The Relationship between Fear of Failure and Academic Achievement of Iraqi EFL Learners

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Abstract:

The current research aims to identify the level of fear of failure among Iraqi EFL learners and to identify if there is any significant difference between male and female students in experiencing the fear of failure. Moreover, the research aims to examine if there is any significant difference between high-achieving students and low-achieving students in terms of experiencing the fear of failure and to examine the relationship between the fear of failure and academic achievement among Iraqi EFL learners. A total sample of (120) male and female students was selected randomly from two different universities. The researcher adopted a modified 5-point Likert scale consisting of (25) items developed by Abd al-Munam et al. (2019) to measure the fear of failure among the students. the researcher used the statistical package of social sciences (V. 23) included a one-sample t-test, an Independent-sample t-test, and Pearson's correlation coefficient test. The findings of the research showed that the fear of failure has a recorded a moderate level among Iraqi EFL learners. There is a statistically significant difference between male and female students in experiencing the fear of failure in favor of females. There is no significant difference between high-achieving students and low-achieving students in terms of experiencing the fear of failure. Finally, there is a weak positive correlation (r= .133) at the level of significance (.146) between the fear of failure and academic achievement among Iraqi EFL learners, in which the higher the level of students' fear of failure, the better the students will achieve.

Keywords: fear of failure, academic achievement, Iraqi EFL learners, university students

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الخوف من الفشل وعلاقته بالتحصيل الدراسي لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية فى العراق

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الملخص:

يهدف البحث الحالي إلى التعرف على مستوى الخوف من الفشل لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية في العراق ومعرفة ما إذا كان هناك فرق كبير بين الطلاب والطالبات في الشعور بالخوف من الفشل. علاوة على ذلك، يهدف البحث إلى

التعرف ما إذا كان هناك فرق كبير بين الطلاب ذوي التحصيل العـالي والطـلاب ذوي التحصـيل المـنخفض مـن حيـث تجربـة الخوف من الفشل ودراسة العلاقة بين الخوف من الفشل والتحصيل الأكـاديمي بـين متعلمـي اللغـة الإنجليزيـة. تـم اختيـار عينـة عشوائية مكونة من (١٢٠) طالب وطالبة في السنتين الأولى والثانية من جامعتين مختلفتين تقعان في مدينة بغداد. واعتمد الباحث مقياس ليكرت المعدل المكون من (٢٥) فقرة والذي تم تطويره من قبل عبد المنعم وآخرين. (٢٠١٩) لقياس الخـوف مـن الفشـل لدى الطلبة. واستعمل الباحث الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية (V.23) المتضمنة اختبار (ت) للعينة الواحدة، واختبار (ت) للعينة المستقلة، واختبار معامل ارتباط بيرسون. وأظهرت نتائج البحث أن الخوف من الفشل سجل مستوى متوسطا لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق. توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الطلاب والطالبات في الشعور بالخوف مـن الفشـل لصالح الإناث. لا توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الطلاب المتفوقين والطلاب ذوي التحصيل المنخفض في الشعور بالخوف من الفشل. وأخيراً، توجد علاقة ارتباطية ضعيفة موجبة (133.=r) عند مستوى دلالة (١٤٦.) بين الخوف من الفشل والتحصيل الأكاديمي لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق، حيث أنه كلما ارتفع مستوى خوف الطلاب من الفشل، كلما زاد مستوى خوف الطلاب من الفشل. أفضل سوف يحقق الطلاب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الخوف من الفشل، التحصيل الدراسي، متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، طلاب الجامعات العراقيين

1.1 Introduction

Fear arises from negative and irrational thoughts within a person's mind, which leads to his extreme perception of reality, situations, events, and interactions. This condition places the person in a fearful and anxious condition, followed by unstable emotions, irrational thoughts, insecurity, and psychological instability. He would also have low self-confidence, incapability to face the future, anxiety, and extreme panic regarding the social and psychological developments that would occur in the future (Zainab, 2005). Furthermore, the anxiety of failure has been considered an obstacle to achievement, which influences the students' conduct and aspirations (Cox, 2009). To illustrate, students who fear failure are not confident of their potential to gain success, which may disrupt their academic motivation and focus on their studies (Covington, 1981). In some cases, fear leads to the drive to adapt to reality to achieve goals, although intensifying fear would change this drive to a psychological disorder that disrupts an individual's progress (Stuart, 2013). Talaat (1995) highlighted that the utmost concern among young people is the future, which occurs when they perceive a lack of clarity or uncertainty about their professional future (Talaat, 1995).

