

The Relationship between Self-Assessment and Goal Orientation among Iranian Advanced EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study investigates the relationship between self-assessment and goal orientation among Iranian advanced EFL learners. Self-assessment, a critical component of self-regulated learning, empowers learners to reflect on their progress, set personal goals, and enhance their language proficiency.

Methods: Using validated Likert-scale questionnaires, this study explores the levels of self-assessment and goal orientation among 150 advanced EFL learners in Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan, Iran. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were employed to analyze the data.

Results: The results revealed that participants exhibit high levels of self-assessment and a strong preference for mastery-oriented goals, with moderate agreement with performance-oriented goals and lower agreement with performance-avoidance behaviors. A strong positive correlation was found between self-assessment and mastery orientation, while a weak negative correlation was observed with performance-avoidance orientation. Regression analysis indicates that self-assessment significantly predicts mastery orientation, explaining 46% of the variance.

Conclusions: These findings suggest that self-assessment practices promote mastery-oriented goals and reduce avoidance behaviors, highlighting the importance of incorporating self-assessment strategies in EFL education to foster intrinsic motivation and resilience. The study provides valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers aiming to enhance language learning outcomes in similar contexts.

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Introduction

Self-assessment has emerged as a pivotal component in the field of language learning, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. It empowers learners by enabling them to reflect on their progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and set personalized learning goals. Effective self-assessment strategies have been linked to increased motivation, autonomy, and overall academic performance (Butler & Lee, 2010; Yan & Brown, 2017). For instance, Baleghizadeh and Masoun (2014) found that regular self-assessment practices significantly improved EFL students' learning goal orientation, fostering a deeper engagement with the learning process.

Goal orientation theory provides a framework for understanding how learners' motivations and behaviors are shaped by their goals and perceptions of success. Mastery-oriented learners strive to develop competence, embrace challenges, and persist despite difficulties, whereas performance-oriented learners focus on demonstrating their abilities and may avoid challenges to protect their self-image (Ames & Archer, 1988; Elliot & McGregor, 2001). More recent research has expanded this framework to include performance-avoidance orientation, where learners avoid tasks to prevent failure or negative judgments (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). This tripartite model offers a nuanced understanding of how learners' goals influence their academic behaviors and outcomes.

The interplay between self-assessment and goal orientation is particularly relevant in EFL contexts, where learners often face unique challenges, such as limited exposure to the target language outside the classroom and high expectations in competitive academic environments. In Iran, where English is primarily learned as a foreign language in academic settings, advanced EFL learners must navigate these challenges while striving to achieve language proficiency. Their ability to self-assess accurately and align their learning goals with intrinsic motivation could significantly impact their success in language learning (Zhang & Zhang, 2020).

Despite the growing body of research on self-assessment and goal orientation, limited studies have explored the relationship between these two constructs among Iranian advanced EFL learners. This gap in the literature is noteworthy, given the unique cultural and educational context of Iran, where societal expectations and competitive academic environments may influence learners' goal orientations (Al-Hoorie et al., 2021). Understanding how self-assessment practices shape goal

orientation in this context can provide valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers seeking to foster more effective and self-directed learning strategies.

This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the relationship between self-assessment and goal orientation among Iranian advanced EFL learners. Using validated Likert-scale questionnaires, the study will provide empirical evidence on how self-assessment practices influence goal-setting behaviors and orientations. The findings of this research can offer practical insights for educators to implement more effective self-assessment techniques that promote positive goal orientation and enhance language learning outcomes. Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the relationship between self-assessment and goal orientation among Iranian advanced EFL learners?

RQ2: How do different types of goal orientation (e.g., mastery vs. performance) correlate with learners' self-assessment practices?

RQ3: To what extent does self-assessment accuracy predict goal orientation among Iranian advanced EFL learners?

RQ4: Are there significant differences in self-assessment practices among Iranian advanced EFL learners with different goal orientations?

