نشریه علمی روانشناسی فرهنگی
(Cultural Psychology)

روان‌شناسی فرهنگی

دوفصلنامهٔ علمی، پژوهشکدهٔ تحقیق و توسعهٔ علوم انسانی (سمت)
دورهٔ ۹، شمارهٔ ۲، پاییز و زمستان ۱۴۰۴
شاپا چاپی: ۷۲۱۱-۲۵۸۸
شاپا الکترونیکی: ۶۳۸۸ - ۲۶۷۶

عواطف مثبت در میان زبان‌آموزان ایرانی: یک مطالعه مرور دامنه‌ای از منظر نظریه ارزش‌گذاری عاطفه

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اطلاعات مقاله

تاریخ‌ها:
دریافت: ۱۴۰۴/۰۷/۰۸
پذیرش: ۱۴۰۴/۱۰/۲۳

واژگان کلیدی:
روان‌شناسی مثبت‌گرا
زبان‌آموزان ایرانی
نظریه ارزش‌گذاری عاطفه
عواطف مثبت با برانگیختگی بالا
عواطف مثبت با برانگیختگی پایین

چکیده

رویکرد مثبت‌گرا در اکتساب زبان دوم، کاوش در بهزیستی زبان‌آموزان را جانی دوباره بخشیده است؛ با این حال، مدل‌های بنیادی عمدتاً غرب‌محور باقی مانده و بر شور و شعف به جای حالات آرامش‌بخش تأکید دارند. این مطالعه مرور دامنه‌ای با بهره‌گیری از نظریه ارزش‌گذاری عاطفه به بررسی پژوهش‌های عواطف مثبت در میان زبان‌آموزان ایرانی پرداخته و ۱۲۲ مطالعه تجربی (۲۰۱۶ تا ۲۰۲۶) را سنتز و تحلیل کرده است. یافته‌ها نشان‌دهنده یک «هرم عاطفی ایرانی» با قاعده‌ای سنگین از عواطف مثبت با برانگیختگی بالا است که در آن لذت یادگیری زبان خارجی متغیر مرکزی محسوب می‌شود. این سوگیری ناشی از یک فیلتر روش‌شناختی است؛ جایی که ابزارهای روان‌سنجی استاندارد، هیجان را در اولویت قرار داده و حالات آرامش‌بخش را نادیده می‌گیرند. این مطالعه خلاءهای تجربی عمیقی را شناسایی می‌کند: سکوت کامل جمعیت‌شناختی در مورد کودکان زیر ۱۲ سال، اتکا به مدل‌سازی‌های مقطعی، و سوگیری در انتخاب شرکت‌کنندگان (تمرکز بر دانشجویان زبان انگلیسی). با وجود تحول در مطالعات اخیر (۲۰۲۴-۲۰۲۶) که نشان می‌دهد حالات عاطفی با برانگیختگی پایین مانند آرامش ذهنی در یادگیری زبان، به عنوان سپرهای فرهنگی در برابر استرس‌های آموزشی عمل می‌کنند، این حوزه از نظر نظری همچنان پراکنده است. در نهایت، این پژوهش مرزهای بعدی تحقیق را در دو انتهای طیف برانگیختگی، یعنی حالات اوجِ عواطف مثبت با برانگیختگی بالا و حالات جامعه‌پسندِ عواطف مثبت با برانگیختگی پایین معرفی کرده و از یک روان‌شناسی مثبت‌گرای استعمارزدایی‌شده در ایران دفاع می‌کند که آرامش را به عنوان یک راهبرد بقای عملکردی به رسمیت شناخته و خواستار دستورکار پژوهشی فراگیر و پویاست.

استناد: تقدمی، محمدشاهین (۱۴۰۴). عواطف مثبت در میان زبان‌آموزان ایرانی: یک مطالعه مرور دامنه‌ای از منظر نظریه ارزش‌گذاری عاطفه، *روان‌شناسی فرهنگی*، ۹(۲). ۹۵-۱۲۶.

https://doi.org/10.30487/jcp.2026.599919.1939

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Cultural Psychology

Vol. 9, Issue 2
Fall 2025 - Winter 2026
Print ISSN: 2676-6388
Online ISSN: 2676-6388

نشریه علمی روانشناسی فرهنگی
(Cultural Psychology)

Positive Affect Among Iranian EFL Learners: A Scoping Review Through the Lens of Affect Valuation Theory

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Article Info

History
Received: September 30, 2025
Accepted: January 13, 2026

Keywords
Positive Psychology
Iranian EFL Learners
Affect Valuation Theory
High Arousal Positive (HAP)
Low Arousal Positive (LAP)

Abstract

The positive turn in Second Language Acquisition has revitalized the exploration of learner well-being; however, foundational models remain predominantly Western-centric, often prioritizing high-arousal exultation over restorative states. This scoping review systematically maps the landscape of positive affect research among Iranian EFL learners through the lens of Affect Valuation Theory, synthesizing 122 empirical studies (2016–2026). The findings reveal an Iranian Affective Pyramid with a broad High Arousal Positive (HAP) foundation, dominated by Foreign Language Enjoyment, and a narrow, emerging tip of Low Arousal Positive (LAP) states. This distribution indicates a methodological HAP-bias, wherein standard psychometric instruments prioritize excitement while often omitting restorative dimensions. The review identifies critical empirical gaps, including a total demographic silence regarding learners under the age of 12, a systemic reliance on static cross-sectional modeling, and a specialist bias toward university English majors. While recent research (2024–2026) suggests that LAP-oriented states like Foreign Language Peace of Mind function as culturally congruent shields against systemic educational stress, the literature remains theoretically fragmented. This review identifies the missing ends of the arousal spectrum, peak HAP and prosocial LAP states, as the next research frontier, advocating for a decolonized positive psychology in Iran that recognizes *Aramesh* (inner peace) as a functional survival strategy and calls for a developmentally and methodologically dynamic research agenda.

Citation: Taghaddomi, M.SH. (2026). Positive Affect Among Iranian EFL Learners: A Scoping Review through the Lens of Affect Valuation Theory. *Cultural Psychology*, *9*(2), 95-126.
https://doi.org/10.30487/jcp.2026.599919.1939

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Introduction

Over the past decade, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has experienced what has been described as a positive or affective turn (Dewaele et al., 2019; Macintyre et al., 2019). This shift has broadened the field beyond its longstanding emphasis on negative experiences and difficulties, directing greater attention to the psychological and affective factors that support learners' engagement, well-being, and development (Wang et al., 2021). Accordingly, research has increasingly examined a diverse range of positive psychological and affective constructs, including foreign language enjoyment, hope, resilience, grit, mindfulness, and well-being, among others. This growing body of work has contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of learners' experiences by recognizing that successful language learning involves not only the mitigation of negative states but also the presence and development of positive psychological and affective resources (Zhao & Wang, 2025).

However, the growing emphasis on positive psychological and affective phenomena also raises an important conceptual question: whether positive experiences can be adequately understood by treating them as a single, homogeneous category. Positive states may differ not only in their valence but also in their level of arousal or activation (Russell, 2003). For example, enjoyment, excitement, and enthusiasm may involve relatively high levels of activation, whereas calmness, contentment, serenity, and peace of mind may be positively valenced but comparatively low in arousal (Tsai, 2007). Such distinctions are potentially consequential for understanding how learners experience and value positive states, because the presence of a positive emotion does not necessarily indicate that learners seek or benefit from the same level of affective activation. An arousal-sensitive perspective may therefore provide a more differentiated account of positive psychological and affective experiences in language learning.

Affect Valuation Theory (AVT) provides a useful framework for examining these distinctions by differentiating between how people actually feel (actual affect) and how they ideally want to feel (ideal affect) (Tsai et al., 2025). Importantly, AVT conceptualizes affect not only in terms of positive or negative valence but also in terms of arousal, thereby distinguishing between high-arousal positive (HAP) states, such as excitement and enthusiasm, and low-arousal positive (LAP) states, such as calmness and contentment. The theory proposes that individuals' ideal affect, the affective states they value or desire, may not always correspond to their actual affective experiences and may be shaped by culturally and socially shared norms and values (Tsai, 2007; Tsai, 2017). From this perspective, examining positive psychological and affective constructs through the HAP–LAP distinction can reveal differences that may remain obscured when positive affect is treated as a unitary category.

Previous reviews and syntheses have contributed substantially to the development of positive psychology and affect research in second and foreign language learning (Budzińska & Majchrzak, 2021; Dewaele & Li, 2020; Macintyre et al., 2019). Existing work has examined the emergence and development of positive psychology in the field (Wang et al., 2021), synthesized research on learners' positive emotions and well-being (Dewaele & Li, 2020), and reviewed individual constructs such as foreign language enjoyment (Wu & Kabilan, 2025), resilience (Chu et al., 2024), and grit (Zhao & Wang, 2023). These reviews have helped establish the growing importance of positive psychological and affective factors in understanding language learners' experiences and development. However, much of this literature has tended to organize positive phenomena according to individual constructs,

emotional categories, or broad dimensions of well-being, rather than examining their underlying affective characteristics. In particular, existing syntheses have not systematically mapped the range of positive psychological and affective constructs investigated in a specific EFL context according to the HAP–LAP distinction proposed by AVT. Consequently, although the expanding literature provides considerable evidence concerning individual positive experiences and resources, a more integrative, arousal-sensitive synthesis is needed to clarify how these constructs may be situated within a broader affective framework.

The Iranian EFL context provides a particularly relevant setting in which to examine positive psychological and affective experiences through an arousal-sensitive framework. English learning in Iran takes place within an educational and sociocultural environment shaped by examination pressures, competitive academic settings, teacher-centered instructional traditions, and substantial demands for achievement and persistence (Aladini et al., 2026; Ghafouri & Hassaskhah, 2025; Haj Mir Alikhani et al., 2026; Rezai et al., 2025). At the same time, learners' experiences of language education are embedded in broader cultural and social norms that may influence how positive psychological states are understood, expressed, and valued. Previous Iranian EFL research has increasingly investigated positive constructs such as enjoyment (Zhao & Wang, 2025), grit (Elahi Shirvan et al., 2022), resilience (Yazdi & Ghanizadeh, 2024), hope (Derakhshan & Yin, 2025), well-being (Rezai et al., 2024), and mindfulness (Gordani & Sadeghzadeh, 2023), indicating growing scholarly interest in learners' positive experiences and psychological resources. Nevertheless, this expanding body of research has largely developed through the examination of individual constructs, with limited attention to whether the positive states and resources investigated across studies differ systematically in their arousal characteristics or can be meaningfully interpreted within a common theoretical framework.