Essentially, fear is a tension that a person goes through, which impacts his mental development including perception, thinking, attention, and remembering. These developments are regarded as crucial for success.

Considering the adverse impact of this tension, it is common for students to be concerned at one point in the study. It is also natural to convey the emotion of fear at a high or low level depending on the tasks assigned to them, such as the expression of anger and frustration at one time and happiness and joy at another time. However, if the fear reaches a state in which students feel helpless from academic pressure, fear would be a hindrance that reduces work efficiency. Additionally, Suinn (1968) proved that many university students fail in their studies due to their inability to overcome situations of fear and anxiety affecting their academic achievement.

Zaleski (1996) stated that when the future is concerned, a person will fear many things that he may encounter. This condition is a reflection of the fear of failure, which results in long-term effects. Also known as the phobia of failure, fear of failure is one of the subjective types of fear experienced by most people at least in some cases. It is also expressed as a barrier that prevents people from carrying out the necessary actions to move forward and fulfill their intentions. The fear of failure can be perceived as the obstacle that impedes a student from utilizing his energy to achieve his goals and ambitions (Ohman, 2000). This fear may also be described as a self-evaluative framework impacting the method through which a person describes, aligns, and undergoes failure in achieving his goals (Heckhausen, 1991). The student's future success is based on his ability to build clear visions and specific goals that motivate him to make more efforts in academic achievement, which is considered a key criterion for determining the level of the student's future achievement. In this case, psychological stability is required. It is also considered as the total number of factors related to motivation and environmental, psychological, and mood conditions. Accordingly, studies conducted by researchers in psychology indicated that students who were emotionally disturbed or suffered from fear or lack of security and reassurance were unable to gain focus and comprehension due to distraction, which ultimately resulted in a decline in their academic achievement.

According to one of the researchers, academic achievement denotes the information acquired by a person through his studies. The relationships between this information and the facts being deduced from it are reflected in the learner's performance in terms of the choice being placed based on the rules that allow a quantitative assessment of a learner's performance. Therefore, the fear of failure negatively affects the student's determination and motivation. Moreover, the intensive fear may form challenging psychological diseases disrupting the achievement of a learner's dreams, leading to his frustration, and preventing him from thinking correctly. This condition subsequently affects his production and innovations (Kamal, 2010). Atkinson (1958) defined the fear of failure as "an avoidance motive that arises from debilitating anxiety". This fear can be separated into two broad classifications related to failure at the level of personal relationships and failure in educational goals or scholarly pursuits. These classifications are also associated with each other. To illustrate, people who fear failure in their workplace may have this fear in their personal lives as he discovers that the performed activity emerges from two opposing goals: 1) the inclination to gain achievement and 2) the inclination to prevent failure. As for individuals with a strong fear of failure, they tend to avoid situations where failure is possible, leading to their avoidance of challenging tasks that require a long period of evaluation and testing (Atkinson, 1958).

Conroy et al. (2003) described the fear of failure as the inclination to evaluate the threat and experience anxiety in conditions involving the risk of failure. To illustrate, people with this fear often prevent conditions that have the aforementioned risk, leading to their avoidance of goals that may come with this risk, depression, anxiety, confusion, anger, low self-confidence, and weak self-esteem. It may impose harm on people who relate failure with negative outcomes. Furthermore, the decline in academic success is also a notable result of the fear of failure (Elliot et al., 1997). Nevertheless, a number of people who go through the fear of failure will gain motivation to make more effort at studying, although they also undergo intense anxiety that may exhaust them. In line with

this, this research aims to approach this issue among students and its association with academic achievement. Being a real issue faced by numerous students across all academic phases, this fear has been considered an academic issue instead of a psychological disease, considering that it is a notable and efficacious factor in educational procedures.

1.2 The aims of the research

The present research aims to:

1- Identify the level of fear of failure among Iraqi EFL learners.
2- Identify the difference between Iraqi EFL male and female students in experiencing the fear of failure.
3- Identify the difference between Iraqi EFL high-achieving students and low-achieving students in terms of experiencing the fear of failure.
4- Examine the correlation between the fear of failure and academic achievement of Iraqi EFL learners.

