taking gender into consideration. It is also interesting to observe that five of ten studies in Iran have been conducted on samples including only female participants (Abdolrezapour, & Tavakoli, 2012; Abdolrezapour, 2017; Abdolrezapour et al., 2014; Rahimi, Sadighi, & Fard, 2012; Talebinejad, & Fard, 2012).

4.1.3 Ethnicity

Ethnicity, unfortunately, was not in the scope of interest in the literature of the present study. therefore, no evidence seems to prove or refute the impact of ethnicity on the relationship of EI and reading comprehension.

4.2 Research design

Regarding research design, two important aspects were highlighted during the review of the studies, i.e., research approaches adopted in different studies, and experimental studies involving quasi design.

4.2.1 Research Approaches

After the review of the literature it was found that the majority of the studies adopted a quantitative research approach. Out of 14 studies reviewed, eight studies employed a quantitative approach. However, only one study adopted a qualitative research approach. An interesting finding was found that out of 14 studies, not a single study adopted a mixed-method approach. In other words, 57% studies were quantitative in nature and only 7% have employed qualitative research approach as shown in Figure 3. below.

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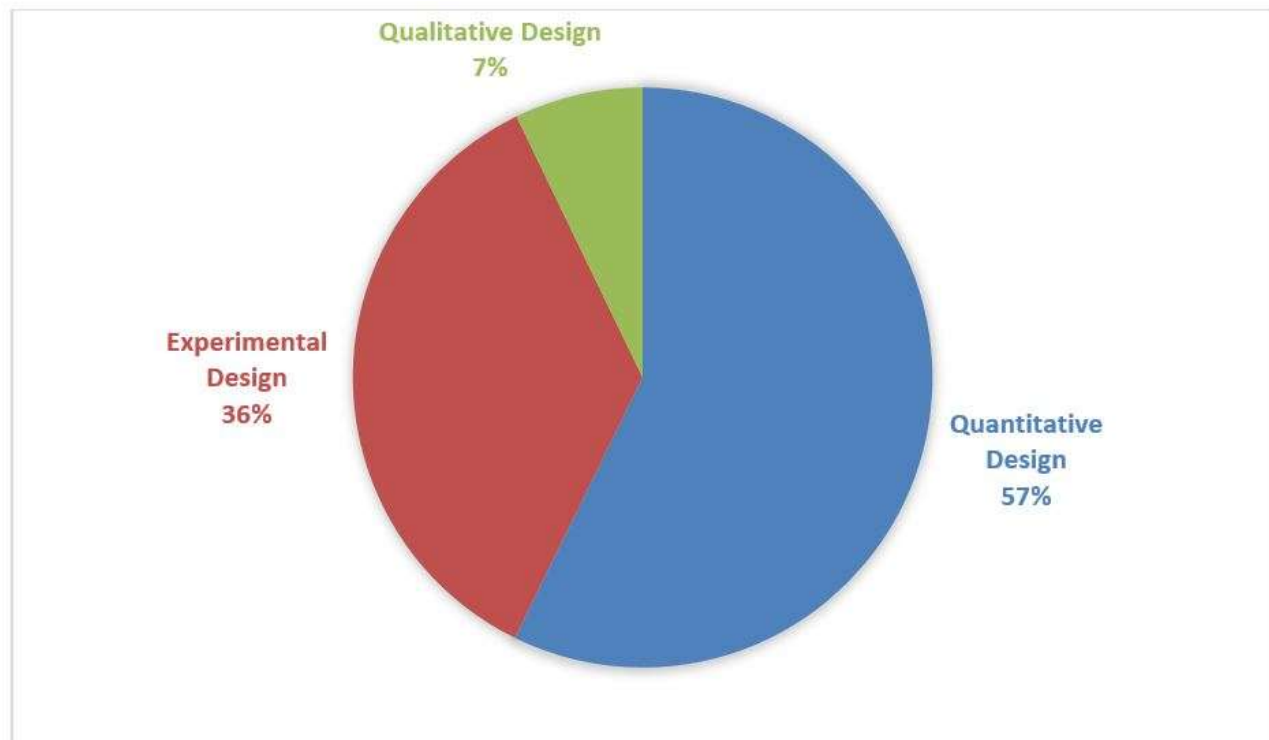


Figure 3. Research approaches

4.2.2 Quasi-Experimental Studies

After reviewing 14 studies presented in the current literature review, it was found that only five studies used a quasi-experimental research design. Abdolrezapour and Tavakoli (2012) conducted their study by giving 63 female Iranian participants, who were studying in a language center, several comprehension activities that included highly emotional content to induce them to talk about their emotions and to raise their EI. Their study findings indicated that participants in the experimental group showed greater achievement in reading comprehension compared to the control group. Similarly, Abdolrezapour et al. (2014) conducted an eight-week experimental study with a qualitative data collection design. Their study was conducted on 14 female teenager students. The results showed a significant relationship between EI and reading comprehension. Later in 2017, Abdolrezapour, the same researcher of the previous two studies, conducted a study to determine the relationship between the same variables but on different participants, i.e., 50 Iranian intermediate students. His study findings indicated that the procedures to reading assessment tasks made a difference in learners' level of reading performance. That is to say EI teaching has elevated the ability to better comprehend read texts.