Despite the growing body of research on positive psychological and affective constructs among Iranian EFL learners, the literature remains fragmented across individual constructs and research traditions. This fragmentation makes it difficult to determine how the positive phenomena investigated across studies relate to one another and whether they represent distinct affective profiles when considered in terms of arousal. Moreover, relatively little attention has been given to examining these constructs collectively through the conceptual distinction between HAP and LAP, or to considering how such affective orientations may vary across learner characteristics, educational settings, and stages of development. This limitation is particularly important because treating all positive constructs as uniformly desirable may obscure meaningful differences in the types of positive experiences that language learners report or value. A systematic mapping of this literature through an AVT-informed lens can therefore provide a more differentiated account of positive psychological and affective phenomena in the Iranian EFL context while identifying areas in which the existing evidence remains limited or uneven.

The present scoping review seeks to address the theoretical and empirical fragmentation identified in the literature by mapping the landscape of positive psychology and affect research among Iranian EFL learners through the lens of AVT. By synthesizing empirical evidence from the past decade (2016–2026), this study aims to provide a unified overview of how positive emotions and psychological traits are conceptualized, operationalized, and culturally valued within this specific context. In doing so, the review intends to uncover the prevailing arousal biases within the research community and identify the white spaces that

hinder a developmentally and culturally inclusive understanding of learner well-being. To achieve these objectives, the review is guided by the following four research questions:

1. What is the range and frequency of positive psychology and affective constructs investigated in the Iranian EFL literature, and how are these distributed across the HAP and LAP spectrums?
2. How is positive psychology and affect methodologically operationalized and measured in these studies, and which arousal dimensions do the utilized instruments primarily target?
3. How do existing studies conceptualize the relationship between cultural context and the valuation of various arousal states (HAP vs. LAP) among Iranian EFL learners?
4. What are the thematic, population-based, and methodological gaps in the current body of research regarding the full spectrum of positive arousal in the Iranian EFL context?

Method

Study Design and Framework

This scoping review was conducted according to the methodological framework proposed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) and further refined by Levac et al. (2010). The scoping review format was selected to systematically map the burgeoning body of research on positive affect and psychological constructs within the Iranian EFL context and to identify theoretical and empirical gaps. The study adheres to the PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews) guidelines. While formal critical appraisal of study quality is not required for scoping reviews under JBI standards, the review maintained a baseline of rigor by including only peer-reviewed empirical studies.

Eligibility Criteria

Selection criteria were established using the Population, Concept, and Context (PCC) framework (Peters et al., 2020):

- Population: The target demographic comprised Iranian EFL learners across all educational tiers, including state schools, private language institutes, and universities. Studies focusing on teachers or Iranian populations in English-speaking countries (ESL contexts) were excluded.
- Concept: Eligible studies were required to investigate Positive Affective States (e.g., enjoyment, joy, peace of mind) or Affect-Laden Positive Psychology (PP) Constructs (e.g., grit, resilience, buoyancy). To address the conceptual boundaries between states and traits, constructs were included if they contained documented affective or passion-based components. Crucially, the data had to permit an interpretation of arousal orientation through the lens of AVT, specifically regarding the distinction between HAP and LAP dimensions. Research focusing exclusively on negative affect without a primary positive counterpart was omitted.
- Context: The investigation was strictly limited to ELT within the geographical borders of Iran.

- Source Characteristics: Eligibility was restricted to empirical journal articles (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods) published in English between 2016 and 2026. Theoretical reviews, book chapters, and conference abstracts were excluded.

Information Retrieval and Search Strategy

A systematic search was executed in the Scopus database. Scopus was selected as the primary information source due to its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals in the social sciences and humanities, specifically within the fields of Applied Linguistics and Educational Psychology, ensuring a comprehensive capture of high-quality regional scholarship disseminated globally. To ensure theoretical breadth and alignment with AVT, a complex search string was utilized, combining three conceptual clusters. The search string targeted titles, abstracts, and keywords using the following Boolean logic:

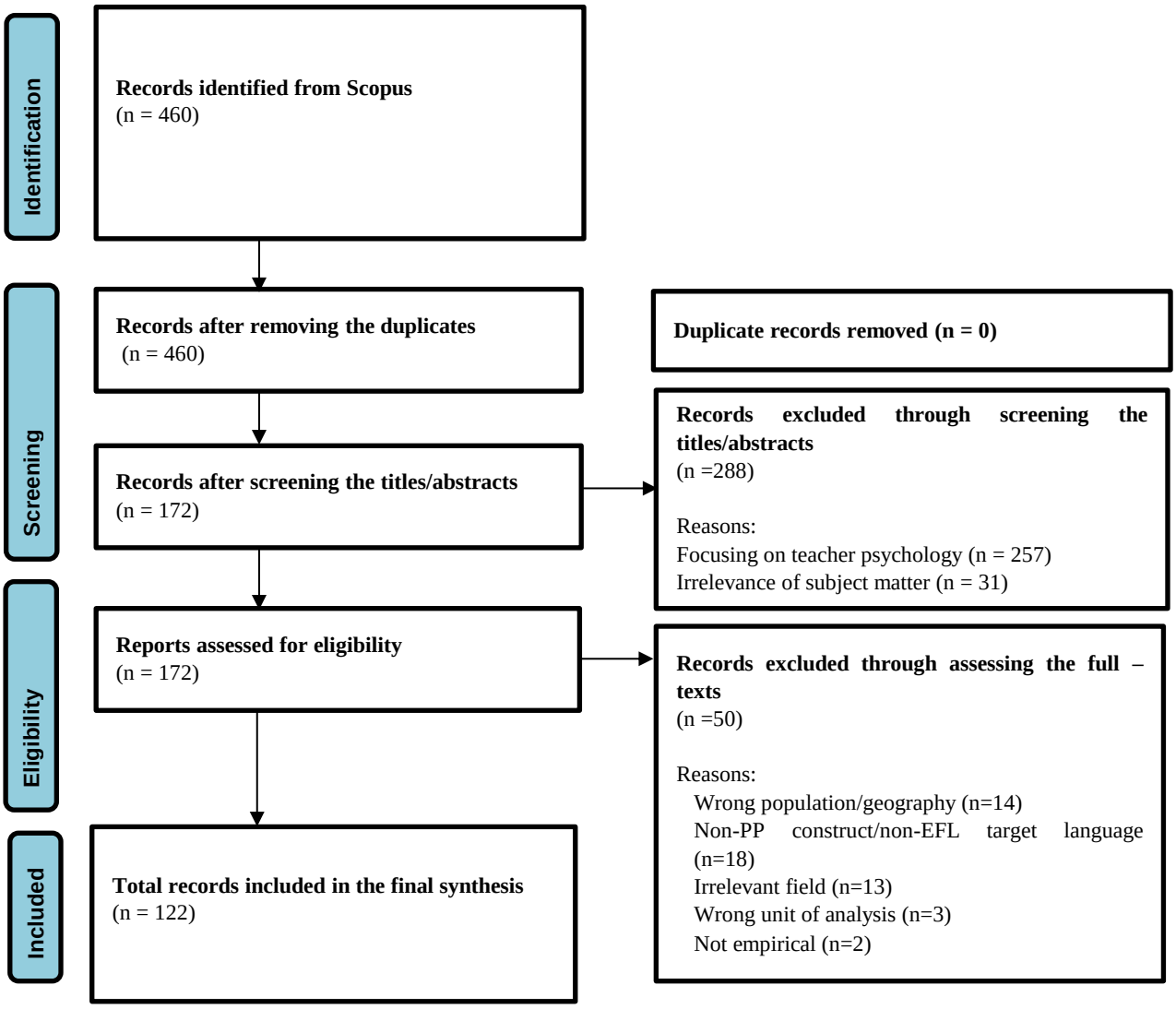
> (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("ideal affect" OR "actual affect" OR "affect valuation" OR "desired emotion" OR "valued emotion" OR "emotion goal*" OR "affective goal*" OR "happiness" OR "joy" OR "enjoyment" OR "pleasur*" OR "well-being" OR "satisfaction" OR "elation" OR "excitement" OR "enthusiasm" OR "calm*" OR "serenity" OR "peace*" OR "contentment" OR "positive affect" OR "positive emotion*" OR "flow" OR "grit" OR "resilience") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("EFL" OR "English as a Foreign Language" OR "TESOL" OR "SLA" OR "language learn" OR "second language acquisition" OR "ELT"))

The search was further refined using the following inclusion filters: (1) Affiliation: Iran; (2) Language: English; and (3) Publication Years: 2016–2026. The decision to limit the review to English-language publications was a deliberate scope decision aimed at analyzing Iranian research as it is represented and peer-reviewed within the international SLA community. This choice also ensured terminological consistency across the synthesized psychometric data.