By addressing these questions, this study contributes to the growing body of research on self-assessment and goal orientation in EFL contexts, particularly in understudied settings such as Iran. The findings have the potential to inform pedagogical practices and curriculum design, ultimately enhancing the language learning experiences of EFL learners.

Review of Literature

Conceptual Framework

Self-assessment, a key component of self-regulated learning, is rooted in Bandura's (1991) self-efficacy theory, which emphasizes self-reflection in academic success. Zimmerman (2002) highlighted how self-assessment fosters metacognitive awareness and influences goal-setting behaviors. Dweck's (2016) growth mindset theory supports the notion that self-assessment encourages resilience and adaptability.

Goal orientation theory (Dweck & Leggett, 1988) distinguishes between mastery and performance goals. Mastery-oriented learners focus on personal development, while performance-oriented

learners seek external validation. Pintrich (2000) argued that mastery-oriented students engage more in self-regulated learning. Elliot and McGregor (2001) introduced performance-avoidance orientation, where students avoid failure rather than strive for success.

Self-Assessment in EFL Learning

Self-assessment has been widely recognized as a tool for increasing learner autonomy and improving performance (Oscarson, 1989). Butler and Lee (2010) found that self-assessment improves confidence and accuracy in language proficiency evaluation. In EFL contexts, self-assessment is particularly valuable in environments with limited exposure to the target language (Little, 2005).

Recent research highlights the role of technology in self-assessment. Lai and Zheng (2018) found that digital platforms provide immediate feedback, enhancing self-assessment skills. Yan and Brown (2021) emphasized peer-assisted self-assessment as a means of improving accuracy and motivation.

Goal Orientation and Academic Achievement

Mastery orientation is associated with greater academic engagement and persistence (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Pajares et al. (2000) found that mastery-oriented students persist in difficult tasks, whereas performance-oriented students experience more anxiety. In collectivist cultures like Iran, performance-oriented goals are often reinforced by societal expectations (Zhang & Zhang, 2020). However, Wang and Eccles (2013) argue that mastery goals are critical for fostering long-term motivation.

Empirical Studies on Self-Assessment and Goal Orientation

Research indicates that self-assessment contributes to mastery goal orientation. Baleghizadeh and Masoun (2014) found that Iranian EFL learners who engaged in self-assessment were more likely to adopt mastery-oriented goals. Noels et al. (2000) emphasized the role of self-regulated learning strategies in goal setting. Yan and Brown (2017) found that self-assessment accuracy enhances intrinsic motivation and goal-directed behavior. Al-Hoorie et al. (2021) demonstrated that formative self-assessment significantly improves learners' goal orientation and academic performance.

The literature supports the positive impact of self-assessment on goal orientation. However, few studies have examined this relationship among Iranian advanced EFL learners. Given Iran's

competitive academic environment, understanding the role of self-assessment in shaping goal orientation is essential. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring how self-assessment influence's goal orientation, providing insights for educators and curriculum developers.

Material and Methods

This study adopted a quantitative research methodology to investigate the relationship between self-assessment and goal orientation among Iranian advanced EFL learners. The study followed a 'positivist paradigm', as it sought to objectively measure and analyze numerical data derived from structured questionnaires. A 'deductive approach' was employed, as the research was based on existing theoretical frameworks related to self-assessment and goal orientation.

Research Design

The study was designed as a **descriptive-correlational study**, which aimed to describe patterns of self-assessment and goal orientation among Iranian advanced EFL learners and determine whether a statistically significant relationship existed between these two variables. This design was chosen because it aligns with the research questions, which seek to explore the relationship between self-assessment and goal orientation (RQ1), examine how different types of goal orientation correlate with self-assessment practices (RQ2), determine the extent to which self-assessment predicts goal orientation (RQ3), and identify significant differences in self-assessment practices among learners with different goal orientations (RQ4). A descriptive-correlational design is particularly suitable for this study because it allows for the examination of relationships between variables without manipulating them, providing insights into how self-assessment practices influence learners' goal orientations.