In the USA, a study was conducted by Ramsay et al. (2010) on a larger sample (N= 353; 296 females and 57 males). The researchers employed five instruments in order to collect the data including, 1) reading comprehension test, 2) Demographic questionnaire, 3) Matching test, 4) Multiple-choice recognition test, and 5) Interest questionnaire. The study findings showed a significant correlation between EI and reading comprehension. Adversely, one study by Izadi, and Nowrouzi (2016) on 42 Iranian students found no significant correlation between EI and reading comprehension. However, the majority of the studies in the present literature showed significant correlations between the study 's variables.

5. Conclusion

After systematic review of the literature, important findings and vital conclusions have been drawn. The majority of the studies found a positive and significant association between EI and reading achievement (Abdolrezapour, & Tavakoli, 2012; Abdolrezapour, 2017; Abdolrezapour et al., 2014; Dehkordi, & Bidabadi, 2015; Fani, 2015; Ghabanchi, & Rastegar, 2014; Mavroveli & Sánchez- Ruiz, 2011; Mohzan, Hassan, & AbdHalil, 2013; Motallebzadeh, 2009; Ramsay et al., 2010; Talebinejad, & Fard, 2012). Also, only one study found a moderate relationship between the study variables (Peters, Kranzler, & Rossen, 2009). However, a few studies indicated an insignificant association between the two variables (Izadi, & Nowrouzi, 2016; Rahimi, Sadighi, & Fard, 2012). Regarding the location in which these fourteen studies were conducted, it was found that researchers have given much more attention to Iran: 10 studies were

conducted in the Iran. The USA was the second with two studies and there was one study conducted in both of UK and Malaysia. The review clearly indicates that more research is necessary in some countries where the research regarding EI and reading comprehension is scarce. More particularly, more research needs to be conducted in ESL countries.

Regarding the gender of the sample, only one study among the other studies in the literature has studied the gender differences in regard to the relationship between the study variables and found it significant (Mavroveli & Sánchez- Ruiz, 2011). Moreover, five studies, all in Iran were conducted only on female students unjustifiably. (Abdolrezapour, & Tavakoli, 2012; Abdolrezapour, 2017; Abdolrezapour et al., 2014; Rahimi, Sadighi, & Fard, 2012; Talebinejad, & Fard, 2012).

No study among the studies presented in this this study has investigated the role of ethnicity on EI and reading performance. Therefore, it is recommended that there is an enormous gap of research that needs to be filled in all countries regarding the relationship of the ethnicity variable with EI and reading performance. It was also revealed after reviewing the literature that out of 14 studies, eight studies were quantitative in nature. Whereas, only one adopted a qualitative research design. It was interesting to observe that not even a single study was conducted by using a mixed-methods research design. Therefore, it is recommended to the future researchers that they conduct research on EI and reading performance by using mixed-methods research design to understand the phenomena in a greater depth. Lastly, only five studies were conducted in which a quasi-experimental research design was employed. Therefore, more research needs to be done by using a quasi-experimental research design.

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Table 1: Summary of Included Studies within the Systematic Review Chronologically.

N. Index	Author(s), Year	Title	Country	Method	Participants	Instrument	Findings	Gender difference	Ethnicity
1 Non-Scopus	Motallebzadeh, K. (2009).	The Relationship between the Emotional Intelligence of Iranian EFL Learners and Their Reading Comprehension and Structural Ability	Iran	Correlational quantitative research	250 Iranian EFL learners	1- Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB, 2005) 2. 'Bar-On EI test, (EQ-I).1980	Significant relationship between EI and Reading comprehension	//////////	////////// //
2 Scopus	Peters, C., Kranzler, J. H., & Rossen, E. (2009)	Validity of the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test: Youth Version-Research Edition	USA	Correlational quantitative research	50 students specifically White or Caucasian (n = 37), African American (n = 9), Hispanic (n = 2), Asian (n = 1), and Other (n = 1)	1. Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test: Youth Version-Research Version (MSCEIT-YV: Mayer et al., in press). 2. BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory: Youth Version (EQ-i:YV).	overall EI and the subscales correlated moderately with Broad Reading achievement	//////////	////////// //
1 Scopus	Ramsay, Sperling, & Dornisch, (2010)	A comparison of the effects of students' expository text comprehension strategies	USA	Experimental study	296 females and 57 males introductory educational psychology classes	1.The target text, with a Flesch-Kinkaid reading level of 12.0. 2.Demographic questionnaire 3.Matching test 4.Multiple-choice recognition test 5.Interest questionnaire	Significant relationship between EI and Reading comprehension	//////////	////////// //
3 Scopus	Mavroveli, S., & Sánchez- Ruiz, M. J. (2011).	Trait emotional intelligence influences on academic achievement and school behaviour	UK	Correlational quantitative research	565 children from diverse ethnic background attending three English state primary schools.	1. Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Child Form (TEIQue-CF), 2. Peer-victimization scale and bullying behaviour scale	Significant relationship between EI and Reading comprehension	Significant difference in gender regarding the rel btw EI an RC	////////// //
13 Scopus	Abdolrezapour, P., & Tavakoli, M. (2012)	The relationship between emotional intelligence and EFL learners' achievement in reading comprehension	Iran	a quasi-experimental by giving them comprehension activities that included highly emotional content to induce them to talk about their emotions and to raise their emotional intelligence	63 students studying Interchange 2 course in a language center	1. TEIQue-ASF (Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Adolescent Short Form 2.	participants in the experimental group showed greater achievement in reading comprehension	All participants were female and they varied in age from 15 to 18.	////////// //
7	Rahimi, Sadighi, & Hosseiny	THE IMPACT OF LINGUISTIC AND EMOTIONAL	Iran	Correlational quantitative research	135 senior English majors	1.Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale	The results, however, showed no	all these students were	////////// //