1.3 Research Questions

1- What is the level of fear of failure among Iraqi EFL learners?
2- Is there a significant difference between Iraqi EFL male and female students in experiencing the fear of failure?
3- Is there a significant difference between Iraqi EFL high-achieving students and low-achieving students in terms of experiencing the fear of failure?
4- What is the relationship between the fear of failure and academic achievement of Iraqi EFL learners?

1.4 Hypotheses:

- H_0: Iraqi EFL learners experience a low level of fear of failure.
- H_0: There is no statistically significant difference between male and female students in experiencing the fear of failure.
- H_0: There is no statistically significant difference between high-achieving students and low-achieving students in terms of experiencing the fear of failure.
- H_a: There is a positive correlation between the fear of failure and the academic achievement of Iraqi EFL learners.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Fear of Failure

Fear has become the subject selected in many fields of studies on the parties concerned with individuals' behavioral disorders or those associated with the achievement and examination as a specific form of fear related to assessment situations, success, and recall habits. These include study habits, motivation, students' persistence at studying, and examinations. Fear is an unpleasant emotional experience that a person goes through by perceiving fear without being able to specify the cause of fear. Several changes take place in this condition (Stuart, 2013). Kamal (2010) defined the fear of failure as a state of comprehensive and continuous tension due to the anticipation of an actual danger threat that may occur, which is accompanied by psychological and physical symptoms. This was followed by Bauman's (2006) definition of the fear of failure as a common response to an actual or envisioned harm, the uncomfortable suspense (Gullone, 2000), and the high expectation of a harmful but vague event that strengthens the motivation to commit avoidance (Rachman, 1998). This fear is also perceived to impact a person's definition, alignment, and experience of failure in achieving goals (McGregor & Elliot, 2005) and is designed as a need, a motive, and a productive inclination.

Individuals who express fear of failure are not confident of their potential for success and their ability to prevent failure in their progress (Covington & Omelich, 1981). Furthermore, individuals with this fear frequently relate their task to adverse outcomes (Shultz, 1999), leading to the effort to prevent conditions where they may face failure due to anticipatory shame and humiliation (Conroy, Kaye, & Fifer, 2007). Notably, this fear plays a major role in individuals' potential to achieve the goals and ambitions that they have personally set. Individuals who fear failure may develop a sense of inadequate ability to succeed through their previous experience due to their belief that success depends on luck or external factors rather than their ability. Moreover, given their awareness of their incapability to control their future, their strength, motivation, and drive to work and succeed would decline. Besides the misunderstanding about competition and its role in excellence, they are also influenced by others' expectations, which deter them from repeating their efforts after one instance of failure. Additionally, they are inclined to be satisfied with the current situation without improving it, which deters them from any struggle and effort to change their situation (Muhammad, 2002).

According to Heckhausen (1991), personal perception and the description of academic failure have a direct association with individual fear of failure. To illustrate, it does not only originate from a person's self-evaluation, but it also originates from other parties' views emerging from the failure. There is a belief that this fear is related to negative impacts, which include the experience of discomfort, depreciation of one's self-estimation, a vague future, the loss of social impact, and disappointing other crucial parties (Conroy, 2001; Conroy, Metzler, & Hofer, 2003; McGregor & Elliot, 2005). It is also perceived to make a negative prediction of developments in the students' affective well-being in the preparation for the examination (Berger & Freund, 2012). Furthermore, fear of failure has been shown to lead to several deleterious outcomes, including anticipatory test anxiety, less intrinsic motivation, and decrements in welfare (Birney et al., 1969; Elliot & McGregor, 1999;

Elliot & Sheldon, 1997). Following that, Elliot and his colleagues (Elliot et al., 1997; Elliot & McGregor, 1999, 2001) have shown that fear of failure influences the adoption of avoidance goals for classroom performance, which in turn leads to a host of adverse results, including ineffectual study strategies such as the disorganization in studying and surface processing of material, lower effort expenditure and persistence (Elliot & McGregor, 1999), increased test anxiety, and reduction of competence-based self-esteem over time (McGregor & Elliot, 2002).

While the fear of failure is a self-evaluative motive that improves the experience and guides the behavior (Heckhausen, 1991), this self-evaluation is not present in the vacuum; however, it is influenced by societal and specifically parental evaluations. In fact, McClelland's (1987; McClelland et al., 1953) theoretical analysis of this motive construct suggests that what is being observed in the classroom is the mature type of avoidance motive that started its formation early in childhood. Investigations into the sources of fear of failure seem to support the notion that parental treatment of children influences the extent to which they develop a fear of failure. For example, Birney et al (1969) found that while the mothers of boys with an intense fear of failure have high expectations for their sons, they do not think that their sons are able to live up to the expectations. In addition, this intense fear among children is rooted in parents who disapprove of failure while showing a neutral reaction to success.

