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The Role of Extensive Reading, Confidence Levels, and Learning Environment on the Academic Performance of Non-English Major EFL Learners in the Kurdish Region

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Abstract

In contemporary times, the acquisition of English language skills has emerged as a crucial necessity for individuals seeking to thrive in the global marketplace. This imperative has garnered the attention of scholars and decision-makers alike. Therefore, the current study aims to examine the influence of extensive reading, students' self-assurance, and the learning environment on the academic achievement of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in the Kurdish region. This study investigates the moderating influence of mentoring on the relationship between extensive reading, students' confidence, and EFL learner performance. Additionally, it explores the mediating role of institutional support in the relationship between the learning environment and EFL students' performance in the Kurdish region. The data was collected by the researchers through survey questionnaires administered to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students residing in the Kurdish region. The researchers utilised the smart-PLS methodology to investigate the relationships between the variables. The results of the study suggest that there is a positive correlation between extensive reading, students' self-assurance, the learning environment, and the performance of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in the Kurdish region. The study also revealed that mentoring plays a significant moderating role in the relationship between extensive reading, students' confidence, and EFL learner performance. Additionally, institutional support was found to significantly mediate the relationship between the learning environment and EFL student performance in the Kurdish region. The study provides guidance to policymakers in formulating policies aimed at enhancing the academic performance of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. These policies focus on the implementation of strategies such as extensive reading, fostering student confidence, providing effective mentoring, and creating an optimal learning environment.

Keywords: Extensive reading, students' confidence, learning environment, EFL learner performance, mentoring, institutional support

Introduction

Countries across the world are renowned for their societies that prioritise education in the domains of ethics, skills, and morality. A comprehensive resolution to these inquiries lies in the establishment of a robust education system of superior calibre. An effective educational system is instrumental in cultivating high-achieving students, thereby contributing to the advancement of society. The academic performance of a student is a determining factor in their overall success. The significance of students' academic performance lies in its potential to foster positive outcomes in areas such as interpersonal development, skill acquisition, and ethical enhancement. Well-educated individuals are more likely to have access to improved opportunities for enhancing their standard of living, such as better employment prospects, innovative business concepts, and related avenues. In the realm of academia, it is important to distinguish between skill and effort, as they are not interchangeable terms. Merely exerting effort does not guarantee success, as the significance of one's abilities becomes progressively more crucial. This phenomenon can

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be attributed to a cognitive ability that enables individuals to mentally anticipate the causal outcomes associated with the management of skill- and effort-related identities. Although these self-perceptions are mutually reinforcing, their significance varies for each individual learner. The objective of enhancing educational institutions is to enhance the academic performance of students. The global literacy rate among individuals aged 15 years and older stands at 83% (Ainscow, 2020; Zhao & Watterston, 2021). The majority of the literacy rate is concentrated in developed economies. Nevertheless, the developing economies continue to lag significantly in this competition. The African region exhibits a comparatively lower position on the list of literacy rates.

Iraq is recognised as one of the burgeoning economies on a global scale. The country's economic dependence is centred around fuel resources. The nation is currently enduring the consequences of the conflict. According to Jameel and Ahmad (2020), the total population of the nation amounts to 43.5 million individuals, while the gross domestic product (GDP) for the year 2022 is reported to be 297 billion. The nation is making diligent endeavours to enhance its infrastructure in order to improve the quality of life for its citizens. The educational system in the Kurdish region of Iraq is subject to strict regulation by the Iraqi government, overseen by the Iraqi Ministry of Education. Public state education is provided at no cost, encompassing primary school education up to doctoral degree programmes. Private educational institutions are indeed present; however, the exorbitant expenses associated with these establishments render them unattractive to the majority of individuals in Iraq (Al-Obthani, 2018). The primary appeal for individuals lies in their autonomy, characterised by limited oversight from the Iraqi government, thereby granting them the freedom to select educational and vocational paths based on personal preferences. The literacy rate of the nation stood at 56% in 2018 (Gadai et al., 2022). In 2023, the allocation of funds towards education in Iraq amounted to 4.7% of the total expenditure. The Kurdish region is currently facing a pressing need for improvement in its education system, aiming to cultivate a highly skilled workforce by enhancing the academic performance of its students (Jules, 2022).

Various factors influence students' academic performance, both within the Kurdish region of Iraq and worldwide. 1) Inadequate educational system (Briones et al., 2022). Insufficient integration of modern-era technology in education (Ameen et al., 2019). Influence of the institutional environment 4) Support provided by educational institutions (Yang & Lee, 2021). Impact of government policies (Xinogalos et al., 2019). Shortage of highly skilled faculty members (Ullah et al., 2020). Inadequate provision of effective mentoring 8) Student motivation is an important factor to consider in the context of education (Li & Wang, 2022). The issue of students lacking confidence has been identified as a significant concern (Li & Wang, 2022). The quality of the learning environment can have a significant impact on student outcomes. 11) Demotivation among students has been recognised as a noteworthy challenge (Sarfray, Khawaja, & Ivascu, 2022). 12) Anxiety is a prevalent issue that can hinder student performance. 13) The implementation of effective education strategies is crucial for promoting student learning (Briones et al., 2022). The primary objective of the current study was to investigate various factors, including teaching strategies, students' self-confidence, learning environment, and students' performance. Additionally, this study examines the moderating effect of mentoring and the mediating effect of institutions.