Selection and Screening Workflow

The selection process followed a four-stage workflow. The initial search yielded 460 records. During the primary screening of titles and abstracts, 288 records were discarded for focusing on teacher-related psychology or falling outside the scope of Applied Linguistics. The remaining 172 reports were retrieved for full-text evaluation. To ensure the precision and trustworthiness of the eligibility assessment, a double-screening process was implemented. The full-text review and the classification of arousal orientations were performed by the researcher and cross-verified by an independent colleague specializing in Applied Linguistics. To ensure objective categorization, constructs were mapped against an Operational Classification Matrix (see Section 2.5) anchored in the lexical descriptors provided by the most recent AVT meta-analysis (Tsai et al., 2025). Any discrepancies regarding inclusion or the HAP/LAP/Integrative classification were resolved through collaborative discussion until 100% consensus was reached. This rigorous review resulted in the exclusion of 50 further reports for reasons including non-Iranian populations (n=14), focus on non-PP constructs or non-English target languages (n=18), and technical/medical irrelevance (n=13). Ultimately, 122 studies met all criteria and were retained for synthesis (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. *PRISMA-ScR Flow Diagram Capturing the Study Identification, Screening, Eligibility, and Inclusion Process*



Data Charting Process

A standardized data extraction template was utilized to capture information across the 122 sources. To ensure data integrity, the extraction process was independently audited by the research colleague. Extracted variables included: (a) study metadata (author, year); (b) participant demographics (educational level, sample size); (c) target constructs; (d) AVT-informed arousal orientation; and (e) measurement instruments. To address the conceptual boundaries between discrete affective states and broader psychological traits, and to ensure objective categorization, an Operational Classification Matrix was developed (see Table 1). This matrix served as the primary criterion for mapping SLA constructs onto the AVT circumplex. Following the most recent AVT meta-analysis (Tsai et al., 2025), constructs were categorized based on their degree of activation and their alignment with influence versus adjustment goals.

Table 1

Operational Classification Matrix: Mapping SLA Constructs to AVT Dimensions

Arousal Orientation	Lexical Criteria (Tsai et al., 2025)	Representative SLA Constructs	Theoretical Rationale
HAP-Oriented	High activation; state of being excited, enthusiastic, or elated.	FLE (Social), Pride, Hope, Joy, Enthusiasm, DMCs.	Aligned with influence goals; requires high-energy activation to mobilize L2 communication.
LAP-Oriented	Low activation; state of being calm, peaceful, or relaxed.	FLPoM, Contentment, Relief, Relaxation, Mindfulness.	Aligned with adjustment goals; involves internal regulation to maintain harmony.
(Integrative) Mixed	Variable arousal; combination of passion and stamina.	L2 Grit, Academic Resilience, Buoyancy, Engagement.	Represent affect-laden traits; bridge momentary energy spikes with steady-state persistence.

Evidence Synthesis and Thematic Mapping

The findings were synthesized using a thematic framework approach designed to address the four research questions systematically. Data were iteratively coded and mapped onto the Iranian Affective Pyramid, a hierarchical model developed for this review to represent the distribution of constructs within the literature (RQ1) and the arousal orientations targeted by measurement instruments (RQ2). This was followed by a higher-order conceptual synthesis that interpreted the sociocultural valuation of affect (RQ3) and identified specific voids in the literature (RQ4). In line with recent advancements in Affect Valuation Theory (Tsai et al., 2025), the synthesis avoided a binary classification of learners as exclusively HAP-oriented or LAP-oriented. Instead, the mapping treated arousal orientations as a continuum, allowing for the integration of heterogeneous evidence ranging from high-energy exultation to steady-state persistence and restorative harmony. This multi-layered synthesis allowed for a coherent narrative that moved beyond the simple reporting of data toward a theoretical deconstruction of the Westernized Ideal Affect exported into the Iranian EFL context.

Result

Overview of Included Studies

A total of 122 empirical studies were identified as meeting the inclusion criteria for this scoping review. A comprehensive summary of these sources, including author(s) and year, learner population, sample size, primary constructs, AVT-informed arousal orientation, and measurement instruments, is provided in Table 2. This overview characterizes the descriptive scope of the evidence base before the specific analyses responding to Research Questions are presented.

The participant pool across the 122 studies is predominantly composed of adult learners in the tertiary education sector. Frequencies indicate that 63 studies focused on university students, particularly English-major undergraduates, while 57 studies were situated in private language institutes. Conversely, the secondary state-school context was documented in 8 studies. Sample sizes were variable, ranging from small-scale qualitative inquiries (N=2) to large-scale surveys exceeding 900 participants.

The investigated constructs span a diverse range of affective states and psychological traits. As detailed in Table 2, the research includes singular emotional states such as FLE, as well as psychological traits and restorative states including L2 Grit, Academic Resilience, Mindfulness, and Peace of Mind. The publication timeline reveals a numerical increase in

research output toward the end of the search period, with 97 studies published between 2022 and 2026.

When mapped through the lens of AVT, the distribution of constructs in the literature shows a focus on specific arousal categories. The majority of the studies target HAP-oriented states, which emphasize energy and activation. A substantial middle tier of the literature investigates integrative mixed constructs (e.g., grit and resilience), which bridge affective passion with steady-state perseverance. Conversely, LAP-oriented states, characterized by calmness and inner harmony, represent the lowest frequency in the dataset and appear primarily in the most recent subset of the literature.

Methodologically, the field exhibits a high degree of instrument standardization. The Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (FLES) and the L2 Grit Scale serve as the primary quantitative tools. However, a methodological diversification is present in the recent literature. Beyond standardized Likert scales, the dataset includes mixed-methods designs and qualitative tools, such as reflective journals, semi-structured interviews, and idiodynamic tracking, to capture the situational nuances of learner affect.

Table 2

Summary of Demographic, Methodological, and Thematic Characteristics of Included Studies

No.	Author(s) & Year	Learner Population	Sample Size	Main PP Construct(s)	AVT-informed Arousal Orientation	Measurement Instrument
1	Sadoughi and Hejazi (2024b)	University	442	enjoyment, hope, pride	HAP	FL-PEQ
2	Esmaeilee et al. (2025)	Private Institute	59	PERMA	Mixed	IELTS speaking test rubrics
3	Hamedi and Arabpour (2025)	Private Institute	224	enjoyment, academic engagement	HAP	AEQ-S/Science Engagement Scale
4	Mellati and Valizadeh (2025)	University	521	enjoyment, hope , pride / academic engagement	HAP	PAEQ/Student Engagement Questionnaire
5	Derakhshan and Azari Noughabi (2024)	University	200	FLPoM/FLE/PsyCap	Mixed	FLPoM Scale/FLE-S Scale/PsyCap Scale
6	Wang et al. (2023)	Private Institute	16	flow of compassion/well-being, motivation	Mixed	Semi-structured interviews/qualitative content analysis
7	Rezaee and Oladrostam (2018)	Private Institute	385	character strengths (love of learning, zest, kindness, gratitude, hope, humor)	Mixed	IPPLL
8	Khodabandeh (2026)	University	68	awe, autonomy	Mixed	Awe Questionnaire/ Learner Autonomy Questionnaire
9	Soyoof et al. (2025)	University	770 (346 Iranians)	Savoring beliefs, L2 WTC	Mixed	L2 SBI/L2 WTC Scale/ IDLE Scale
10	Shirvan and Talebzadeh (2018)	University	18	FLE/FLCA	HAP	Semi-structured interviews/narrative frames/personal journals
11	Derakhshan and Yin (2025)	University	699 (353 Iranians)	enjoyment, hope , pride / academic engagement	HAP	UES-S/AEQ
12	Zare and Al-Issa (2024)	University	116	Enjoyment/self-appreciation	Mixed	Reflective frames/semi-structured interviews
13	J. Fathi et al. (2025)	Private Institute	50	ICC/L2 WTC	Mixed	ICC Scale, WTC Scale/post-intervention interviews

Table 2 (continued)

Summary of Demographic, Methodological, and Thematic Characteristics of Included Studies

No.	Author(s) & Year	Learner Population	Sample Size	Main PP Construct(s)	AVT-informed Arousal Orientation	Measurement Instrument
14	Zou et al. (2026)	University	626 (330 Iranians)	FLE/L2 WTC/FLB	Mixed	FLE-S Scale, L2 WTC Scale/ FLB Scale/IDLE Scale
15	Zamanpour and Etemadzadeh (2024)	University	60	Joy, pride, hope/student engagement	HAP	AEQ/Student Engagement Scale
16	Derakhshan and Zare (2023)	University	141	Enjoyment/emotion regulation	Mixed	ERQ/reflective frames/semi-structured interviews
17	Mohammad Hosseini et al. (2022)	Private Institute	386	FLE/student engagement	HAP	FLE-S/Student Engagement Scale
18	Badiei et al. (2025)	University	350	FLPoM/FLE/L2 grit	Mixed	FLPoM Scale/FLE-S/L2 Grit Scale
19	Zarrinabadi and Khodarahmi (2024)	University	14	DMCs/positive emotionality (excitement, happiness)	HAP	Motivational graphs/semi-structured interviews
20	Abdolrezapour and Ghanbari (2021)	Private Institute	45	hope, gratitude, emotion regulation, empathy	Mixed	Class observations/semi-structured interviews
21	Zahed Alavi et al. (2026)	University	9	Savoring/enjoyment/motivation	Mixed	Semi-structured interviews
22	Enferad et al. (2025)	University	301	FLPoM/FLE/FLEng/L2 WTC/FLCA/FLB	Mixed	FLPoM Scale/L2 WTC Scale/FLB Scale/FLCA Scale/SEQ/ FLES-S
23	Hamzavi et al. (2023)	University	440	Enjoyment, pride, hope/appraisals of control and value	HAP	MSLQ/AEQ
24	Abdolrezapour and Ghanbari (2022)	Private Institute	67	flow, interest	Mixed	TEIQue-ASF/Perceived Flow scale
25	Ebadi et al. (2018)	Private Institute	306	L2 grit	Mixed	Iranian EFL Context-Specific Grit Questionnaire
26	Derakhshan and Fathi (2024a)	University	566	FLE/L2 grit	Mixed	FLE Scale/L2 Grit Scale
27	J. Fathi et al. (2024)	University	903	FLE/grit/growth mindset/ideal L2 self	Mixed	Growth Mindset scale/FLE scale/Ideal L2 Self scale/Grit scale
28	Teimouri et al. (2022)	University	191	L2 grit, L2 joy	Mixed	L2-Grit Scale/domain-general grit scale/L2 joy scale
29	Derakhshan and Fathi (2025)	University	879	FLE/L2 grit/WTC	Mixed	FLE scale/L2 Grit scale/WTC scale/FLA scale
30	Heydarnejad (2023)	Private Institute	386	FLE/Academic Resilience/Positive Orientation	Mixed	ASR/POS/FLES
31	Heydarnejad et al. (2022)	University	418	language-domain-specific grit	Mixed	LDSGS/FLCAS
32	Shahrokhi and Jahangiri Dehaghani (2025)	Private Institute	356	L2 grit, WTC	Mixed	L2 Grit Scale/Core Self-Evaluation Scale/Motivation Scale, WTC Scale
33	Mohammad Hosseini et al. (2022)	Private Institute	627	Mindfulness/grit/academic buoyancy	Mixed/LAP	FFMQ-15/Grit-S/Academic Buoyancy Scale
34	Azari Noughabi and Ghasemi (2025)	University	313	L2 grit/WTC	Mixed	Domain-specific L2 Grit scale/ IDLE Scale/WTC Scale