2.2 Theories
This section will discuss a number of relevant theories that take academic failure and fear of failure into consideration as follow.

2.2.1 Self-Worth Theory
Self-worth theory presumes that the search for self-acceptance is the most significant human priority, which may contribute to fear of failure and an attitude in approaching achievement. According to Covington (1984, 1981), failure has an impact on students' self-regard due to the view that failure indicates low ability, while low ability indicates low

self-regard. For this reason, many students make further efforts to avoid failure or altering its definition. In this case, two approaches that can be employed are self-handicapping and defensive pessimism. Specifically, self-handicappers modify the definition of failure by diverting its factor away from their capability to the elements including the inadequate effort that may harm their self-regard. Meanwhile, defensive pessimists modify the definition of failure by preparing themselves for failure and reducing expectations. Overall, self-handicapping and defensive pessimism are employed deliberately, allowing people to maintain their self-worth.

2.2.2 Self-handicapping

Individuals who are apprehensive of failure often experience embarrassment and an increased sense of failure in comparison to those who do not have the same level of apprehension (Bartels & Herman, 2011). According to Bartels and Herman, people with this fear are inclined to make less use of cognitive approaches that may improve academic performance and overuse cognitive approaches that lead to a higher possibility of failure. It is possible that the widely employed approach that leads to a higher potential of failure is self-handicapping. In this case, self-handicappers select the impediments to an effective performance that allows them to divert the factor of failure from their competence to the impediments. Through these methods, the self-handicappers will be able to prevent disconfirmation of the targeted self-conception.

Self-handicapping comprises various types. The common instances of it are procrastination, the selection of performance-debilitating situations, the involvement in slight or no action for upcoming tasks, and the deliberated decrease in effort (Berglas & Jones, 1978; Higgins & Harris, 1988; Tice & Baumeister, 1990). Moreover, a person would be prepared for excuses when failure occurs. To illustrate, inadequate effort is perceived as the cause rather than people's low capacity. Besides the more effective type of self-handicapping, a self-presented dimension is also suggested. Self-presented self-handicapping commonly appears as a

self-report of performance-related challenges, including the exaggeration of challenges in gaining achievement or excuses of illness and test anxiety (De Gree & Snyder, 1985; Hirt, Deppe, & Gordon, 1991). For example, the exaggerated test anxiety would serve as an excuse for potential failure.

2.2.3 Defensive Pessimism

Defensive pessimism consists of having unreasonably low standards and considering a wide range of possible outcomes before the evaluation of a person's performance (Norem & Cantor, 1986). Subsequently, two elements that support defensive pessimism are defensive expectations and reflectivity. In general, defensively pessimistic people recognize the fear and cognitively address it, which reduces anxiety and increases control (Norem & Illingworth, 1993). Furthermore, having lower and safer standards can reduce the threshold for acceptable performance (Baumgardner & Brownlee, 1987) or establish performance standards that are less challenging to fulfill (Showers & Ruben, 1990). Therefore, the self-worth motivation viewpoint expresses that defensive pessimism can be regarded as a self-protective approach that aims to protect one's capacity and eventual self-regard. Additionally, having lower and safer expectations against one's capacity reduces the possibility of it to being deemed insufficient and leads to questions regarding one's self-regard.

2.2.4 Theory of Needs

Fear of failure has been highlighted by numerous researchers in the area of psychology. David McClelland incorporated this fear into his theory of needs, specifically his third need (the need for achievement). According to McClelland, individuals are motivated by the obstacle in gaining achievement and this fear. In the 1960s, John Atkinson elaborated McClelland's theory of needs by suggesting that the distinctions in achievement behavior are attributed to distinctions in the need for success. According to Atkinson, people who require achievement set a higher standard of success compared to their fear of failure. Known as

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high-need achievers, they also expect to sense pride and accomplishment when the task is fulfilled, hence seeking more challenging tasks and expecting a degree of success in line with the challenge. Meanwhile, low-need achievers opt out of challenging tasks as their fear of failure is stronger than their need for success. Rather than pride, these people are prepared for shame when the task is completed. Low-need achievers usually take one of two routes when choosing a task. A convenient task is selected due to the higher potential for them to accomplish the task or a task of high-level difficulty is selected due to the knowledge that they would not feel ashamed if they do not accomplish the task (Snowman & Biehler, 2008).