This study aims to address certain gaps in the existing literature. Specifically, it seeks to investigate the relationship between variables such as students' performance, students' reading strategies, and students' confidence, with a focus on the moderating effect of mentoring and the mediating effect of institutional support. Notably, this particular research gap has not been thoroughly explored in recent studies, particularly in the context of the Kurdish region. Additionally, 1) Teevno and Raisani (2017) as well as Fitrissia, Tan, and Yusuf (2015) have looked into the connection between reading strategies and students' performance. Building upon this research, the present study aims to explore this relationship in the Kurdish region while also considering additional factors such as students'

confidence, learning environment, mentoring as a moderator, and institutional support as a mediator. 2) In their respective studies, Moneva and Tribunaleo (2020) and Olutola, Adamu, and Okonkwo (2023) investigated the correlation between students' confidence and their academic performance. Building upon this research, the present study aims to further explore this relationship in the Kurdish region.

Additionally, this study will examine the influence of additional factors such as students' reading strategies, learning environment, mentoring as a moderator, and institutional support as a mediator. In their respective studies. 3) Munir et al. (2021) and Ahmed et al. (2018) investigated the correlation between the learning environment and students' academic performance. Building upon this research, the present study seeks to further explore this relationship within the context of the Kurdish region. Additionally, this study aims to examine the impact of additional factors such as students' reading strategies, confidence levels, and mentoring as a moderator. 4) In their study, Woo, Kim, and Park (2019) examined the moderating effect of mentoring in various contexts. Additionally, they proposed that mentoring could also serve as a moderating variable in the relationship between students' performance, reading strategies, and the learning environment, specifically within the Kurdish region. 5) Heng et al. (2022) investigated the mediating role of institutional support in various contexts.

Specifically, they examined its role as a mediator in relation to students' performance, reading strategies, confidence, and the learning environment, with a particular focus on the Kurdish region. The current study aims to examine 1) the significance of students' performance in relation to improving the quality of education and producing skilled individuals for the country's future. 2) Additionally, it seeks to contribute to the existing literature on students' performance by exploring the impact of factors such as reading strategies, confidence, mentoring, and institutional support. 3) This research will be beneficial for professionals in the fields of education and academia, as it will shed light on the weaknesses in the educational system that lead to poor student performance. 4) Further, it will provide guidance for educational institutions in identifying and addressing their weaknesses, ultimately enhancing student performance and educational standards, particularly in the Kurdish region.

Literature Review

Education plays a pivotal role in determining the success of a nation. Education serves as the fundamental foundation for the cultivation and enhancement of skills. The cultivation of such skills additionally contributes to achieving success in one's professional endeavours. The entirety of the process is predicated on achieving favourable academic results. Students play a pivotal role in the realm of education. The success of a student is determined by their performance in terms of skill development. Scholarly literature has posited that the English language plays a pivotal role in fostering the economic advancement of underdeveloped economies. The existing body of literature suggests that there is a connection between English reading strategies and students' academic performance, especially in developing economies. In the present study, Teevno and Raisani (2017) examined the correlation between English reading strategies and students' academic achievement. The present study examined the association within the population of Pakistan. The study employed a quantitative approach. A sample of 359 students was used to collect quantitative data. The research employed the stratified sampling method. The data collection method employed in this study involved the administration of questionnaires.

To investigate the aforementioned relationship, the researchers utilised multiple linear regression (MLR) analysis techniques. The findings derived from the analysis indicate a correlation between English reading strategies and students' academic performance. The nexus between reading strategies and

student performance is characterised by a positive correlation, as the implementation of effective reading strategies enhances students' comprehension and subsequently improves their academic achievements. Fitriasia, Tan, and Yusuf (2015) conducted a study to examine the relationship between English reading strategies, specifically in the context of metacognitive awareness, and students' academic performance. The investigation focused on examining the relationship within the population of Indonesia. The study employed a quantitative approach. A sample of 272 students was used to collect quantitative data. The research employed the random sampling method. The data collection method employed in this study involved the administration of questionnaires. To investigate the aforementioned relationship, the researchers utilised regression analysis techniques. The findings derived from the analysis suggest a correlation between English reading strategies, specifically in relation to metacognitive awareness, and students' academic achievement.