Table 2 (continued)

Summary of Demographic, Methodological, and Thematic Characteristics of Included Studies

No.	Author(s) & Year	Learner Population	Sample Size	Main PP Construct(s)	AVT-informed Arousal Orientation	Measurement Instrument
35	Mirzaei et al. (2024)	Private Institute	326	eudaimonic well-being motives/hedonic well-being motives/mindfulness/resilience	Mixed/LAP	Well-being motives scale/ Connor-Davidson Resilience scale/FFMQ
36	Fathi and Mohammaddokht (2021)	University	195	FLE/ideal L2 self	HAP	FLES, FLCAS, Ideal L2 self scale
37	Elahi Shirvan et al. (2021)	Private Institute	437	L2 grit/FLE	Mixed	FLES/L2 Grit Scale
38	Derakhshan and Fathi (2024b)	Private Institute	379	growth mindset/ideal L2 self/grit/student engagement	Mixed	Student Engagement Scale, Ideal L2 Self Scale, Growth Mindset Scale, L2 Grit Scale
39	Ahmed Ali Sulaiman et al. (2026)	Private Institute	100	peace of mind, academic enthusiasm	LAP/HAP	FLPoMS/Academic Enthusiasm Scale
40	Soleimani et al. (2026)	University	390	student engagement/FLE/growth mindset	Mixed	Student Engagement scale/FLE scale, GMVL scale
41	J. Fathi et al. (2026)	Private Institute	379	L2 grit/growth mindset/self-efficacy	Mixed	Growth Mindset scale, Grit scale, Self-efficacy scale
42	Hwang et al. (2024)	Private Institute	66	FLE/language-specific grit	Mixed	FLE scale, Grit scale
43	Kargar Behbahani et al. (2024)	Private Institute	18	Academic Buoyancy/Reflective Thinking/Academic Resilience	Mixed	Narratives/focus group discussions
44	Zhang et al. (2025)	Private Institute	374	L2 writing growth mindset/ writing enjoyment/self-efficacy/Ideal L2 Writing Self	Mixed	L2 Writing Growth Mindset Scale/English Writing Enjoyment Scale/Ideal L2 Writing Self Scale
45	Zarrinabadi et al. (2026)	Private Institute	346	meta-emotions/enjoyment/WTC	Mixed	Metaemotions Scale/Enjoyment Scale/WTC Scale
46	(Liu et al., 2024)	Private Institute	36	FLE/Ideal L2 Self/L2 Grit	HAP/Mixed	FLES/Ideal L2 Self Scale/L2 Grit Scale/semi-structured interviews
47	(Fathi et al., 2026)	University	456	FLE/Coping Self-Efficacy/ Mindfulness	HAP/LAP/ Mixed	FLES/MAAS/ CSES
48	Rezai et al. (2025)	University	532	OFLE/Online Motivation for Learning (OML)	HAP	OFLE Scale/OML Scale
49	Fathi et al. (2024)	University	532	L2 writing grit/ideal L2 writing self/growth L2 writing mindset	Mixed	L2 Writing Grit Scale
50	Elahi Shirvan et al. (2020)	University	2	FLE	HAP	Idiodynamic method, Enjoymeter/weekly journals/semi-structured interviews
51	Rezai et al. (2024)	Private Institute	492	Well-being (Hedonic and Eudaimonic)/Emotion Regulation	Mixed	WBS/ERS
52	Bagheri Nevisi and Farhani (2022)	Private Institute	180	Motivation	Mixed	Motivation Questionnaire/interviews
53	Ebn-Abbasi and Nushi (2022)	School/Private Institute	269	L2 grit/Classroom Enjoyment (CE)/L2 WTC	Mixed/ HAP	L2 Grit Scale/CE Scale/L2 WTC Questionnaire
54	Derakhshesh et al. (2024)	Private Institute	186	Online learning self-efficacy/Online course satisfaction/Online learning climate	Mixed	OLSS/OCSS/OLCS

Table 2 (continued)

Summary of Demographic, Methodological, and Thematic Characteristics of Included Studies

No.	Author(s) & Year	Learner Population	Sample Size	Main PP Construct(s)	AVT-informed Arousal Orientation	Measurement Instrument
55	Wang et al. (2024)	Private Institute	320	Academic Enthusiasm/Creative Thinking/Emotional Intelligence	HAP	AE Scale/Abedi's Creativity Questionnaire/Schutte Self-Report EI Test
56	Pawlak et al. (2024)	University	238	FLE/L2 Grit/Motivated Learning Behaviour	Mixed / HAP	FLE Scale/L2 Grit Scale/BPELC-R Scale
57	Pishghadam et al. (2016)	University	308	Enjoyment, hope, pride/Relief	Mixed / HAP / LAP	EFL Skills Emotions Scale
58	Sadoughi and Hejazi (2024b)	Private Institute	387	Learning Enjoyment/Ideal L2 Self/Learning Experience/ WTC	HAP	Learning Enjoyment Scale
59	Ghanizadeh et al. (2019)	University	221	L2 Resilience/Mindfulness/Self-Fulfilment/Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation	Mixed	Langer Mindfulness Scale/L2 Resilience Scale/ Measurement of Actualization of Potential/L2 Motivation Scale
60	Aladini et al. (2026)	University	60	Emotional resilience/Cognitive flexibility	Mixed / LAP	Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale/Wisconsin Card Sorting Test
61	Zare and Aqajani Delavar (2023)	University	92	Trait Emotional Intelligence/Well-being/Emotionality/Self-control/Sociability	Mixed	TEIQue-S
62	Namaziandost, Heydarnejad and Azizi (2023)	University	398	Academic Resilience/Academic Emotion Regulation/Academic Self-Esteem	Mixed	ARS/AERQ/FLLSES
63	Hwang et al. (2025)	Private Institute	60	Flow Experience	Mixed	Flow Experience Questionnaire
64	Khodaverdian Dehkordi et al. (2021)	University	384	L2 Grit/Big Five Personality Traits	Mixed	L2 Short Grit Scale/Big Five Inventory
65	Çakmak et al. (2023)	Private Institute	512	Academic Resilience/Academic Motivation/Self-Assessment	Mixed	ARS/AMS/CSAQ
66	Namaziandost, Rezai, et al. (2023)	University	411	Academic Resilience/Academic Engagement/Academic Emotion Regulation/Self-Efficacy Belief	Mixed	ARS/SAES/AERQ
67	Zarrinabadi et al. (2022)	University	300	Academic Resilience, L2 Growth Mindset, Ideal Self, Class Engagement/Well-being	Mixed	Academic Resilience Measure/Student Course Engagement Questionnaire /Flourishing Scale /L2 Mindset Scale
68	Namaziandost and Hwang (2025)	Private Institute	40	Academic Engagement/ WTC/Academic Success/Multiple Intelligences	Mixed	Language Achievement Test/ semi-structured qualitative interviews
69	Khajavy et al. (2019)	University	317	Psychological Capital (self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience)	Mixed	Compound PsyCap Scale (CPC-12)
70	Shahian et al. (2017)	Private Institute	238	Flow experience, Emotioncy	Mixed	Flow Short Scale/Emotioncy Scale
71	Li and Shakibaei (2026)	Private Institute	60	Behavioral, Cognitive, and Emotional Engagement	HAP / Mixed	Engagement Questionnaire
72	Ghafouri and Hassaskhah (2025)	State School	263	L2 Grit	Mixed	L2 Grit Scale
73	Karimi and Ashkani (2025)	University	33	Coping mechanisms	Mixed	Written narratives/semi-structured qualitative interviews

Table 2 (continued)

Summary of Demographic, Methodological, and Thematic Characteristics of Included Studies