Birney, Burdick, and Teevan (1969) stated that fear of failure impacts an individual's selection of tasks, performance, compliance, ambition, risk preference, and subjective experience in success. It was added that this fear influenced a person's inclination towards convenient tasks and avoidance of activities that evaluate the skill (competition), come up with excuses for the performance to avoid personal responsibility, and reduce the value of an expertise and/or competition. Other impacts of fear of failure are social desirability, aspiration, positivity, fear of success, concern, disrupted focus, and somatic and cognitive anxiety (Conroy & Metzler, 2003).

2.3 Fear of Failure and Gender

The extant literature demonstrates the notable distinction between men and women in the degree of fear of failure. To illustrate, Rothblum (1990) found that upon the women's consideration regarding achievement as a crucial element that may affect a relationship, a stronger fear of failure was observed. Therefore, women were more concerned by the possibility of failure to negatively impact an association and individuals. Stein and Bailey (1973) found that female students experienced higher anxiety regarding tests, examinations, and academic failures compared to male students. Furthermore, they were recorded to be more impacted by early failure experiences compared to men, leading

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to a higher inclination among women to give up compared to men. Moreover, women are easily pressured. To illustrate, Albury, k. w. (1983) highlighted the notable distinctions between men and women, in which the fear of failure was stronger among women compared to men. Following that, Alkhazaleh et al. (2016) demonstrated a remarkably strong fear of humiliation among female students compared to male students. This condition implies that female students who have faced failure early in life are more inclined to give up compared to male students.

2.4. Fear of Failure and Achievement

The theoretical efforts related to fear of failure and achievement by Atkinson (1958; 1964) and Birney, Burdick, and Teevan (1969) suggested that behavioral differences between the high and low-level fear of failure have become particularly apparent in achievement situations. In this case, the factors in the achievement situation play a role in increasing the motivation of fear emerging in specific behavioral tendencies of a person. Atkinson assumed that the motivation behind achieving success and avoiding failure emerges when a person receives an achievement task. A person's behavior denotes a function of the distinction between the inclination to gain success and preventing failure. Individuals who are more motivated to gain achievement rather than avoid failure are considered to possess achievement-oriented characteristics. However, the individuals with higher motivation to avoid failure are considered to have failure-threatening characteristics.

Atkinson's model includes two situational factors essential for determining the strength of fear of failure motivation. The first factor is the individual's anticipation of success or failure in the given task. According to Atkinson, the relative frequency of success or failure in similar situations in the past offers the primary foundation for determining the possibility of success in a given condition. To a certain extent, when individuals have experienced success or failure of similar past situations, they should perceive any task as more or less difficult.

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Essentially, a higher perceived possibility for success reduces the challenges in the task and vice versa. The second factor is "incentive value", which represents the level of fulfillment or unfulfillment attached by a person to the success or failure in fulfilling a specific objective.

2.5 Previous Studies

A study was conducted (2018) by Abdullah to examine the correlation between the fear of failure and remembering habits of upper secondary school students. To this end, two-hundred students were chosen randomly from various schools in Diyala. To collect the needed data, the researcher adopted two instruments: the scale of Al-Abbas (2014) to measure the fear of failure consisting of (24) items, as well as the scale of remembering habits designed by Al-Kasabi (2010), which included (70) items. The findings of the study revealed that secondary school students experience fear of failure as they are afraid of the unknown future ahead. The study also showed that students have a positive average of remembering habits. Moreover, the results showed there is a significant positive correlation between the fear of failure and remembering habits of upper secondary school students, this means the more students experience fear of failure, the more they experience anxiety that motivates students to use remembering habits.

So as to identify the relationship between self-awareness and the fear of failure, Ali and Awad (2021) adopted two scales: a scale of (26) items developed by (Karagholy, 2011) was used to measure self-awareness and a scale of (32) items developed by (Al-seadi, 2014) was used to measure the fear of failure. The two questionnaires were administered to a sample of (120) male and female students selected randomly from (50) secondary schools in Baghdad for the academic year (2020-2021). The results found that the study sample has a good level of self-awareness and fear of failure. Likewise, the results showed there is a significant relationship between self-awareness and the fear of failure, there is a significant difference between male and female students in terms of self-

awareness and the fear of failure in favor of males, in which males experience more fear of failure than females.