The nature of the nexus is multifaceted when considering both proficient and struggling readers. In addition, Aghaie and Zhang (2012). conducted an investigation into the correlation between English reading strategies, specifically cognitive and metacognitive strategies, and students' reading performance. The investigation focused on examining the relationship within the population of Iran. The study utilised a quantitative approach. A sample consisting of 1100 students was used to collect quantitative data. The research employed the method of simple random sampling. The data collection method employed in this study involved the administration of questionnaires. To investigate the relationship mentioned above, the study utilised SPANOVA analysis methods. The findings derived from the analysis indicate a correlation between English reading strategies, encompassing both cognitive and metacognitive approaches, and the reading proficiency of students, specifically within the context of Iran. The decided hypothesis is as under:

H1: *The extensive reading has an association with the student's performance.*

Confidence plays a pivotal role in various domains of life. Confidence plays a crucial role in determining an individual's success across various domains, including business, academia, and social networking. The absence of self-assurance has a detrimental impact on the aptitudes and competencies of each person. The situation is analogous when it comes to students. The possession of self-confidence among students enables them to effectively navigate various challenges, such as completing assignments and performing well on exams. The self-confidence of the student has an impact on the student's academic performance. The scholarly literature has also suggested a correlation between self-confidence and academic achievement among students. In the present study, Moneva and Tribunalo (2020) examined the relationship between students' self-confidence and their task performance. The investigation focused on examining the relationship within the population of the Philippines.

The study utilised a quantitative approach. A sample consisting of quantitative data from a two-year period was collected. The provided dataset encompasses the period spanning from 2019 to 2020. The research employed the method of simple random sampling. To investigate the aforementioned relationship, the study utilised Chi-Square analysis methods. The findings derived from the analysis indicate a correlation between students' self-confidence and their performance on tasks, specifically in the context of the Philippines. In a similar vein, Olutola, Adamu, and Okonkwo (2023) examined the relationship between students' self-confidence and their academic performance. The investigation focused on examining the relationship within the Nigerian population. The study employed a quantitative approach. A sample of 3036 students was selected to collect quantitative data. The research employed the purposive sampling method. The data collection method employed in this study involved the use of questionnaires.

To investigate the aforementioned relationship, the study utilised the Pearson Product-Moment

Correlation (PPMC) and t-test analysis methodologies. The findings derived from the analysis indicate a correlation between a student's self-confidence and their academic performance, specifically within the context of Nigeria. Furthermore, the study conducted by Gultom and Oktaviani (2022) examined the relationship between students' self-esteem and their performance on English proficiency tests. The study examined the relationship within the population of Indonesia. The study employed a quantitative approach. A sample consisting of 38 participants was used to collect quantitative data. The research employed the method of simple random sampling. The data collection method employed in this study involved the administration of questionnaires. To investigate the aforementioned relationship, correlation analysis methods were utilised. The findings derived from the analysis suggest a correlation between students' self-esteem and their reading performance, specifically in the context of English proficiency tests, particularly in Indonesia. The decided hypothesis is as under:

H2: *The student's confidence has an association with the student's performance.*

The educational institution's environment plays a crucial role in facilitating enhanced student learning. The quality of the learning environment has a significant impact on students' academic performance, particularly in terms of their comprehension and understanding. According to scholarly literature, there is a suggested correlation between the learning environment and student performance. Filippidi, Tselios, and Komis (2010) conducted a study to examine the relationship between the learning environment and student performance. The investigation focused on examining the relationship within the population of Greece. The study employed a quantitative approach. A sample of 117 students was used to collect quantitative data. The research employed the method of simple random sampling. The data collection method employed in this study involved the use of questionnaires. To investigate the aforementioned relationship, the researchers utilised regression analysis methodologies. The findings derived from the analysis suggest a correlation between the learning environment and students' academic performance.

Enhancing the learning environment has been observed to yield a positive correlation with the improvement of students' academic performance. In a similar vein, Munir et al. (2021) conducted an investigation into the relationship between the learning environment and students' academic performance. The investigation focused on examining the relationship within the population of Pakistan. The study employed a quantitative approach. A sample of 658 students was used to collect quantitative data. The research employed the method of simple random sampling. The data collection method employed in this study involved the use of questionnaires. To assess the aforementioned relationship, the methods of correlation and regression analysis were utilised. The findings derived from the analysis indicate a correlation between the learning environment and the academic performance of students at the chosen university in Pakistan. An enhanced educational setting leads to a rise in students' scholastic achievement. Additionally, the study suggests that universities should enhance their learning environment in order to enhance the quality of education.

Furthermore, Ahmed et al. (2018). conducted an investigation into the correlation between students' perceptions of the learning environment and their academic performance. The study examined the relationship within the population of Sudan. The study employed a quantitative approach. A sample of quantitative data from a span of two years was collected. The provided dataset encompasses a period of time spanning from 2019 to 2020. The research employed a non-probability sampling methodology. To investigate the aforementioned relationship, the research utilised the SPSS analysis method. The findings derived from the analysis indicate a correlation between the learning environment and students' academic performance in Sudan. A conducive learning environment has been found to positively impact students' academic performance, leading to an increase in their overall educational outcomes. Additionally, the study suggests that universities should enhance their learning environment in order to enhance the

quality of education. The decided hypothesis is as under:

H3: *Learning environment has an association with the students' performance.*

There are various classifications of students, including those who demonstrate exceptional learning abilities, those who exhibit good learning capabilities, those who fall within the average range, and those who display limited learning potential. Often, students belonging to high-achieving groups employ effective learning strategies in an effort to enhance their academic performance. However, despite their efforts, they often do not achieve the desired outcomes. Despite their best efforts, they were unable to succeed. Merely adopting learning strategies is insufficient; rather, individuals require appropriate guidance and mentorship on how to effectively implement these strategies in order to enhance their performance. Therefore, mentoring serves as a moderator in the association between reading strategies and students' academic achievement. In the present study, Woo, Kim, and Park (2019) examined the relationship between burnout and turnover intentions, specifically focusing on university students.