Setting and Participants

The participants consisted of 150 male and female English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners from language institutes in Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan, Iran. All participants were native speakers of Persian and studied at an advanced level. They were selected via convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method where participants are chosen based on their availability and willingness to participate. Specifically, participants were recruited from several language institutes in Bandar Abbas, and those who met the inclusion criteria (e.g., advanced proficiency level, willingness to participate) were invited to take part in the study. Their ages ranged from 18 to 42

years, ensuring a diverse sample that reflects the demographic characteristics of advanced EFL learners in the region.

Data Collection Method

Instruments

Two previously validated Likert-scale questionnaires—one measuring self-assessment and the other assessing goal orientation—were used to gather data. Although these instruments had been validated in prior studies, additional validity and reliability checks were performed through a pilot study. This included exploratory factor analysis and the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha to ensure the questionnaires were appropriate for the target population. The questionnaires were distributed in printed format in EFL classrooms. Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, and their participation was voluntary, with all responses kept anonymous.

Pilot Study Overview

To assess the validity and reliability of the two questionnaires (Self-Assessment and Goal Orientation), a pilot study was conducted with 20 advanced EFL learners from an Iranian English institute. Participants were selected based on their English proficiency and willingness to participate. The primary goal of the pilot study was to evaluate the appropriateness of the items, the factor structure, and the internal consistency of the questionnaires.

Construct validity was assessed through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), which was conducted to examine the underlying structure of both questionnaires and to determine if the items corresponded to the expected factors.

Main Study Overview

The main study involved 150 Iranian advanced EFL learners, selected from various English institutes in Bandar Abbas, Iran. Participants were randomly chosen through convenience sampling and were enrolled in advanced-level English courses. Their ages ranged from 18 to 42 years.

The study employed two validated Likert-scale questionnaires:

1. **Self-Assessment Questionnaire (16 items):** This questionnaire was designed to evaluate learners' ability to reflect on their language learning progress and establish personal learning goals.
2. **Goal Orientation Questionnaire (16 items):** This questionnaire measured learners' orientation towards mastery or performance goals in the language learning process.

To ensure clarity and avoid potential language comprehension issues, both questionnaires were administered in Persian. Before the main study, the questionnaires were piloted and adjusted based on feedback from a sample of 20 participants, as described in the pilot study section.

Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed in paper form during regular class sessions. Clear instructions were provided on how to complete the questionnaires, which were filled out individually and anonymously. Participants were asked to read each statement carefully and respond based on their personal experiences and self-reflections. To minimize any external influences on the responses, both questionnaires were administered on the same day. Participants were given 20-30 minutes to complete the questionnaires, a duration deemed sufficient to allow for thoughtful responses without causing fatigue.

Data collection took place at various English institutes in Bandar Abbas. After completing the questionnaires, participants were thanked for their participation, and those interested were provided with additional resources on self-assessment and goal-setting strategies in language learning.

Data Analysis

The collected responses were coded and entered into SPSS for statistical analysis. A series of analytical procedures were employed to examine the relationship between self-assessment and goal orientation.

First, descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies, were calculated to give an overview of self-assessment levels and goal orientations. These measures helped establish an initial understanding of the data distribution and overall trends. Second, correlation analysis was performed using Pearson's correlation coefficient to investigate the strength and direction of the relationship between self-assessment and goal orientation. This analysis sought to reveal significant associations between these variables. Finally, regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the predictive power of self-assessment on goal orientation. Specifically, the analysis focused on whether self-assessment could predict mastery-oriented and performance-oriented goals, offering insights into how self-assessment influences learners' goal-setting tendencies.