Nelson et al. (2013) investigated the overall fear of failure of (158) males and (62) females from different ethnicities: Caucasians, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans, Each participant was asked to answer the PFAI that consisted of (25) multidimensional measure items including cognitive-emotional-relational appraisals associated with fear of failure. Responses were collectively reported in a group format. The research sample was a group of volunteers enrolled in undergraduate engineering classes at a mid-sized southern university in America. The researchers hypothesized that female engineering students would show a much greater fear of failure than males. The findings revealed that females reported a significantly higher fear of failure compared to males. Females also showed higher scores on the subscales for fears of exposure to shame and embarrassment, fears of having an uncertain future, and fears of devaluing one's self-estimate.

Alkhazaleh & Mahasneh (2016) conducted a study to identify the level of fear of failure among Jordanian undergraduate students. It also aims to determine if there is a significant difference among the study sample in terms of academic level, gender, and GPA. A sample of (548) male and female undergraduate students studying at Hashemite University in Jordan was selected purposively as the study sample. The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI) was used as an instrument to collect the required data, it consisted of (25) items distributed on five subscales with five alternatives to measure the belief associated with aversive consequences of failure. The results revealed that the overall mean score of fear of failure in the study sample is 0, 34. There are significant differences between male and female students in the level of fear of failure. There are significant differences among the study sample in the fear of failure in terms of the academic level. Additionally, there are significant differences in the GPA level groups in the fear categories.

Omar (2022) carried out a study to investigate the relationship between the fear of failure and the self-confidence of Libyan undergraduate

students. To do this, a sample of (50) male and female students was chosen randomly from the college of Education at the University of Zintan in Libya. The researcher used two scales: a modified scale of (41) items to measure the self-confidence, the scale developed by JS Shrauger and a scale of (37) items to measure the fear of failure developed by Abd Alwahab, they were administered the study sample to collect the needed data. The findings of the study indicated that there is a positive correlation between the fear of failure and the self-confidence of Libyan undergraduate students. The study sample reported a good level of self-confidence with a greater level of fear of failure. Moreover, the study showed there are no significant differences between male and female students in terms of the fear of failure and self-confidence.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design

This research is a survey-research study, in which the main objective of utilizing such design is to investigate one or more variables and determine their degree of relationship (Creswell, 2013). It can also be considered a correlation study because it examines the correlation between variables.

3.2 Participants

A total sample of (120) male and female students in the first and second years was selected randomly from two different universities, which are located in the city of Baghdad. The entire participants are studying English language at the Department of the English Language for the academic year (2021-2022). They were chosen based on the criteria that these two colleges hold to allow the new students to join the English department, which gives the researcher the opportunity to classify students into high-achieving students and low-achieving students. The reason for choosing these two stages in particular, they are still unable to make the right decision and deal with the problems they encounter in their academic field.

3.3 Instrument

To investigate the fear of failure, a survey approach was adopted as it is an applicable process for collecting the needed data to conduct the research (Creswell, 2013). Since the study is quantitative in nature, the researcher adopted a 5-point Likert scale consisting of (52) items developed by Abd al-Munam et al. (2019) to measure the fear of failure among students. The new modified version of the questionnaire included (25) items with 5 alternatives. To ensure the internal consistency of the questionnaire, the alpha Cronbach test was applied. It showed a good value at the level of (.849).

3.4 Data analysis

To process the collected data of the raised questions, the researcher used the statistical package of social sciences (SPSS, 23). The researcher utilized the tests of normality to examine the distribution of the study sample, Reliability Statistics was run to investigate the internal consistency of the scale's items, as well as a One-sample t-test to answer question one. As for questions two and three, an Independent-sample t-test was run searching for the significant differences between males and females in experiencing the fear of failure and between high-achieving students and low-achieving students. To test the correlation between the fear of failure and academic achievement among Iraqi EFL learners, Pearson's correlation coefficient test was applied.

3.5 Test of Normality

It is necessary to test the normal distribution of the study sample, which gives the researcher the right path to determine the proper tests for analyzing the collected data. The researchers tested the normal distribution of the study sample. The result was as displayed in Table (1). Normal distribution was accomplished.