Additionally, the relationship was examined by incorporating the moderating influence of mentoring. The investigation focused on examining the relationship within the population of the United States. The study employs a cross-sectional research design. The study employed a quantitative approach. The researchers employed a simple random sampling technique. A sample consisting of 106 faculty members was used to collect quantitative data. Data collection was conducted using questionnaires. To investigate the aforementioned relationship, the study utilised the SPSS analysis approach. The findings derived from the analysis suggest a significant relationship between burnout and turnover intentions. Moreover, mentoring serves as a moderating factor in the aforementioned relationship. The decided hypothesis is as under:

H4: *Mentoring moderates the students reading strategies nexus with students' performance.*

Confidence plays a pivotal role in achieving success, while excessive confidence can lead to the opposite outcome. The demarcation between confidence and overconfidence is exceedingly subtle. Frequently, students exhibit overconfidence due to a lack of appropriate guidance, which subsequently hampers their academic performance. Therefore, it can be argued that the key to achieving success lies in the cultivation of confidence through logical mentoring. The existing body of literature suggests that mentoring has an impact on students' self-confidence and their academic performance. In the present study, Nazari (2016) examined the relationship between job satisfaction and the propensity to voluntarily depart from the organisation.

Moreover, the relationship was examined by incorporating the moderating role of mentoring. The study examined the association within the population of Iran. The study employs a cross-sectional research design. The study employed a quantitative approach. The researchers employed a simple random sampling technique. A sample of 252 managers was used to collect quantitative data. Data collection was conducted using questionnaires. To investigate the aforementioned relationship, the AMOS analysis approach was utilised. The findings derived from the analysis indicate a significant correlation between job satisfaction and the propensity to leave the organisation. Moreover, mentoring serves as a moderating factor in the aforementioned relationship. The decided hypothesis is as under:

H5: *Mentoring moderates the self-confidence nexus with the student's performance.*

The environment serves as a reflection of every institution. The improvement of the institution's environment is contingent upon the presence of institutional support. The determination of the direction and nature of the environment is vested in the management of the institution. As a result, the institution's support has a big impact on how its activities run overall. The education system exhibits a similar pattern. The learning environment in which students are located has an impact on their academic achievement.

However, it is the responsibility of the institution to provide and maintain the learning environment. Hence, the role of institutional support is instrumental in mediating the relationship between the learning environment and students' academic performance. In the present study, Heng et al. (2022) examined the relationship between the technology acceptance model and students' academic performance in the context of satisfaction, specifically focusing on the utilisation of e-learning platforms.

Likewise, the relationship was examined by incorporating the mediating role of institutional support. The investigation focused on examining the relationship within the population of Malaysia. The study employs a cross-sectional research design. The study utilised a quantitative approach. The researchers employed a simple random sampling technique. A sample of 344 students was used to collect quantitative data. Data collection was conducted using questionnaires. To investigate the aforementioned relationship, the SPSS analysis method was utilised. The findings derived from the analysis suggest a positive correlation between the technology acceptance model and student satisfaction with the utilisation of e-learning. Moreover, the institution plays a mediating role in the aforementioned relationship. The decided hypothesis is as under:

H6: *Institutional Support mediates in the nexus aimed learning environment and the student's performance.*

Research Methodology

This study aims to explore the influence of extensive reading, students' confidence, and the learning environment on the performance of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Additionally, it seeks to examine the moderating role of mentoring in the relationship between extensive reading, students' confidence, and EFL learner performance. Furthermore, the study investigates the mediating role of institutional support in the relationship between the learning environment and EFL students' performance, specifically within the Kurdish region. The data was collected by the researchers through survey questionnaires administered to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in the Kurdish region. The questionnaires utilised in this study were derived from previous research. The measurement of extensive reading was based on five items extracted from Taha and Al Sukhon (2023) study. The assessment of students' confidence included four questions adopted from Labrague et al. (2019) research. The evaluation of the learning environment was conducted using five items taken from Carter Jr et al. (2020) study.

Mentoring was measured using four questions extracted from Lorenzetti et al. (2019) research. Institutional support was assessed using four questions adopted from Le and Lei (2019) study. Lastly, students' performance was evaluated using five items taken from Abu Saa, Al-Emran, and Shaalan (2019). research. The individuals enrolled in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses serve as the participants in this research. The participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, as the objective was to specifically choose EFL students. The surveys were disseminated to the student population through in-person visits to the educational institutions where English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is being taught. The researchers distributed a total of 556 surveys; however, only 295 valid surveys were received after a few days. This represents a response rate of approximately 53.06 percent.