Validity Checks

A random sampling technique was employed to ensure the validity of the data collection process. Additionally, participants' demographic information was cross-checked to confirm that the sample was representative of the target population. The use of validated questionnaires, as outlined in the pilot study, further ensured that the measurement tools were appropriate for the research objectives.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were prioritized. Participants received detailed study information and provided informed consent. Participation was voluntary, with the option to withdraw anytime without consequences. Data was anonymized to protect privacy, and no identifiable information was collected. The study adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring participants' rights and well-being.

Limitations

Several potential limitations in the data collection procedure should be noted, as they may have influenced the accuracy and reliability of the findings.

One key limitation is language barriers. Although the questionnaires were translated into Persian to enhance clarity, participants may have had varying levels of comprehension regarding the language used in the questions. This could have affected their ability to interpret and respond accurately, potentially leading to inconsistencies in the data.

Another important concern is self-report bias. As with any study relying on self-assessment, there is a risk that participants provided responses that they perceived as socially desirable rather than reflecting their true thoughts and experiences. This tendency could have introduced bias into the results, impacting the validity of the findings.

Results

Pilot study Results

The EFA results revealed that the items in both questionnaires loaded onto the anticipated factors, supporting their alignment with the proposed conceptual framework.

For the Self-Assessment Questionnaire, the factor analysis indicated that all items were loaded onto a single factor with eigenvalues greater than 1, suggesting that the items collectively represent a unified construct related to self-assessment (Table 1). Similarly, the Goal Orientation

Questionnaire identified two factors— ‘mastery orientation’ and ‘performance orientation’— confirming the theoretical framework underlying the questionnaire. The factor analysis results demonstrated that the items measuring each goal orientation loaded strongly onto their respective factors (Table 2).

Table 1. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Results for the Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Factor	Number of Items	Factor Loadings Range	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained (%)
Single Factor	16	0.65–0.85	6.80	42.5%

Notes: All 16 items were loaded onto a single factor with eigenvalues > 1.

Factor loadings ranged from 0.65 to 0.85, indicating strong alignment with the self-assessment construct. No cross-loadings exceeded the threshold of 0.4.

Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Results for the Goal Orientation Questionnaire

Factor	Number of Items	Factor Loadings Range	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained (%)
Mastery Orientation	6	0.70–0.85	4.50	28.1%
Performance Orientation	5	0.60–0.80	3.20	20.0%
Performance Avoidance Orientation	5	0.55–0.75	2.80	17.5%
Total	16	0.55–0.85	10.50	65.6%

Notes: Three factors were identified: mastery orientation (6 items), performance orientation (5 items), and performance-avoidance orientation (5 items).

Factor loadings ranged as follows: Mastery Orientation: 0.70–0.85, Performance Orientation: 0.60–0.80, Performance Avoidance Orientation: 0.55–0.75.

Factor loadings were examined for both questionnaires to ensure that all items contributed meaningfully to their respective factors. The results of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) confirmed the validity of the factor structure for both instruments.

For the Self-Assessment Questionnaire, all items demonstrated strong factor loadings, with values greater than 0.5 on the primary factor. This suggests that each item made a meaningful contribution to the overall construct of self-assessment. Similarly, for the Goal Orientation Questionnaire, the factor loadings varied across the three subscales. The mastery orientation factor exhibited item loadings ranging from 0.70 to 0.85, reflecting a strong alignment with the mastery goals construct. The performance orientation factor showed item loadings between 0.60 and 0.80, indicating a good fit with performance-oriented behaviors. Lastly, the performance-avoidance orientation factor had item loadings ranging from 0.55 to 0.75, confirming its alignment with performance-avoidance orientation behaviors.

To evaluate the internal consistency and reliability of the two questionnaires, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each one. A Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.7 is typically regarded as acceptable for internal consistency. The Cronbach's Alpha for the Self-Assessment Questionnaire was 0.85, indicating high internal consistency. For the Goal Orientation Questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha was 0.82 for the mastery orientation subscale, 0.79 for the performance orientation subscale, and 0.76 for the performance-avoidance orientation subscale, both demonstrating good reliability (Table 3).