Table (1) Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
fear of failure	.048	120	.200*	.988	120	.305

Normal Q-Q Plot of fear of failure
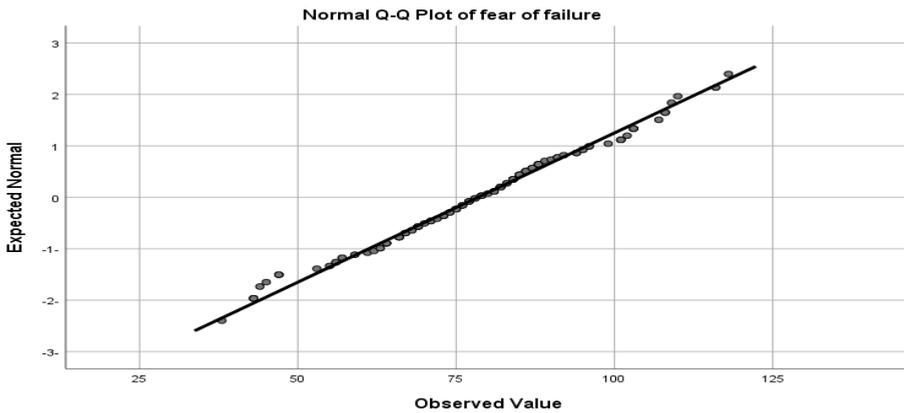
3.6 Reliability Statistics

The Alpha Cronbach test was utilized to investigate the internal consistency of the scale's items, which was developed to test the reliability of the multi-question Likert scale. It was found to be (.849), which is a good value. (Bland & Altman, 1997)

Table (2) Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.849	25

4. Results

This section includes the answers of the raised question.

4.1 What is the level of fear of failure among Iraqi EFL learners?

T-Test
Table 3

Table (3) One-Sample Test

			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	Mean	**Std. Deviation**					**Lower**	**Upper**
Test Value = 75								
fear of failure	78.4417	17.24212	2.187	119	.031	3.44167	.3250	6.5583

The outputs as presented in table (3) demonstrate that the mean score of fear of failure is (M=78.4417, SD= 17.24212), which is upper than the test value = 75, and the calculated (t) = 2.187 is greater than the tabulated (t) (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. The p-value is (.031) less than (0.05), which means a significant difference between the fear of failure mean score and test value confirming that Iraqi EFL learners experience a moderate level of fear of failure. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis proposed by the researcher "Iraqi EFL learners experience a low level of fear of failure" is rejected.

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4.2 Is there a significant difference between Iraqi EFL male and female students in experiencing the fear of failure?
T-Test
Table 4

Table (4) Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
fear of failure	**Male**	**60**	**75.1333**	**17.89372**	**2.31007**
	female	**60**	**81.7500**	**16.03664**	**2.07032**

Table (5) Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**Mean Difference**	**Std. Error Difference**	**95% Confidence Interval of the Difference**	
									Lower	**Upper**
fear of failure	**Equal variances assumed**	.455	.501	-2.133-	118	.035	-6.616-	3.102	-12.759-	-.473-
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.133-	116.611	.035	-6.616-	3.102	-12.760-	-.473-

To scrutinize the significant difference between males and females in terms of experiencing the fear of failure, the researcher employed the independent sample t-test. As revealed in Table (4&5) the results exhibit a significant difference between the male mean (M=75.1333, SD=17.89372) and the female mean (M = 81.7500, SD = 16.03664). Then, the p-value is (0.035), which is less than (0.05), and the calculated (t) value = -2.133- is higher than the tabulated value (1.96) at the level of

significance (0.05). Thus, it summarizes that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female students in experiencing the fear of failure in favor of females, which reflects on their academic achievement. Accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected.

4.3 Is there a significant difference between Iraqi EFL high-achieving students and low-achieving students in terms of experiencing the fear of failure?

T-Test

Table 6

<div align="center">

Table (6) Group Statistics

</div>

	Achievement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
fear of failure	High	60	76.1500	17.60954	2.27338
	Low	60	80.7333	16.69859	2.15578

<div align="center">

Table (7) Independent Samples Test

</div>

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
									Lower	Upper	
fear of failure	Equal variances assumed	.153	.696	-1.463-	118	.146	-4.583-	3.132	-10.787-	1.620	
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.463-	117.669	.146	-4.583-	3.132	-10.787-	1.621	

The researcher run the independent sample t-test to examine if there is a significant difference generally between high-achieving students and

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low-achieving students in terms of experiencing the fear of failure, as shown in table (6) the mean score of high-achieving students is (M=76.1500, SD=17.60954), which is almost close to the mean of low-achieving students (M=80.7333, SD=16.69859). as for the p-value is (.146), which is greater than (0.05), and the calculated (t) value is = -1.463-is higher than the tabulated value (1.96) at the level of significance (0.05). Accordingly, it concludes that there is no statistically significant difference between high-achieving students and low-achieving students in terms of experiencing the fear of failure, for that reason, the null hypothesis is accepted.