No.	Author(s) & Year	Learner Population	Sample Size	Main PP Construct(s)	AVT-informed Arousal Orientation	Measurement Instrument
74	Derakhshan and Park (2026)	Private Institute	218	Autonomy/competence/relatedness	Mixed	METUX Scale
75	Sharifi et al. (2017)	State School	51	Interest/challenge/choice/joy	HAP / Mixed	My Class Activities survey
76	Fathi et al. (2025)	Private Institute	347	Ideal L2 Self/Mindfulness, Academic Buoyancy	LAP / Mixed	Ideal L2 Self Scale/MAAS/ABS
77	Yazdi and Ghanizadeh (2024)	University	611	Resilience in Virtual Education/Personal Best Goals	Mixed	RVES/PBS
78	Ebn-Abbasi et al. (2022)	State School/ Private Institute	308	L2 Grit/Ideal L2 Self/Ought-to L2 Self/Willingness to Communicate	Mixed	L2-specific Grit Scale/L2MSS Questionnaire /L2 WTC Questionnaire
79	Ebn-Abbasi et al. (2024)	Private Institute	450	L2 Grit/Ideal L2 Self/Language Mindset/Willingness to Communicate	Mixed	L2 domain-specific Grit Scale /L2MSS Scale/ Growth Language Mindset Scale/L2 WTC Scale
80	Souzandehfar and Ahmed Abdel-Al Ibrahim (2023)	University	20	Academic Buoyancy/Self-Esteem/Creativity/Language Achievement	Mixed	Semi-structured qualitative interviews
81	Mousavi and Ketabi (2021)	Private Institute	15	Engagement (Behavioral/Collaborative/Female-Oriented Participation)/Voice	Mixed	Semi-structured qualitative interviews/class observations/reflection journals
82	Sadoughi et al. (2026)	Private Institute	643	Enjoyment/hope/pride/Self-Efficacy for Motivation Regulation	HAP / Mixed	AEQ-S
83	Jahedizadeh et al. (2021)	University and Private Institute	376	Sustained Flow/Personal Best /Buoyancy	Mixed	Persian DMC Disposition Scale /PBQ/Academic Buoyancy Scale
84	A. Mirzaei et al. (2024)	Private Institute	59	Course Interest/Motivation	HAP / Mixed	Course Interest Survey /interviews
85	Ghanbaran et al. (2023)	University	78	Flow experience	Mixed	Short Flow Scale/Task Specific Flow Scale
86	Valipour and Salehi (2026)	University	147	Self-regulated learning/strategy use/L2 Grit	Mixed	SRCvoc/L2-Grit Scale
87	Khodarahmi and Zarrinabadi (2016)	Private Institute	187	Self-Regulated Learning/English language learning optimism	Mixed	SRSI-SR/EFL Learning Optimism Scale
88	Alazemi et al. (2023)	University	435	Academic Buoyancy/L2 Grit, Academic Emotion Regulation/Personal Best	Mixed	ABS/L2-Grit S/AERQ/ PBS
89	Jahedizadeh and Ghanizadeh (2021)	University/ Private Institute	320	Sustained Flow/Directed Motivational Currents/Personal Best goals	Mixed	Persian web-based DMC Disposition Scale/Personal Best Questionnaire
90	Papi and Khajavy (2021)	University	324	Regulatory Focus/L2 Self-Guides/L2 Enjoyment, L2 Eager/Vigilant L2 use	HAP / Mixed	Regulatory Focus Scale/L2MSS 2x2 Self-Guides Scale/L2 Anxiety and Enjoyment scales
91	Namaziandost et al. (2024)	Private Institute	417	Basic psychological needs satisfaction/Psychological Well-Being	Mixed	PLSPQ/AMS/Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction Measure/ PWB
92	Gordani and Sadeghzadeh (2023)	University	504	Mindfulness, Psychological Capital (self-efficacy, hope, resilience, optimism)	Mixed	Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire/Psychological Capital Questionnaire
93	Haj Mir Alikhani et al. (2026)	Private Institute	54	Psychological well-being/Academic buoyancy	Mixed	PWB/ABS

Table 2 (continued)

Summary of Demographic, Methodological, and Thematic Characteristics of Included Studies

No.	Author(s) & Year	Learner Population	Sample Size	Main PP Construct(s)	AVT-informed Arousal Orientation	Measurement Instrument
94	Hassanpour et al. (2025)	Private Institute	60	L2 grit/Learning engagement/Growth mindset	Mixed	L2GS/SES/LMI
95	Majdi et al. (2025)	State School	80	Engagement, Enjoyment, Motivation	HAP / Mixed	Engagement Scale/ FLE Scale/Attitudes & Motivation Test Battery
96	Elahi Shirvan et al. (2022)	Private Institute	437	L2 grit	Mixed	L2GS
97	Aldosari et al. (2023)	University	518	Core of Self-Assessment/ Reflective Thinking/Learner Enjoyment/Language Student Immunity	HAP / Mixed	CSAQ/RTQ/FLES/LSIS
98	Behzadpour et al. (2025)	University	378	FL Enjoyment/Ideal L2 Self/Student Engagement	HAP / Mixed	FLES/Ideal L2 Self Scale; Student Engagement Scale
99	Hedeshi and Ghanizadeh (2025)	University/ Private Institute	321	L2 Resilience/L2 Buoyancy	Mixed	L2 Learners' Resilience Scale/L2 Buoyancy Scale
100	Botes et al. (2025)	Private Institute	182	L2 Grit/Ideal L2 Self,/L2 Engagement	Mixed	L2 Grit Scale/Short Grit Scale/L2 Engagement Scale
101	Ebrahimzadeh and Alavi (2017)	State School	136	E-learning enjoyment	HAP / Mixed	EGameFlow Scale
102	Pawlak et al. (2025)	University	807	L2 grammar grit	Mixed	Domain-Specific Grammar Grit Questionnaire
103	Kajabadi et al. (2016)	University	156	Resilience/Autonomous learning	Mixed	CD-RISC/Learner Autonomy Questionnaire
104	Kruk et al. (2025)	Private Institute	412	Foreign language enjoyment	HAP / Mixed	FLES
105	Rezazadeh and Zarrinabadi (2023)	University	232	Foreign language enjoyment	HAP	FLES
106	Mirabolghasemi et al. (2021)	Private Institute	164	Blended learning satisfaction	LAP / Mixed	CoI scale/satisfaction scale
107	Isaee and Barjesteh (2026)	University	60	Self-transcendent emotions /well-being	HAP / LAP	Awe Experience Scale/PERMA Profiler
108	Alazemi et al. (2023)	Private Institute	58	Academic engagement/Emotion regulation/WTC/Academic well-being	Mixed	AES/ERS; PASS/ WTC Scale
109	Kruk et al. (2024)	Private Institute	145	Ideal L2 writing self/L2 writing enjoyment	HAP / Mixed	Ideal L2 Writing Self Scale/L2 Writing Enjoyment Scale
110	Ebrahimzadeh and Alavi (2016)	State School	136	E-learning enjoyment	HAP / Mixed	EGameFlow Scale
111	Luo et al. (2024)	University	242	Academic enthusiasm/Academic vitality/Self-efficacy beliefs	HAP / Mixed	AEQ/AVQ/SEBQ
112	Ebadi and Ebadijalal (2022)	University	20	WTC/motivation/enthusiasm/confidence	Mixed	WTC scale/semi-structured focus group interviews
113	Elahi Shirvan and Taherian (2021)	University	367	Foreign language enjoyment	HAP / Mixed	FLE Scale/reflective journals/semi-structured interviews
114	Danesh and Shahnazari (2020)	Private Institute	132	L2 learning motivation/Resilience	Mixed	L2 MSSQ/CD-RISC

Table 2 (continued)

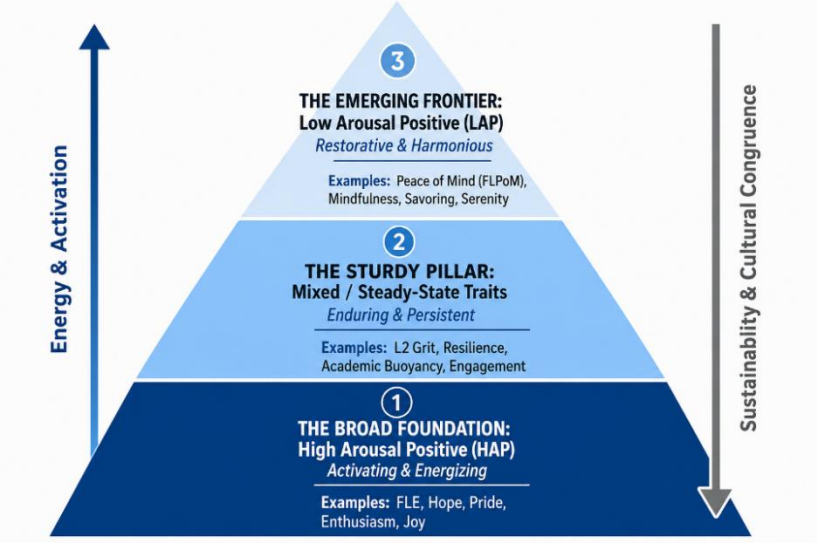
Summary of Demographic, Methodological, and Thematic Characteristics of Included Studies

No.	Author(s) & Year	Learner Population	Sample Size	Main PP Construct(s)	AVT-informed Arousal Orientation	Measurement Instrument
115	Zarrabi et al. (2026)	University	55	Wellbeing	Mixed	Wellbeing Questionnaire/ semi-structured interview
116	Abdolrezapour et al. (2023)	University	120	Self-efficacy/Resilience/Academic motivation	Mixed	QESE/Ego Resilience Scale/AMS
117	Karimi and Nasouri (2024)	Private Institute	57	Flow (game-induced and language-induced flow)	Mixed	Operation Span Task/ diaries/semi-structured interviews
118	Barzakhi Farimani and Nasrollahi Shahri (2020)	University	271	Hierarchical needs / satisfaction of needs	Mixed / LAP	Revised Need Satisfaction Inventory
119	Ghasemi and Azari Noughabi (2026)	University	316	Foreign Language Peace of Mind/WTC/ FL Learning Burnout	LAP / Mixed	IDLE Scale/L2WTC Scale/ FLLB Scale/ FLPoMS
120	Aliakbari and Mardani (2022)	Private Institute	60	Motivation/Satisfaction	Mixed	researcher-made questionnaire
121	Aladini et al. (2025)	Private Institute	561	growth mindfulness/autonomy, enjoyment/motivation/self-efficacy	Mixed	MAAS/semi-structured interviews/attitude & perception questionnaire
122	Ebrahimi et al. (2026)	University	16	Learning satisfaction/learning motivation	Mixed	semi-structured interviews/focus group discussions

The Affective Landscape: Distribution of HAP and LAP Constructs

In response to RQ1, the 122 included studies were mapped based on the specific affective and psychological constructs investigated and their AVT-informed arousal orientations (see Table 3). As illustrated in Figure 2, the resulting distribution of findings in the research landscape can be conceptualized as the Iranian Affective Pyramid. This model represents the frequency with which specific constructs have been empirically measured in the Iranian EFL literature, revealing a tiered structure consisting of a broad foundation of high-arousal activating states, a middle tier of integrative traits, and a narrow subset of low-arousal states.

Figure 2. *The Iranian Affective Pyramid: A hierarchical mapping of the investigated positive affective and psychological constructs categorized by their AVT-informed arousal orientations*



The Iranian EFL research landscape is significantly skewed toward high-energy, activating constructs. *FLE* is the most frequent variable in the corpus, appearing in 62 of the included studies (approximately 50% of the total dataset). As shown in Table 3, other high-frequency HAP constructs include *hope* and *optimism* (*n*=14), *Pride* (*n*=13), and *Academic Enthusiasm* (*n*=11). The literature consistently justifies this HAP focus through the lens of Control-Value Theory (CVT). Authors like Sadoughi and Hejazi (2024b) and Hamzavi et al. (2023) argue that for Iranian learners, high-arousal states act as primary activating mechanisms. These emotions are conceptualized as providing the necessary energy and drive to overcome the cognitive and social challenges of a foreign language environment, serving as a vital psychological buffer against the monotony and passivity often associated with traditional pedagogical structures (Derakhshan & Yin, 2025; Enferad et al., 2025; Luo et al., 2024; Pishghadam et al., 2016; Zou et al., 2026). This HAP-centric foundation is further reinforced by research into *joy* and *directed motivational currents*, where success is equated with visible, high-energy participation and intense, goal-directed academic surges (Zarrinabadi & Khodarahmi, 2024).