Table 3. Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha) for the Questionnaires

Questionnaire	Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Self-Assessment Questionnaire	Single Factor	0.85	High internal consistency
Goal Orientation Questionnaire	Mastery Orientation	0.82	Good reliability
	Performance Orientation	0.79	Good reliability
	Performance Avoidance Orientation	0.76	Acceptable reliability

Notes: Cronbach's Alpha values > 0.7 indicate acceptable internal consistency.

Regarding the factor structure, both questionnaires exhibited strong construct validity, with the factor analysis confirming the expected factor structure. Factor loadings indicated that all items loaded strongly onto their respective factors, with no cross-loadings exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.4. Concerning reliability, both questionnaires showed high internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.7 (Table 4).

Table 4. Summary of Pilot Study Findings

Aspect	Self-Assessment Questionnaire	Goal Orientation Questionnaire
Construct Validity	Single factor confirmed	Three factors confirmed
Factor Loadings	0.65–0.85	Mastery: 0.70–0.85; Performance: 0.60–0.80; Avoidance: 0.55–0.75
Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)	0.85	Mastery: 0.82; Performance: 0.79; Avoidance: 0.76
Conclusion	Valid and reliable	Valid and reliable

In conclusion, the pilot study demonstrated that both the Self-Assessment and Goal Orientation questionnaires are valid and reliable instruments for use in the main study. The factor analysis confirmed the theoretical structure of both questionnaires and Cronbach's Alpha values indicated that the items within each questionnaire consistently measured the intended constructs.

Main Study Results

The results of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship between self-assessment and goal orientation among Iranian advanced EFL learners. The findings are organized to address each of the research questions, offering a clear understanding of how self-assessment practices influence learners' goal orientations.

Descriptive Statistics

Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Q1):

The descriptive statistics for the self-assessment questionnaire revealed that participants generally agreed with the statements, with an overall mean of 4.02 (SD = 0.87). This indicates a positive attitude toward self-assessment among the participants. Specifically, participants strongly agreed with statements related to setting learning goals based on self-assessment (Mean = 4.10) and reflecting on mistakes to improve learning strategies (Mean = 4.10). These findings suggest that Iranian advanced EFL learners are actively engaged in self-assessment practices and use them to guide their learning.

Goal Orientation Questionnaire (Q2):

The goal orientation questionnaire was divided into three subscales: mastery orientation, performance orientation, and performance-avoidance orientation. The results reveal distinct patterns in participants' goal-setting tendencies.

First, regarding mastery orientation, participants exhibited a strong alignment with mastery-oriented goals, with an overall mean of 4.25 (SD = 0.72). This suggests a predominant focus on self-improvement and skill development. Notably, participants strongly agreed with statements such as *"My main goal in learning English is to master the language and improve my skills"* (Mean = 4.20), reinforcing their commitment to personal growth.

In contrast, performance orientation received moderate agreement, with an overall mean of 3.45 (SD = 1.02). This indicates that while participants valued external validation—such as outperforming peers or receiving high grades—this was not their primary motivation. The relatively lower mean compared to mastery orientation suggests that performance-oriented goals played a secondary role in their learning approach.

Finally, performance-avoidance orientation showed the lowest level of agreement among participants, with an overall mean of 2.85 (SD = 1.18). This suggests a reduced tendency to avoid

challenges or experience anxiety related to performance. The lower mean score indicates that most learners did not exhibit strong avoidance behaviors, further emphasizing their inclination toward positive goal-setting strategies.

As evidenced by the findings, participants exhibit a strong alignment with mastery-oriented goals, emphasizing self-improvement and skill development. They also demonstrate a moderate inclination toward performance-oriented goals, suggesting some concern with external validation. Conversely, participants show lower agreement with performance-avoidance behaviors, indicating a reduced tendency to avoid challenges or experience performance anxiety.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis (Table 5) explored the relationship between self-assessment and goal orientation.