Additionally, the researchers employed the smart-PLS methodology to investigate the relationships between the variables. The smart-PLS is widely regarded as the most effective tool for conducting primary data analysis, particularly when dealing with extensive data sets and intricate models (Hair Jr, Howard, & Nitzl, 2020). The study employed three independent variables, namely extensive reading (ER), students' confidence (SC), and learning environment (LE). Additionally, one moderating variable, mentoring (MN), one mediating variable, institutional support (IS), and one dependent variable,

students' performance (SP), were also utilised. These variables are given in Figure 1,

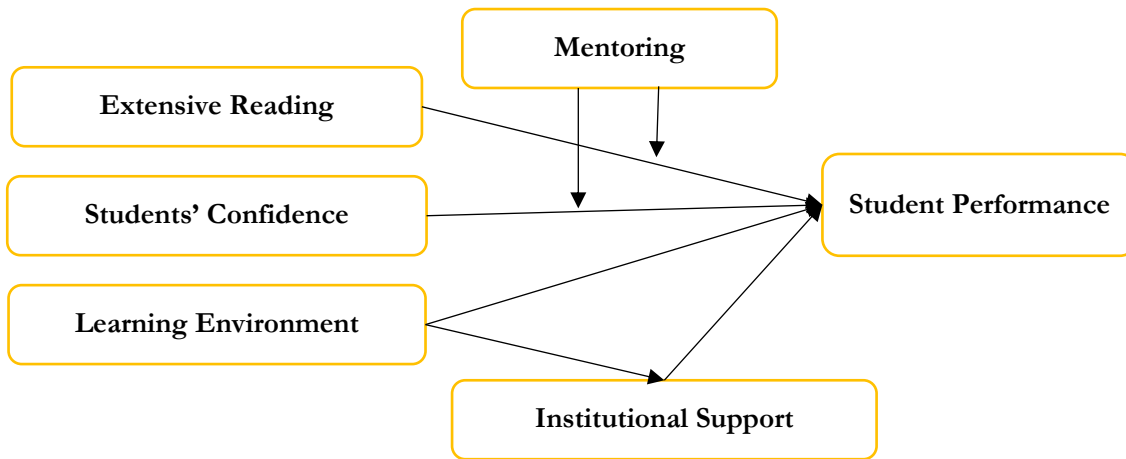


Figure 1: Research Model

Research Findings

The findings of the research demonstrate the association between the variables referred to as convergent validity. Composite reliability (CR) is utilised to assess the reliability of a measurement instrument, in conjunction with Alpha. The values obtained from these assessments should not fall below the threshold of 0.70. Furthermore, the examination is conducted using factor loadings in conjunction with the average variance extracted (AVE), ensuring that all values exceed the threshold of 0.50. The aforementioned values demonstrate sound convergent validity. These outcomes are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Convergent Validity

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
Extensive Reading	ER1	0.919	0.960	0.969	0.863
	ER2	0.923			
	ER3	0.931			
	ER4	0.930			
	ER5	0.943			
Institutional Support	IS1	0.857	0.885	0.920	0.742
	IS2	0.863			
	IS3	0.863			
	IS4	0.863			
Learning Environment	LE1	0.925	0.928	0.949	0.824
	LE2	0.946			
	LE3	0.936			
	LE5	0.819			
Mentoring	MN1	0.926	0.904	0.933	0.777
	MN2	0.924			
	MN3	0.795			
	MN4	0.875			
Students' Confidence	SC2	0.959	0.775	0.877	0.714
	SC3	0.562			
	SC4	0.952			
Students' Performance	SP1	0.650	0.798	0.862	0.615
	SP3	0.670			

SP4	0.895
SP5	0.886

The results also demonstrate the relationship between the variables referred to as discriminant validity. The examination was conducted using Fornell-Larcker analysis, which involved assessing cross-loadings. The results revealed that the values indicating the association with the constructs themselves were higher than the values indicating the association with other constructs. The aforementioned values demonstrated sound discriminant validity. The aforementioned results are presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2: Fornell Larcker

	ER	IS	LE	MN	SC	SP
ER	0.929					
IS	0.363	0.862				
LE	0.562	0.470	0.908			
MN	0.474	0.510	0.479	0.882		
SC	0.536	0.502	0.649	0.582	0.845	
SP	0.571	0.577	0.731	0.452	0.657	0.784