A substantial second tier of the literature focuses on integrative mixed constructs. These are led by L2 *grit* (*n*=28) and *academic resilience and buoyancy* (*n*=25). Unlike the momentary exultation associated with HAP states, these constructs are conceptualized as steady-state psychological resources and character strengths that represent a sustained commitment to language acquisition (Ebn-Abbasi et al., 2024; Pawlak et al., 2025). Researchers in the Iranian context (Ebadi et al., 2018; J. Fathi et al., 2026; Teimouri et al., 2022) frequently describe grit and resilience as an unwavering commitment and sustained passion, enduring traits required to navigate the long-distance marathon of language learning (Khodaverdian Dehkordi et al., 2021). These constructs act as critical emotional shock-absorbers and protective buffers (Abdolrezapour et al., 2023; Mohammad Hosseini et al., 2022), allowing learners to maintain internal focus and emotional stability within Iran's highly competitive and exam-oriented educational climate. This is said to be particularly vital for navigating high-stakes evaluative pressures, such as the national university entrance exam (*Konkoor*), where academic buoyancy and resilience enable students to recover from routine setbacks and maintain consistent performance (Aladini et al., 2025; Rezai et al., 2025; Zahed Alavi et al., 2026). This middle tier effectively bridges the gap between pure emotional experience and stable personality features, demonstrating a strong valuation of long-term persistence and psychological equanimity over transient exultation (Danesh & Shahnazari, 2020; Elahi Shirvan et al., 2022).

LAP-oriented states, those characterized by calmness, inner peace, and tranquility, represent the smallest portion of the current research landscape. *Mindfulness* (*n*=12) and *FLPoM* (*n*=12) are the primary constructs in this category, followed by *learner satisfaction* (*n*=5) and *savoring* (*n*=3). While these states appear less frequently, they constitute an emerging thematic cluster in studies published between 2024 and 2026 (Ghasemi & Azari Noughabi, 2026). Authors in this subset argue that LAP states are more culturally congruent with Eastern/Persian values of internal harmony and inner peace compared to the high-arousal excitement prioritized in Western pedagogical models (Badiei et al., 2025; Derakhshan & Azari Noughabi, 2024; Isaee & Barjesteh, 2026). The emerging data suggests that while HAP is valued for its activating power, LAP is increasingly recognized for its restorative function, providing an essential psychological buffer and shield for learners within Iran's high-anxiety,

exam-oriented educational system (Aladini et al., 2026; Haj Mir Alikhani et al., 2026). Specifically, low-arousal states like FLPoM have been found to fully mediate the relationship between informal learning and the mitigation of student burnout, offering a level of emotional stability that high-arousal enjoyment cannot sustain (Ghasemi & Azari Noughabi, 2026).

Table 3

Arousal Orientations of Positive Affective and Psychological Constructs in the Iranian EFL Literature

Construct Name	AVT-informed Arousal Orientation	Frequency
Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE)	HAP	62
L2 Grit (General & Writing/Grammar)	Mixed	28
Academic Resilience & Buoyancy	Mixed	25
Hope & Optimism	HAP / Mixed	14
Pride / Achievement Emotions	HAP	13
Mindfulness	LAP / Mixed	12
FL Peace of Mind (FLPoM)	LAP	12
Academic Engagement / Enthusiasm	HAP / Mixed	11
Flow & DMCs (Motivational Surges)	HAP / Mixed	11
Joy	HAP	7
Life/Learner Satisfaction	LAP	5
Willingness to Communicate (WTC)	Mixed	5
Savoring / Self-Actualization	LAP / Mixed	3
Altruism & Compassion	Mixed	2
Awe / Self-Transcendence	HAP / Mixed	2

Methodological Review: Psychometric Operationalization and Arousal Bias

To answer RQ2, this review evaluated the psychometric architectures of the 122 included studies (see Table 4). The results identify a concentrated reliance on specific quantitative instruments that prioritize the measurement of high-arousal activating states, while low-arousal restorative states are frequently omitted from empirical models.

The methodological base is characterized by a high frequency of a few standardized instruments. The FLES, in its various original and shortened forms, is the most prevalent tool (Fathi & Mohammaddokht, 2021), utilized as the primary instrument in 29 of the included studies. As noted in the psychometric review, the FLES, and the broader Control-Value Theory (CVT) framework under which the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire (AEQ) operates, is structurally designed to capture activating affect (Fathi et al., 2026; Sadoughi & Hejazi, 2024a). Authors in the Iranian context explicitly define enjoyment as an activity-related, high-arousal emotion (Enferad et al., 2025) and a positive activating state that inspires students to actively participate in learning tasks (Derakhshan & Yin, 2025). Consequently, the empirical data derived from these scales primarily reflect exultant socio-emotional experiences, which serve as the dominant archetype for positive affect in the Iranian corpus (Behzadpour et al., 2025; Derakhshan & Fathi, 2024a).

The prevalence of scale items targeting indicators such as laughter, fun, and excitement results in the empirical data concentrated on high-activation states. Under these methodological parameters, students experiencing positive affect through quiet reflection, internal harmony, or a sense of safety tend to obtain lower scores, despite experiencing valid positive states (Ghasemi & Azari Noughabi, 2026). This data-collection focus emphasizes high-arousal exultation, while restorative and quiescence-related dimensions, such as calmness and safety, appear less frequently in quantitative models (Papi & Khajavy, 2021). Ultimately, the review identifies that

even when positive deactivating states like relief are theoretically acknowledged, they are often excluded from final statistical analyses (Pishghadam et al., 2016).

Moreover, a substantial portion of the research corpus assesses integrative mixed constructs, primarily through the L2 Grit Scale (*n*=24) and various resilience and buoyancy scales (*n*=20). Unlike scales targeting momentary affective states, these instruments measure enduring psychological traits and eudaimonic capacities. Researchers in the Iranian context (Ebadi et al., 2018; Fathi et al., 2024; Teimouri et al., 2022) conceptualize grit as a combination of perseverance of effort and consistency of interest, framing it as the psychological stamina required to navigate the long-distance marathon of language learning rather than a brief sprint (Botes et al., 2025; Khodaverdian Dehkordi et al., 2021). Furthermore, these tools often operationalize positive affect as a stable form of Psychological Capital, allowing for the measurement of a learner's long-term capacity to manage academic setbacks under significant socio-evaluative pressure (Khajavy et al., 2019; A. Mirzaei et al., 2024; Mohammad Hosseini et al., 2022).

The mapping of studies utilizing the AEQ (*n*=9) or its variants identifies a pattern of selective sub-scale inclusion. While this instrument theoretically encompasses a broad range of affect, empirical applications in the Iranian context primarily utilize sub-scales measuring activating states, specifically enjoyment, hope, and pride, while excluding deactivating states such as relief, relaxation, and contentment (Hamzavi et al., 2023; Sadoughi & Hejazi, 2024b). Authors frequently justify this focused approach by targeting emotions believed to correlate most directly with classroom engagement and communicative performance (Derakhshan & Yin, 2025). Furthermore, the review identifies instances where deactivating states such as relief were removed from statistical analysis after failing to register significantly among participants (Pishghadam et al., 2016).

The most recent literature (2024–2026) includes the utilization of the Foreign Language Peace of Mind Scale (FLPoMS; *n*=5). This instrument is designed to measure dimensions including inner peace and classroom harmony (Derakhshan & Azari Noughabi, 2024). Empirical findings from studies utilizing the FLPoMS indicate that these low-arousal states can serve as significant predictors of perceived language proficiency and resilience, occasionally showing stronger predictive paths than high-arousal enjoyment (Badiei et al., 2025). For instance, structural equation modeling has identified that low-arousal peace of mind mediates the relationship between informal digital learning and the mitigation of learner burnout (Ghasemi & Azari Noughabi, 2026). These results provide a quantitative account of restorative experiences that were previously absent from the empirical models in the Iranian context.

Furthermore, 23 of the included studies utilized qualitative or mixed-methods designs to investigate emotional dimensions not captured by standardized quantitative instruments (Majdi et al., 2025; Sadoughi & Hejazi, 2024b). Techniques such as Ecological Momentary Assessment and the Idiodynamic Method have allowed researchers to track second-by-second fluctuations, revealing that learners frequently cycle between high-energy surges of joy and quiet, restorative moments of satisfaction (Elahi Shirvan & Taherian, 2021; Elahi Shirvan et al., 2020). Additionally reflective journaling (Aladini et al., 2025) and narrative inquiry (Karimi & Ashkani, 2025) were used to identify complex affective states, including self-transcendence, the ecosystemic flow of compassion, and the experiential sense of feeling small but peaceful (Ghafouri & Hassaskhah, 2025; Isaee & Barjesteh, 2026; Wang et al.,

2024). These qualitative inquiries provided descriptive data on the subjective origins of positive affect within specific instructional contexts.