Table 5. Correlation Analysis

Variable	Self-Assessment	Mastery Orientation	Performance Orientation	Performance Avoidance Orientation
Self-Assessment	1.00	0.68**	0.38**	-0.28**
Mastery Orientation	0.68**	1.00	0.45**	-0.35**
Performance Orientation	0.38**	0.45**	1.00	0.20**
Performance Avoidance Orientation	-0.28**	-0.35**	0.20**	1.00

Notes: **p < 0.01

A strong positive correlation exists between self-assessment and mastery orientation, a moderate positive correlation with performance orientation, and a weak negative correlation with performance-avoidance orientation.

The findings revealed a significant relationship between self-assessment and goal orientation. Specifically, self-assessment is strongly correlated with mastery orientation ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$), moderately correlated with performance orientation ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$), and weakly negatively correlated with performance-avoidance orientation ($r = -0.28$, $p < 0.01$). These results indicate that learners who engage in self-assessment are more likely to adopt mastery-oriented goals, which focus on self-improvement and skill development. Additionally, self-assessment is associated with a reduced tendency to avoid challenges or experience performance anxiety, as evidenced by the negative correlation with performance-avoidance orientation.

Regression Analysis

The regression analysis (Table 6) was conducted to explore the predictive power of self-assessment on goal orientation. The results indicate that self-assessment significantly predicts all three types of goal orientation.

First, regarding **mastery orientation**, self-assessment accounts for 46% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.46$, $F = 125.45$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting a strong relationship. This indicates that learners who engage in self-assessment are more likely to adopt mastery-oriented goals, which emphasize self-improvement and skill development.

Similarly, **performance orientation** is also influenced by self-assessment, though to a lesser extent. The analysis shows that self-assessment explains 14% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.14$, $F = 24.12$, $p < 0.01$). While this confirms a significant relationship, the predictive power of self-assessment for performance-oriented goals is notably weaker compared to mastery orientation.

A weaker yet still significant relationship is observed for **performance-avoidance orientation**. Self-assessment accounts for only 8% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.08$, $F = 12.89$, $p < 0.01$), indicating a modest effect. This suggests that while self-assessment may help mitigate avoidance behaviors and performance anxiety, its influence is relatively limited.

Table 6. Regression Analysis Results

Dependent Variable	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F-Value	p-Value
Mastery Orientation	0.46	0.45	125.45	< 0.01
Performance Orientation	0.14	0.13	24.12	< 0.01
Performance Avoidance Orientation	0.08	0.07	12.89	< 0.01

Self-assessment significantly predicts all three goal orientation types, explaining the most variance in mastery orientation (46%) and the least in performance-avoidance orientation (8%).

Overall, these findings suggest that self-assessment is most effective in fostering mastery-oriented goals, which are associated with intrinsic motivation and long-term language proficiency. In contrast, its predictive power is considerably weaker for performance and performance-avoidance orientations, indicating that additional factors may influence these goal-setting tendencies among advanced EFL learners.

Answering Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between self-assessment and goal orientation?

Self-assessment is strongly associated with mastery goals, supporting Zimmerman's (2002) model of self-regulated learning. The moderate correlation with performance orientation suggests some external validation, but the weak negative correlation with performance-avoidance orientation highlights its role in reducing anxiety.

2. How do different goal orientations correlate with self-assessment?

Mastery-oriented learners exhibit the highest self-assessment engagement. Performance-oriented learners show moderate self-assessment involvement, while performance-avoidant learners engage in self-assessment the least.

3. To what extent does self-assessment predict goal orientation?

Regression analysis confirms that self-assessment significantly predicts mastery orientation. Its predictive power for performance orientation is weaker, and its influence on performance-avoidance orientation is minimal.