4.4 What is the relationship between the fear of failure and academic achievement of Iraqi EFL learners?

Correlations

Table 8

Table (8) Correlations

		fear of failure	achievement
fear of failure	**Pearson Correlation**	1	.133
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.146
	N	120	120
Academic Achievement	**Pearson Correlation**	.133	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.146	
	N	120	120

To answer question four that looking for the statistical correlation between the fear of failure and academic achievement among Iraqi EFL learners, the researcher applied Pearson's correlation coefficient test that computes the strength and path of the association between two variables. The achieved results as shown in table (8) indicate that there is a weak positive correlation (r= .133) at the level of significance (.146), which is

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smaller than (0.05) between the fear of failure and academic achievement among Iraqi EFL learners, which means they are moving in the same direction. The higher the level of students' fear of failure, the better the students will achieve, and vice versa. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

5. Discussion

The purpose of the study is to determine the degree of fear of failure among Iraqi EFL learners and how this emotion affects their academic achievement because fear of failure may prompt students to think erroneously, make incorrect choices, and alter their learning style. So as to accomplish the objectives of the study, the researcher presented four questions. The answers to the first question, which sought to measure Iraqi EFL learners' fear of failure, are consistent with research findings by (McGregor & Elliot, 2005; Awad, 2021; Büchele de Montes, 2021; Mohamed, 2010; Abdullah, 2018; Omar, 2022). This demonstrated that the research participants had a high degree of failure-related fear. The study's findings refuted the assumption that there is no gender difference in terms of how differently men and women experience the fear of failure. According to the findings, female students are more likely than male students to have a statistically significant difference in their fear of failing. It emerges from the conclusions of research done by (Albury, 1983, Rothblum, 1990, McGregor & Elliot, 2005, Mohamed, 2010; Nelson et al., 2013; Alkhazaleh & Mahasneh, 2016; Büchele de Montes, 2021; Stein and Bailey, 1973) revealed that as compared to men, women expressed a greater degree of anxiety of failure. Regarding how different students' levels of proficiency affect how much they fear failing. The final result differs with research findings of (Alkhazaleh & Mahasneh, 2016; Büchele de Montes, 2021). When it comes to experiencing the fear of failure, there is no statistically significant difference between high-achieving students and low-achieving students. This implies that there are comparable degrees of fear of failure among high-achieving students and low-achieving students. This emotion may be brought on by poor

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self-esteem, self-doubt, underestimating one's own abilities, and a lack of intellectual confidence in oneself. The results (Abdullah, 2018; Ali & Awad, 2021; Omar, 2022) are in line with the findings of the current study with regard to the relationship between the fear of failure and the academic achievement of learners of English as a foreign language in Iraq. Additionally, a positive correlation was shown between academic achievement and the fear of failure. Students' achievement will rise in direct proportion to their level of fear of failing, and vice versa. Conversely, the results of research by (Caraway, Tucker, Reinke, & Hall, 2003; Albury, 1983) contradict the current result, which observed that the variables had a negative correlation. This indicates that the experience of fear has a big impact on student's motivation to learn more effectively and improves their memory through the adoption of learning techniques.

6. Conclusion

This research was conducted to identify the level of fear of failure among Iraqi EFL learners and to identify if there is a significant difference between male and female students in experiencing the fear of failure. Moreover, the research aimed to examine if there is a significant difference between high-achieving students and low-achieving students in terms of experiencing the fear of failure and to examine the relationship between the fear of failure and academic achievement among Iraqi EFL learners. The results of the research showed that Iraqi EFL learners experience a moderate level of fear of failure. There is a statistically significant difference between male and female students in experiencing the fear of failure in favor of females. There is no statistically significant difference between high-achieving students and low-achieving students in terms of experiencing the fear of failure. Lastly, there is a weak positive correlation (r= .133) at the level of significance (.146) between the fear of failure and academic achievement among Iraqi EFL learners, in which the higher the level of students' fear of failure, the better the students will achieve, and vice versa.

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