Table 3: Cross-loadings

	ER	IS	LE	MN	SC	SP
ER1	0.919	0.364	0.536	0.409	0.541	0.529
ER2	0.923	0.303	0.490	0.471	0.472	0.498
ER3	0.931	0.353	0.555	0.457	0.502	0.568
ER4	0.930	0.343	0.515	0.429	0.513	0.515
ER5	0.943	0.322	0.511	0.437	0.461	0.537
IS1	0.368	0.857	0.417	0.486	0.414	0.544
IS2	0.287	0.863	0.415	0.409	0.454	0.518
IS3	0.326	0.863	0.381	0.442	0.440	0.442
IS4	0.267	0.863	0.404	0.419	0.425	0.477
LE1	0.511	0.457	0.925	0.396	0.599	0.832
LE2	0.511	0.455	0.946	0.395	0.586	0.758
LE3	0.507	0.398	0.936	0.381	0.549	0.740
LE5	0.515	0.391	0.819	0.590	0.628	0.675
MN1	0.372	0.449	0.428	0.926	0.521	0.372
MN2	0.457	0.468	0.453	0.924	0.581	0.420
MN3	0.434	0.486	0.412	0.795	0.460	0.454
MN4	0.386	0.362	0.379	0.875	0.476	0.311
SC2	0.470	0.446	0.598	0.388	0.959	0.630
SC3	0.438	0.441	0.440	0.399	0.662	0.394
SC4	0.467	0.412	0.595	0.360	0.952	0.609
SP1	0.419	0.445	0.402	0.431	0.457	0.650
SP3	0.365	0.441	0.399	0.392	0.383	0.670
SP4	0.476	0.507	0.812	0.346	0.608	0.895
SP5	0.523	0.452	0.836	0.331	0.577	0.886

The results also demonstrate the relationship between the variables known as discriminant validity. The Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was utilised to assess the data, revealing that the values did not exceed 0.90. The aforementioned values demonstrated sound discriminant validity. The aforementioned results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio

	ER	IS	LE	MN	SC	SP
ER						
IS	0.392					
LE	0.596	0.516				
MN	0.502	0.559	0.525			

SC	0.640	0.630	0.776	0.785	
SP	0.645	0.693	0.700	0.547	0.819

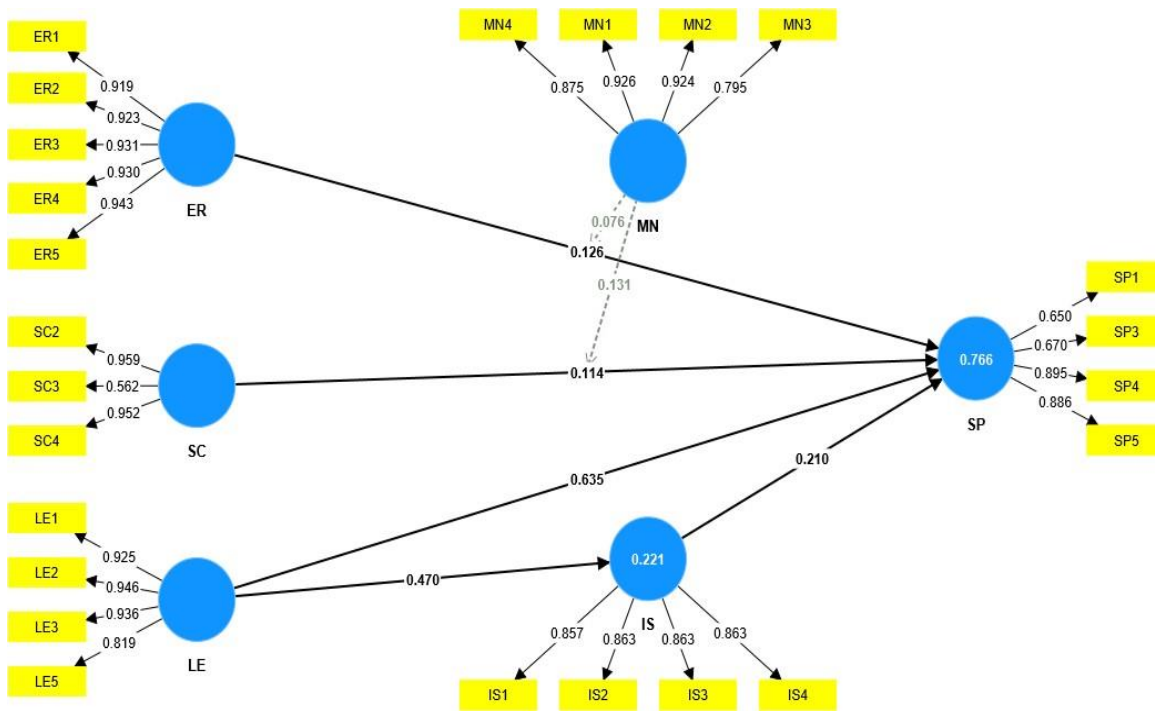


Figure 1: Measurement Model Assessment

The results of the study demonstrate a significant correlation between extensive reading, students' self-assurance, and the learning environment with the performance of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in the Kurdish region. Therefore, we accept hypotheses H1, H2, and H3. Furthermore, the research also revealed that mentoring plays a significant moderating role in the relationship between extensive reading, students' confidence, and EFL learner performance, thereby supporting hypotheses H4 and H5. The study also found that institutional support plays a significant role in mediating the relationship between the learning environment and the performance of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in the Kurdish region. This finding supports the acceptance of hypothesis 6. The aforementioned associations are referenced in Table 5.