4. Are there significant differences in self-assessment practices based on goal orientation?

Mastery-oriented learners demonstrate the highest self-assessment levels. Performance-oriented learners engage in self-assessment but are influenced by external validation. Performance-avoidance learners exhibit the lowest self-assessment levels, reinforcing the role of self-assessment in fostering resilience.

Discussion

This study provides key insights into the relationship between self-assessment and goal orientation among Iranian advanced EFL learners, structured around research questions.

RQ1: Relationship Between Self-Assessment and Goal Orientation

A strong positive correlation between self-assessment and mastery orientation suggests that learners who self-assess tend to focus on self-improvement and skill development (Zimmerman, 2002; Baleghizadeh & Masoun, 2014). A moderate correlation with performance orientation indicates some external validation, though intrinsic motivation plays a stronger role (Yan &

Brown, 2017). A weak negative correlation with performance-avoidance orientation highlights self-assessment's role in reducing anxiety and avoidance behaviors (Elliot & McGregor, 2001).

RQ2: Correlation Between Goal Orientations and Self-Assessment

Mastery goals strongly align with self-assessment, emphasizing intrinsic motivation and growth mindset (Dweck, 2016). Performance-oriented learners engage in self-assessment to a lesser extent, often influenced by societal expectations (Zhang & Zhang, 2020). A weak negative correlation with performance-avoidance orientation suggests that self-assessment fosters resilience and reduces anxiety (Al-Hoorie et al., 2021).

RQ3: Predictive Power of Self-Assessment on Goal Orientation

Regression analysis shows self-assessment predicts mastery orientation significantly (46% variance), reinforcing its role in intrinsic motivation and language proficiency (Pintrich, 2000). It weakly predicts performance orientation (14%) and performance-avoidance orientation (8%), suggesting other factors shape these tendencies (Wang & Eccles, 2013).

RQ4: Differences in Self-Assessment Across Goal Orientations

Mastery-oriented learners exhibit the highest self-assessment engagement, reinforcing confidence and accuracy in language evaluation (Butler & Lee, 2010). Performance-oriented learners engage moderately, while performance-avoidant learners show the lowest self-assessment levels. Encouraging self-assessment can promote motivation, resilience, and improved learning outcomes (Oscarson, 1989).

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between self-assessment and goal orientation among Iranian advanced EFL learners. Findings show self-assessment is strongly linked to mastery-oriented goals, emphasizing self-improvement and intrinsic motivation, aligning with Zimmerman's (2002) self-regulated learning theory. A moderate correlation with performance-oriented goals suggests some focus on external validation, while self-assessment reduces performance-avoidance behaviors, promoting resilience.

Regression analysis revealed self-assessment significantly predicts mastery orientation (46% variance), reinforcing its role in learner autonomy and language proficiency. Its predictive power for performance and avoidance orientations was weaker, suggesting cultural and environmental

influences. Overall, self-assessment effectively fosters mastery-oriented behaviors and reduces avoidance tendencies.

Implications for EFL Education

Educators should integrate self-assessment strategies, such as reflective journals and peer-assisted assessments, to enhance metacognitive awareness and intrinsic motivation. Providing feedback and fostering a supportive environment can help learners set goals, monitor progress, and build resilience, improving language learning outcomes.

Beyond classroom practice, this study underscores self-assessment's role in fostering autonomous, motivated learners, contributing to student-centered approaches that enhance engagement, critical thinking, and self-regulation.

Limitations and Future Research

Self-reported data may introduce bias, suggesting future studies incorporate qualitative methods for deeper insights. The study's cultural context (Iran) limits generalizability, warranting exploration in diverse settings. Additional factors, such as teacher feedback, should be examined, and longitudinal research could track long-term impacts of self-assessment on goal orientation and language learning.

Overall, this study highlights self-assessment's effectiveness in fostering adaptive goal orientations, supporting long-term language learning success.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the ethics committee of Islamic Azad University. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design, material preparation, data collection, and analysis. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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