Table 4

Psychometric Architectures of the Included Studies

Name of Scale / Tool	Arousal Dimension Targeted	Frequency	Psychometric & Construct Properties
Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (FLES)	HAP	29	Developed by Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014). Items target social enjoyment (e.g., we laugh a lot) and private enjoyment (e.g., I am a worthy member).
L2 Grit Scale (L2GS / LDSG)	Mixed	24	Measures sturdy passions via two components: Perseverance of Effort (e.g., I am diligent) and Consistency of Interest (e.g., I maintain my interest). Targets long-term stamina rather than brief emotional peaks.
Academic Resilience & Buoyancy Scales (ARS / ABS)	Mixed	20	Targets the capacity to bounce back from setbacks. ARS captures perceived happiness, persistence, and self-regulation and measures everyday shock-absorption and sustainability of motivation.
Flow & Engagement Scales (FSS, UES, SES)	Mixed / High Arousal	24	Measures deep cognitive absorption (Flow) and multidimensional investment (Engagement). Items range from behavioral participation (HAP) to focused cognitive autotelic experience (Steady-State).
Achievement Emotions Questionnaire (AEQ)	HAP	9	Grounded in CVT, it is almost exclusively used in Iran to measure activating HAP states: Enjoyment, Hope, and Pride. Omission of Relief (LAP) is documented in pilot phases (e.g., Pishghadam et al., 2016).
Well-being & PERMA Profiler	Mixed	11	Captures overall flourishing and eudaimonic purpose in life. Bridges hedonic pleasure (HAP) with long-term factors like self-acceptance and environmental mastery (LAP/Steady-State).
Mindfulness Scales (FFMQ / MAAS)	LAP / Mixed	7	Measures present-moment, non-judgmental awareness. Psychometrically assesses non-reactivity, describing, and non-judging, fostering inner composure and lowered physiological arousal.
FL Peace of Mind Scale (FLPoMS)	LAP	5	A pioneering tool designed for Eastern contexts. Items specifically target inner peace, harmony, and feeling at ease (e.g., My mind is free and at ease in the English class).

Cultural Valuation of Affect: Tension Between Liberation and Congruence

In response to RQ3, the qualitative and discussion-based evidence from the included studies was synthesized to identify the sociocultural and educational factors associated with affect valuation in Iran. While AVT terminology is infrequently operationalized in the study titles, the literature highlights a tension between Western-influenced pedagogical ideals (HAP) and orientations rooted in Iranian cultural traditions (LAP). The literature describes several defining features of the high-context instructional environment, specifically a traditional banking system of education characterized by teacher-centeredness and rote memorization, which authors identify as primary sources of learner boredom and disengagement (Majdi et al., 2025; Mousavi & Ketabi, 2021). Additionally, the studies describe a collectivist social structure in which academic achievement is tied to family honor, resulting in a high risk of losing face and intense evaluative pressure centered on high-stakes examinations (Ghafouri & Hassaskhah, 2025; Rezai et al., 2025). Within this landscape, English is characterized not merely as a school subject but as a bridge to the universe and a tool for higher education or potential emigration (A. Mirzaei et al., 2024).

The literature characterizes HAP-oriented states, including enjoyment, excitement, and pride, as activating factors that facilitate engagement. Researchers propose that these high-arousal states serve to counteract the perceived rigidity of the formal school environment (Ebrahimzadeh & Alavi, 2017). Specifically, high-energy states, often associated with informal digital learning, are linked to increased learner autonomy and re-engagement with the target language within lower-pressure domains (Behzadpour et al., 2025; Zou et al., 2026). These activating emotions are found to broaden cognitive flexibility and offer a protective correlate against deactivating states such as boredom and anxiety in high-stakes instructional settings (Fathi et al., 2026). Furthermore, the

studies identify a predictive relationship between HAP states, such as hope and euphoria, and the Ideal L2 self, with these emotions supporting the persistence required to navigate socio-political and economic constraints (Derakhshan & Yin, 2025).

Conversely, a recent and significant shift in the literature, notably between 2024 and 2026, increasingly argues that LAP states like peace of mind, calmness, and harmony are restorative and culturally congruent. Scholars argue that these LAP states align with Eastern collectivist values that prioritize internal harmony and emotional stability over outward exultation (Badiei et al., 2025; Rezai et al., 2024). Within the Iranian educational context, LAP-oriented states are associated with mitigating the evaluative pressures of public performance, providing students with the internal security necessary for communicative engagement (Ahmed Ali Sulaiman et al., 2026). When learners experience inner calm and relational security, they report lower levels of evaluation apprehension (Enferad et al., 2025). Furthermore, in the context of high-stakes testing, reflective practices and mindfulness function as psychological buffers that facilitate emotional regulation, allowing students to reappraise setbacks and maintain performance equilibrium (Aladini et al., 2026; Haj Mir Alikhani et al., 2026).

The literature further suggests that Western-oriented pedagogical strategies can lead to a mismatch where high-arousal tasks are perceived as intimidating or induce cognitive dissonance among learners accustomed to formal instructional settings (Majdi et al., 2025). Emerging evidence suggests that universal constructs like L2 grit may require localized refinement to distinguish between test-driven persistence and genuine mastery-oriented passion (Valipour & Salehi, 2026). Recent structural modeling indicates that LAP-oriented states, such as peace of mind, are significant predictors of language proficiency and willingness to communicate, in some models performing as primary mediators between digital learning engagement and the mitigation of student burnout (Badiei et al., 2025; Ghasemi & Azari Noughabi, 2026). These findings indicate that while HAP-oriented states are associated with task activation, LAP-oriented states are associated with sustainability and long-term perseverance within the Iranian educational context.

Identification of Research Gaps: Mapping the White Spaces of Inquiry

With regard to RQ4, the synthesis of the included literature reveals significant thematic gaps regarding the range of investigated constructs, particularly within the LAP spectrum. While FLPoM has recently emerged as a culturally congruent variable, other vital LAP states on the AVT circumplex, such as contentment, serenity, and relaxation, remain virtually unmeasured. A pattern of selective variable inclusion is evident, wherein positive deactivating states are frequently referenced in theoretical frameworks but are omitted from final quantitative models (Alazemi et al., 2023; Papi & Khajavy, 2021). This is illustrated by instrument validation studies where only activating sub-scales of the AEQ were adapted for the Iranian context, excluding restorative states such as relief, despite their theoretical relevance (Sadoughi & Hejazi, 2024b). Furthermore, even within the dominant HAP-oriented spectrum, the research focus remains narrow. While enjoyment is researched extensively, peak emotional states such as elation, ecstasy, or exultation do not appear as primary variables across the analyzed database. Additionally, constructs that foster deep interpersonal connection, such as compassion and awe, are represented by a limited number of empirical studies, leaving the transcendent and relational dimensions of the Iranian learner's emotional experience less explored (Isaee & Barjesteh, 2026; Wang et al., 2023).

Regarding population-based gaps, the literature is characterized by a reliance on convenience sampling, with a majority of research drawn from university English-language majors who may possess higher levels of baseline motivation and linguistic competence (Fathi et al., 2024; Pawlak et al., 2025). This creates a notable blind spot regarding the public state-school sector, a concern frequently acknowledged by researchers who note that findings from elite institutions may lack generalizability to the broader student population (Mohammad Hosseini et al., 2022). This gap is significant because the state-school environment, defined by more rigid structures and limited access to digital autonomy, represents a distinct emotional climate compared to tertiary or private settings (Majdi et al., 2025; Zou et al., 2026). Furthermore, a developmental age-based gap is evident; this review identified no studies focusing exclusively on Iranian children under the age of 12. Consequently, there is an absence of data concerning how younger learners experience or value positive affective states, indicating that current research on the harmonious spectrum of positive psychology is largely representative of mature, post-secondary cohorts.

Finally, the review identifies methodological limitations that constrain a dynamic understanding of affect. The literature is predominantly characterized by cross-sectional, quantitative questionnaires, an approach that multiple authors have identified as limiting the capture of temporal fluctuations in emotional experience (Sadoughi et al., 2026; Soyoof et al., 2025). This reliance on cross-sectional data may obscure the lived reality of how affective states, such as inner peace or grit, unfold in real-time. Furthermore, researchers frequently utilize composite scores for multidimensional constructs like Psychological Capital and L2 grit; this aggregation may mask the individual predictive power of specific sub-components and potentially complicate the interpretation of results (Ghasemi & Azari Noughabi, 2026; Gordani & Sadeghzadeh, 2023). Lastly, there is an absence of dismantling designs in positive psychology interventions, making it difficult to isolate which specific components, such as mindfulness practice versus instructional support, are the primary drivers of positive change (Abdolrezapour & Ghanbari, 2021; Haj Mir Alikhani et al., 2026).

Discussion

The distribution of positive affect identified in this review, characterized by a broad HAP foundation and a narrow LAP tip, is best understood through the distinction between Actual Affect and Ideal Affect. AVT posits that Western, individualist cultures prioritize HAP states to facilitate influence goals (Tsai, 2017). The prevalence of FLE in the Iranian literature may reflect the uncritical adoption of this Westernized Ideal Affect, which has been systematically exported into the global SLA paradigm. This suggests an *Iranian Affective Paradox*: a disconnect where researchers, guided by imported definitions of success, utilize HAP-biased instruments that act as a conceptual filter. This finding offers a plausible interpretation for the documented relief gap, where deactivating states are theoretically discussed but absent from final empirical models (Alazemi et al., 2023; Pishghadam et al., 2016). Similar to findings in East Asian contexts where high-energy exultation mismatches traditional classroom realities (Fendos, 2018; Pham Thi Hong, 2011; Tsai, 2007), the Iranian empirical landscape may function as a mirror for Western affective ideals rather than a neutral map of the learner's actual restorative experiences.

However, the surge in Iranian research between 2024 and 2026 focusing on FLPoM and mindfulness signals a significant cultural awakening. According to AVT, collectivist cultures

value LAP states because they foster adjustment goals, which facilitate relational harmony Tsai (2007). The recent empirical validation of FLPoM in Iran suggests that for these learners, inner peace and internal harmony function as essential resources for persistence (Badiei et al., 2025; Ghasemi & Azari Noughabi, 2026). This shift marks a transition toward a focus on *Aramesh* (inner peace) as a culturally congruent affective ideal. While high-arousal immersion may drive temporary enjoyment, recent structural modeling indicates that the low-arousal restorative harmony can be a more sustainable predictor of proficiency than transient joy (Karimi & Nasouri, 2024). These findings align with a growing international movement toward a decolonized positive psychology, recognizing that in high-stress, collectivist educational systems, emotional equilibrium may serve as a foundational resource for long-term survival (Fellner, 2018; Laeheem, 2026).