Table 5: Path Analysis

Relationships	Beta	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
ER -> SP	0.126	0.031	4.066	0.000
IS -> SP	0.210	0.035	5.935	0.000
LE -> IS	0.470	0.046	10.260	0.000
LE -> SP	0.635	0.041	15.335	0.000
MN -> SP	0.110	0.032	3.416	0.001
SC -> SP	0.114	0.046	2.505	0.013
MN x ER -> SP	0.076	0.036	2.110	0.035
MN x SC -> SP	0.131	0.035	3.759	0.000
LE -> IS -> SP	0.099	0.019	5.088	0.000

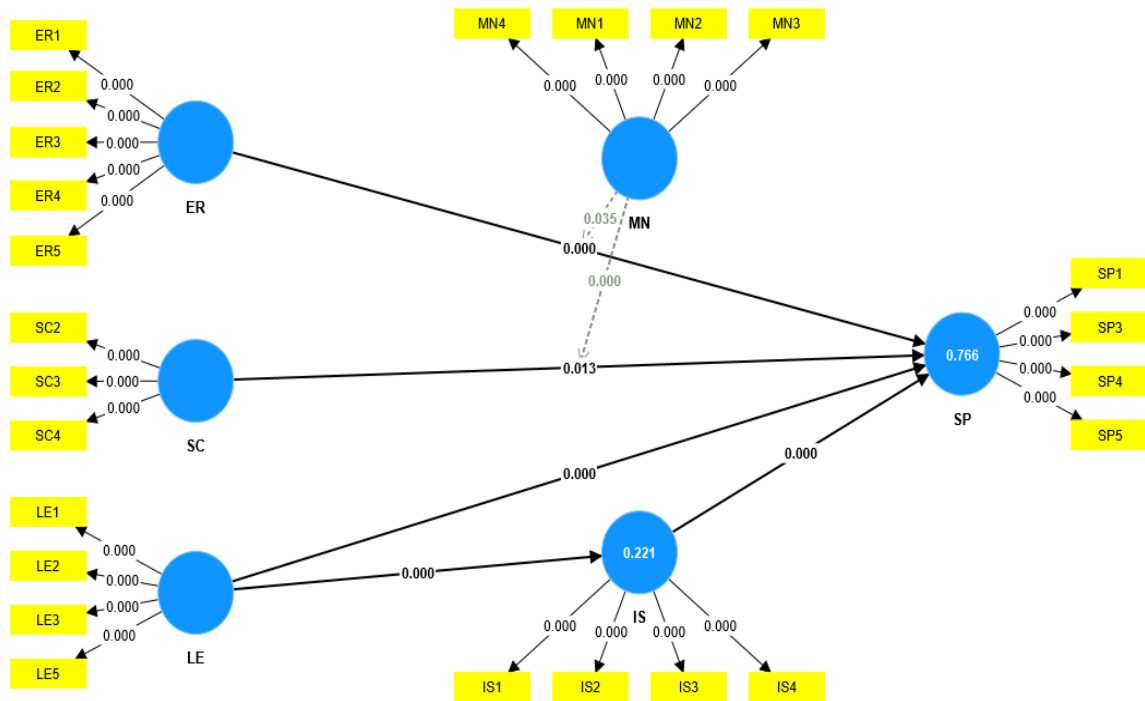


Figure 2: Structural Model Assessment

Discussions

The findings of the study suggest that there is a positive correlation between the utilisation of reading strategies and academic achievement among students. The findings presented in Din (2020) study provide support for the notion that educational institutions can enhance student learning by implementing effective reading strategies and fostering their regular utilisation among students. Effective reading strategies have been found to enhance student performance. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Støle, Mangen, and Schwippert (2020), which asserts that the proficient utilisation of reading strategies enhances students' comprehension of the curriculum, leading to improved performance in class discussions and assessments. The findings additionally demonstrated a positive correlation between student confidence and student performance. The findings presented in the study conducted by Jones et al. (2019) provide support for the notion that students may encounter difficulties in comprehension when engaging with educational texts. The self-assured student engages in a comprehensive analysis and utilises personal resources to enhance their understanding of the concept. Therefore, there has been an improvement in student performance compared to previous periods. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Moneva and Tribunale (2020), which posits that students' confidence facilitates their active participation in classroom activities and leads to improved academic performance.

The results of the study indicate that mentoring plays a crucial role in moderating the relationship between reading strategies and student academic achievement. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Law, Hales, and Busenbark (2020), which posits that the implementation of mentoring in educational institutions facilitates students' acquisition of effective reading strategies,

resulting in enhanced learning outcomes. The outcomes presented in this study are corroborated by the research conducted by Meeuwissen, Stalmeijer, and Govaerts (2019), wherein it is asserted that mentoring provides students with a valuable avenue for seeking guidance from more experienced peers. Through this process, students are able to acquire knowledge regarding more effective reading strategies, ultimately leading to improved academic performance. The findings of the study suggest that mentoring plays a crucial role in influencing the relationship between students' self-assurance and their academic achievements. The findings presented are substantiated by the research conducted by Goldhaber, Krieg, and Theobald (2020).