Non-Scopus	Fard, (2012).	INTELLIGENCE ON THE READING PERFORMANCE OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS			Iranian university	(SSRES).	significant difference among the students with different degrees of EI.	female.	
12 Scopus	Talebinejad, M. R., & Fard, Z. R. (2012).	The Relationship between Emotional Quotients, Socioeconomic Status and Performance in Reading Comprehension: A Case Study of Iranian High School Students	Iran	Correlational quantitative research	80 homogenous EFL female students from different high schools	1. The Quick Placement Test 2. Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire. 3. Socioeconomic Status Questionnaire 4. Reading Comprehension Tests	Data analysis and statistical calculations revealed that there was a significant relationship between the students' emotional intelligence, socioeconomic status and their reading ability.	female students	//////// //
4 Scopus	Mohzan, M. A. M., Hassan, N., & Abd Halil, N. (2013)	The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Academic Achievement	Malaysia	Correlational quantitative research	1214 bachelor degree students		Emotional Intelligence on Academic Achievement are related	//////////	//////// //
8 Non-Scopus	Abdolrezaqur, P., Tavakoli, & Ketabi, (2014).	Qualitative analysis of mediational strategies in emotionalized dynamic assessment of L2 reading comprehension	Iran	Eight-week experimental and qualitative	14 students studying Interchange 2 participated in this study.	1. Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Adolescent Short Form (TEIQue-ASF) 2. Reading comprehension test	Significant relationship between EI and Reading comprehension	All participants were female and they varied in age from 12 to 15.	//////// //
11 Non-Scopus	Ghabanchi, Z., & Rastegar, R. E. (2014).	The Correlation of IQ and Emotional Intelligence with Reading Comprehension	Iran	Correlational quantitative research	Forty-five EFL college students from Payame Noor University of Gonbad and Azad University	1. Bar-On's (EQ-i)	A small but significant correlation was found between reading comprehension scores and some emotional-intelligence	//////////	//////// //
12 Non-Scopus	Fani (2015).	Reading Comprehension Performance Viewed in the Light of Bar-On's Emotional Intelligence Scales and Subscales	Iran	Correlational quantitative research	268 students	1. Bar-On's (EQ-i) 2. a reading comprehension test.	The relationship between EI and reading comprehension ability was significant	//////////	//////// //
6 Non-Scopus	Majidi Dehkordi, B., & Shirani Bidabadi, F. (2015).	Relationship between Iranian EFL Learners' Reading Strategy Use and Emotional Intelligence	Iran	'ex-post facto' research design	a group of 60 was selected out of 274 university learners majoring in TEFL and English Translation.	1. English Proficiency Test 2. Bar-On's (1997) EI Test,	The results of the study revealed that EI level was positively associated with Reading Strategy Use	//////////	//////// //
13 Non-Scopus	Izadi, & Nowrouzi, (2016)	Reciprocal Teaching and Emotional Intelligence: A Study of Iranian EFL Learners' Reading	Iran	Experimental	42 learners	1. Reading section of IELTS Test 2. Trait Emotional Intelligence (Trait EI) -Adolescent Short Form (TEIQueASF) by	Non-Significant relationship between EI and Reading comprehension	//////////	//////// //

**THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN READING COMPREHENSION
PERFORMANCE: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

		Comprehension				(Petrides, et al., 2006			
14	Abdolreza-pour, P. (2017)	Improving L2 Reading Comprehension through Emotionalized Dynamic Assessment Procedure	Iran	a quasi-experimental pretest-treatment-posttest design Treatment (8 Weeks	50 intermediate learners aged 12–15	1.Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Adolescent Short Form (TEIQue-ASF) 2.Reading Comprehension Test	procedures to reading assessment tasks made a difference in learners' level of reading performance	All participants were females	//////// //
Scopus									