The mapping of positive affect in this review reveals that research in the Iranian EFL context has been constrained by a reliance on psychometric instruments, specifically the FLES and AEQ, that primarily operationalize high-arousal states. As Tsai (2007) posits, questionnaire items are not culturally neutral; instruments such as the FLES are structurally designed to capture influence-oriented behaviors like laughter and exultant pride, potentially rendering quiet, harmonious states less visible in quantitative datasets (Liu et al., 2024; Sadoughi & Hejazi, 2024b). This has resulted in a recurrent gap where restorative states like contentment are theoretically discussed but infrequently measured. The exclusion of specific emotions, such as relief, which was omitted from the final models in the study by Pishghadam et al. (2016), illustrates how standard survey instruments may not adequately facilitate the reporting of lower-arousal dimensions. This reflects a broader international methodological trend where Western-centric scales may inadequately represent non-Western affective experiences (Marshall, 2013). When analyzed through the lens of AVT, what standardized scales might interpret as passive disengagement may, in the Iranian context, represent an active strategy of emotional regulation used to preserve relational harmony, a culturally valued strength that standard HAP-oriented scales are psychometrically ill-equipped to detect (Rezai et al., 2024).

Challenging the historical reliance on HAP-oriented models, recent Iranian research (2024–2026) has demonstrated the predictive significance of LAP-oriented states. Structural equation modeling indicates that while high-arousal enjoyment may provide a temporary motivational spark, low-arousal peace of mind acts as a critical mediator that translates digital engagement into communicative outcomes while mitigating student burnout (Ghasemi & Azari Noughabi, 2026). This suggests that LAP-oriented states may serve as a more sustainable resource for academic success in high-stress contexts. While high-energy emotions are inherently volatile and subject to rapid situational fluctuations (Elahi Shirvan et al., 2020), LAP states like mindfulness and peace of mind represent stable eudaimonic resources. This aligns with international findings suggesting that in non-Western, high-pressure educational systems, internal equilibrium is a vital psychological asset necessary to conserve cognitive resources and facilitate authentic learner expression (Badiei et al., 2025; Wong, 2020). By empirically validating FLPoM, the Iranian context contributes to a global paradigm shift that recognizes emotional equilibrium as a foundational resource for long-term L2 perseverance.

Furthermore, the restrictive nature of Iranian state education, characterized by digital limitations and rote memorization, appears to dictate a functional bifurcation of affect (Majdi et al., 2025; Mousavi & Ketabi, 2021). Within this landscape, HAP-oriented states like joy function as a temporary release from institutional monotony, whereas LAP-oriented states such as peace of

mind (FLPoM) operate as a stable buffer against the chronic stress of high-stakes evaluation (Ebrahimzadeh & Alavi, 2017; Zou et al., 2026). This pattern aligns with the environmental fit observed in other high-pressure testing cultures, such as those in East Asia, where learners prioritize adjustment goals, reappraising the internal self to navigate a centralized system rather than attempting to alter the external environment (Badiei et al., 2025; Oishi & Gilbert, 2016; Tsai, 2007). In such contexts, *Aramesh* (inner peace) functions as a plausible survival strategy, providing the stability necessary for sustained persistence in an exam-oriented ecology.

This valuation of low arousal is further grounded in an interdependent self-construal where academic success is bound to family honor and the prevention of losing face (Esmaeilee et al., 2025). In high-context cultures, the high-energy self-promotion encouraged by Western pedagogical models may be perceived as socially intimidating or disruptive to group cohesion (Majdi et al., 2025). Consequently, LAP-oriented states in the Iranian context represent high security rather than low engagement; calmness serves as a stable foundation that mitigates evaluation apprehension (Ahmed Ali Sulaiman et al., 2026). As Tsai (2017) suggests, LAP states provide the relational harmony required for interpersonal security, allowing learners to reduce their affective filters and interact without the threat of public embarrassment often associated with high-arousal exultation.

The Iranian context necessitates a re-conceptualization of L2 grit, shifting the emphasis from high-arousal passion toward steady-state equitable stamina. While Western models often characterize grit as a high-energy pursuit, Iranian research emphasizes a mindset rooted in equanimity and patience (Ebadi et al., 2018; Khodaverdian Dehkordi et al., 2021). This is supported by an empirical divergence in the literature: while perseverance of effort consistently emerges as a significant predictor of success, the consistency of interest dimension that is often associated with passion-oriented engagement frequently fails to influence outcomes in Iranian classrooms. This aligns with broader evidence from collectivist contexts where persistence, rather than autonomous, exultant passion, serves as the primary driver of achievement (Huéscar Hernández et al., 2020). These findings suggest that Iranian learners may achieve success not through passionate intensity, but through a resilient, low-arousal equanimity uniquely adapted to navigate institutional adversity (Mohammad Hosseini et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the Iranian affective landscape is characterized by a stark demographic imbalance: an empirical absence of research regarding children under the age of 12. Current evidence is largely adult-centric, relying on convenience samples of tertiary-level English majors or adult learners in private institutes (Gordani & Sadeghzadeh, 2023; Luo et al., 2024). These models are generalized from specialized cohorts, leaving the field without a developmental baseline to understand how positive emotional assets emerge during initial L2 socialization (Enferad et al., 2025; Valipour & Salehi, 2026). Through the lens of AVT, this gap carries profound implications, as Tsai (2007) demonstrate that ideal affect is not innate but is actively socialized between the ages of 3 and 5. While Western children are socialized toward HAP states to facilitate influence goals, collectivist societies utilize cultural media and parenting to steer children toward adjustment goals, prioritizing the capacity to maintain social harmony (Tsai, 2017). In the Iranian context, this suggests the preference for *Aramesh* (inner peace) identified in this review may be a developmental achievement shaped by years of socio-cultural and institutional enculturation, rather than a static or biologically innate disposition.

Integrating these principles with the documented stressors of the Iranian classroom allows for the theoretical proposition of a *Socialized Aramesh Hypothesis*. This review suggests that

while younger Iranian learners may naturally favor HAP-oriented states, the transition into formal schooling triggers a systematic shift in affect valuation. The rigid, teacher-centered environment of state schooling, defined by rote memorization and digital restrictions, limits the expression of high-arousal states (Majdi et al., 2025; Zou et al., 2026). As learners progress toward adolescence and encounter the intense evaluative pressure of university entrance examinations, the volatile nature of HAP states may become psychologically unsustainable (Elahi Shirvan et al., 2020). To adapt to this restrictive ecosystem, learners may be socialized to prioritize LAP states as a functional survival strategy. This aligns with international evidence suggesting that emotional cultural patterns are re-created by the specific demands of a society's educational and social structures (Mesquita et al., 2016). Ultimately, this developmental trajectory posits that low-arousal states, such as peace of mind, represent an adaptive resource necessary to preserve mental health within high-stakes climates. As demonstrated by Ghasemi and Azari Noughabi (2026), this stable state of inner harmony may be more effective in buffering students against burnout than high-arousal enjoyment. By failing to study children under 12, the current body of research lacks a developmental baseline to empirically test this transition, highlighting a critical direction for future inquiry.

Conclusion

This scoping review represents the first systematic attempt to map the landscape of positive psychology in the Iranian EFL context through the specialized lens of AVT. By synthesizing 122 empirical studies, this review conceptualizes the research landscape as an Iranian Affective Pyramid. This hierarchical mapping reveals a significant concentration of research on high-arousal activating states, suggesting a researcher-level prioritization of a Westernized Ideal Affect that often equates language learning success with visible, high-energy participation. While a substantial middle tier of integrative constructs, such as L2 grit and resilience, provides evidence of the importance of psychological stamina, the narrow tip of the pyramid highlights that low-arousal restorative states remain a nascent frontier in the literature. Collectively, these findings indicate that the research landscape has historically favored high-arousal benchmarks, pointing toward a need for future inquiries to more broadly explore the restorative and quiet dimensions of the Iranian EFL affective experience.

The findings of this review necessitate a pedagogical shift within the Iranian EFL context, moving from a paradigm centered on high-arousal exultation toward a more culturally congruent model of emotional sustainability. For practitioners, this involves balancing active engagement strategies with the cultivation of a calm, secure classroom milieu that lowers the affective filter by providing a supportive environment for communication. Such an approach accounts for collectivist preferences where high-energy performance can be socially intimidating. Simultaneously, materials developers should diversify the affective profile of instructional tasks by integrating opportunities for mindful savoring, reflective journaling, and quiet contemplation to build the restorative resources needed for long-term language acquisition. At the macro level, policy makers might address the chronic emotional exhaustion generated by high-stakes evaluative pressures by formalizing mindfulness and peace-of-mind interventions within the state-school curriculum, thereby transforming restrictive pedagogical environments into sustainable spaces for both eudaimonic flourishing and linguistic success.

Despite its comprehensive scope, this review is subject to certain limitations. First, data retrieval was restricted to the Scopus database and English-language publications; consequently, relevant domestic research published in Persian-language journals may have been omitted, potentially limiting the visibility of localized cultural nuances. Second, in accordance with the scoping review design, this study focused on mapping the volume and conceptual range of the evidence base rather than evaluating the methodological quality of individual studies. As such, the review provides a thematic and theoretical landscape of the field but does not offer a meta-analytic assessment of the effect sizes or the statistical power of the reported HAP and LAP interventions.

To advance a more representative understanding of the Iranian affective experience, future research should address the critical gaps identified in this review. Demographically, there is an urgent need for studies involving Iranian children and primary school learners to chart the developmental trajectory of affect valuation before the onset of high-stakes evaluative pressures. Methodologically, the field should move beyond static, cross-sectional modeling toward real-time dynamic tracking, such as Ecological Momentary Assessment and the Experience Sampling Method, to capture the temporal fluctuations of positive affect. Additionally, future interventional research should employ dismantling designs to isolate which specific components, such as mindfulness practice versus pedagogical support, are the primary drivers of psychological change. Finally, the thematic frontier remains open for investigations into the under-explored ends of the arousal spectrum, specifically peak HAP states like ecstasy and elation, and prosocial LAP states including compassion and gratitude. Addressing these areas will contribute to a more holistic and culturally congruent map of the Iranian learner's positive psychological landscape.

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