During the process of mentoring, students acquire the necessary self-assurance to effectively collaborate in group settings, which subsequently leads to improved performance outcomes. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Tuomikoski et al. (2020), which posits that mentoring fosters a conducive atmosphere wherein students cultivate self-assurance and exhibit enhanced performance outcomes. The findings of the study indicate that there is a positive correlation between the learning environment and institutional support. The findings presented are consistent with the findings reported by Riebe et al. (2023). Based on the findings of a prior investigation, it can be posited that when an educational institution cultivates a conducive learning environment and employs committed tutors, it has the potential to offer substantial assistance to its students. These findings are consistent with the findings of Alzen et al. (2021), which also emphasise that institutions can offer support to their students through the implementation of a conducive learning environment.

Research results indicate a positive correlation between institutional support and student performance. The findings presented by Hasan et al. (2020) provide support for the notion that institutions can enhance their performance by providing training to their staff in order to better support students. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Rajabalee and Santally (2021), who argue that institutional support plays a crucial role in enabling students to effectively utilise learning resources and demonstrate the desired level of performance. The findings of the study suggest that there is a notable relationship between institutional support and student performance, with the former acting as a mediator in the context of the learning environment. The findings presented in Adams and Blair (2019) study provide support for the notion that when educational institutions strive to create a conducive learning environment characterised by support and assistance, students are more likely to experience improved academic performance. The findings of this study are consistent with the research conducted by Elshami et al. (2021), which demonstrates that the presence of a conducive learning environment can enhance the impact of institutional support on student academic achievement.

Implications

The current study holds significance for educational institutions as it addresses the need to meet parental expectations regarding educational outcomes. By shedding light on effective strategies for institutional management, the study offers insights into enhancing student performance. The adoption of effective learning strategies is imperative for students in order to enhance their academic performance. The study additionally suggests that tutors should cultivate students' self-assurance to enhance their academic performance. The article additionally posits that it is imperative for institutions to prioritise the provision of mentoring opportunities for students. The implementation of effective learning strategies is anticipated to foster the adoption of such strategies among students, thereby leading to an enhancement in their academic performance. The study additionally demonstrates the importance of implementing a mentoring educational approach as a means to foster self-assurance in students and equip them with the necessary skills to achieve higher levels of academic performance.

The study additionally posits that it is imperative for institutional management to establish a conducive learning environment in order to enhance the capacity of institutions to provide support to students. Additionally, it implies that educational institutions should adopt a supportive approach towards their students in order to enhance student performance. Additionally, the study suggests that the establishment of an effective learning environment can lead to a more supportive institutional behaviour towards students. Demonstrating support has the potential to enhance student motivation, thereby promoting higher levels of performance. The study provides guidance to policymakers in formulating policies aimed at enhancing the academic performance of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. These policies focus on implementing strategies such as extensive reading, fostering student confidence, providing effective mentoring, and creating an optimal learning environment.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the interconnectedness between mentoring, learning strategies, student confidence, and student performance. Additionally, the study aimed to examine the correlation between the learning environment, institutional support, and student performance. Questionnaires were utilised to gather data from the Kurdistan Region. The findings of the study indicate a significant correlation between learning strategies and student confidence, and their impact on student performance is positive. The findings of the study indicate that the provision of innovative and effective reading strategies by educational institutions leads to enhanced learning outcomes and improved performance on examinations among students. The study additionally determined that student confidence plays a crucial role in facilitating active discourse, problem-solving, and self-expression among students, ultimately resulting in enhanced academic achievement.

Additionally, the research suggests that mentoring plays a moderating role in the relationship between learning strategies, student confidence, and student performance. In the context of mentoring, students receive support and collaboration from more experienced senior students. Therefore, the adoption of more effective reading strategies and the cultivation of increased self-assurance can result in improved academic outcomes for students. The research findings also demonstrated the intermediary function of institutional support in relation to the learning environment and student academic achievement. A conducive learning environment serves as a catalyst for educational institutions to offer assistance to students, thereby facilitating enhanced academic performance.

Limitations

The current study has certain limitations. In subsequent scholarly discourse on education, it is imperative to address and eliminate these aforementioned limitations. The analysis has focused on several determinants of student performance, including learning strategies, student confidence, learning environment, and institutional support. In order to establish a coherent, lucid, and all-encompassing theoretical structure, it is imperative for authors to undertake a more extensive examination of the multitude of factors that influence student academic achievement. Furthermore, the data collection was limited to the Kurdistan region, and the analysis period was also specific and restricted. Future research should aim to enhance the quantity of data by increasing both the sample size and the duration of the study.

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