UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE READING EMOTIONS AND MOTIVATION OF MIDDLE SCHOOL SPANISH 1 STUDENTS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Norman, Oklahoma

2025

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THE READING EMOTIONS AND MOTIVATION OF MIDDLE SCHOOL SPANISH 1 STUDENTS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

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Abstract

Motivating middle school students to read can be particularly challenging, especially in world language (WL) classrooms where students must engage with unfamiliar vocabulary, syntax, and cultural content. Research has shown that motivation to read often declines in adolescence, making it increasingly important to understand the emotional and motivational dimensions of reading during this developmental stage (Wigfield et al., 2015). Despite the relevance of these issues, few studies have explored how emotions and motivation may relate to reading comprehension in middle school WL contexts. This mixed-methods study sought to better understand how middle school Spanish 1 students experience reading emotionally and motivationally. Using in Control-Value Theory (Pekrun, 2006) and Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), the study involved 7th and 8th grade Spanish 1 students who completed an emotions survey, a motivation survey, and a reading comprehension assessment, with 10 students also participating in semi-structured interviews.

Quantitative results revealed that students reported significantly more positive emotions than negative ones during reading. These positive emotions significantly predicted higher reading comprehension scores, suggesting that emotional experience may be closely tied to reading success in a world language. Although motivational variables did not significantly predict reading outcomes or emotions in the small matched subsample, positive trends emerged between intrinsic motivation and emotional engagement. Semi-structured interviews enriched these findings by revealing how classroom factors such as humor, peer interaction, and choice supported both emotional regulation and self-determined motivation.

These findings suggest that fostering positive emotions may be a pathway to improved reading performance in WL education, and that classroom strategies promoting autonomy,

competence, and relatedness may support this process. Furthermore, the study contributes to under-researched areas of K–12 WL education by emphasizing positive rather than negative emotions. This research aligns with Positive Psychology perspectives that highlight the role of positive experiences in learning (Olivera, 2025; Shahrokhi & Dehaghani, 2025). While motivation did not significantly predict reading in this small sample, emotionally supportive classroom practices appear to foster conditions in which motivation and comprehension can thrive. Future research should explore these relationships with larger participant pools and consider how Positive Psychology might unify CVT and SDT as a framework for emotionally and motivationally rich language instruction.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Study

Reading motivation is widely recognized as a key contributor to academic achievement, particularly in language learning, where students must engage actively with texts to build vocabulary, grammar knowledge, and cultural understanding. Motivated readers are more likely to demonstrate deeper comprehension, stronger retention, and increased language acquisition outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). In second-language contexts, reading becomes not only a cognitive task but also an emotionally and socially situated activity, requiring perseverance in navigating linguistic challenges and unfamiliar cultural references (Grabe, 2009). Understanding what motivates students to read, especially in a language other than their first, is critical for educators striving to create instruction that fosters both proficiency and long-term interest.

Within the field of second language acquisition (SLA), motivation has long been regarded as a central factor influencing learner success (Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2003). Reading in a second language presents specific challenges, as students must simultaneously decode text and construct meaning through an unfamiliar linguistic framework. This process is often influenced by a range of emotional responses, such as frustration, anxiety, curiosity, and enjoyment (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). Research has shown that such emotional experiences can either facilitate or obstruct learners' engagement with text, particularly when reading requires sustained attention and resilience (Pekrun et al., 2017). As such, motivation and emotion are not peripheral; they are central to understanding how students navigate reading tasks in L2 environments.

The middle school years, typically ages 11 to 14, are marked by profound developmental changes that influence students' academic motivation, identity formation, and emotional self-regulation. During this time, students begin to develop more complete understandings of their competencies and interests, which can correlate with their willingness to take academic risks or persist through difficulty (Eccles & Roeser, 2009; Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2015). At the same time, they are highly responsive to peer dynamics and classroom climate, both of which shape their emotional engagement and motivation to learn. This developmental period is therefore critical for understanding how students experience reading in a second language. It is especially important in school contexts where reading is often tied to grades, performance, and peer visibility.

World language classrooms present unique instructional environments in which students might be asked to interpret unfamiliar texts and discuss meaning in the presence of others, which can provoke strong emotional reactions. Research suggests that emotional responses such as pride, boredom, anxiety, and enjoyment can significantly influence students' reading engagement and comprehension outcomes (Pekrun, 2006; Schunk et al., 2008). Middle school students, in particular, may be more vulnerable to negative emotional cycles if they perceive reading tasks as threatening or if they lack confidence in their abilities (Ryan & Deci, 2017). For teachers, understanding how motivation and emotion interact during reading is essential for developing effective strategies that support student well-being and interest in the content.

This study is situated at the intersection of second language acquisition, educational psychology, and middle grades instruction. It builds on a growing body of literature that recognizes reading as both a cognitive and affective activity (Afflerbach et al., 2015). By focusing on middle school students in world language classrooms, this research explores how

motivational and emotional factors influence reading engagement and comprehension. In doing so, it offers a foundation for practical insights that may help educators foster emotionally supportive and motivating learning environments for adolescent L2 learners.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the documented significance of reading motivation and emotional engagement in learning, there remains a noticeable gap in research on how these factors function in world language classrooms, particularly among middle school students. Studies examining motivation and emotion in reading have primarily focused on first-language (L1) contexts or postsecondary learners, leaving novice second-language (L2) learners underrepresented in the literature (Grabe, 2009; Mori, 2002). While research exists on motivational strategies in second language acquisition more broadly, relatively few studies investigate the combined influence of motivation, emotion, and reading comprehension in L2 settings (Schunk et al., 2008; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Even less attention has been given to how these dynamics play out in the unique environment of middle school world language classrooms, where students are simultaneously developing their literacy skills and language proficiency. As such, there is a pressing need to better understand how emotional and motivational variables affect L2 reading engagement and comprehension at this critical developmental stage.

The challenges faced by middle school students in world language learning are complex and often multifaceted, involving cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions. Adolescents may struggle to maintain motivation in language classes that are cognitively demanding and require sustained effort over time (Eccles & Roeser, 2009). Emotional barriers, such as anxiety about making mistakes or fear of peer judgment, can inhibit students' willingness to take risks, participate actively, and engage with texts in meaningful ways (Ryan & Deci, 2017). These

challenges are further compounded by a broader, well-documented decline in reading motivation and enjoyment that typically begins in early adolescence, making it more difficult to sustain interest and engagement in academic reading, especially in a second language (Guthrie et al., 2007; McKenna et al., 2012). Without intentional support, this decline in motivation can hinder comprehension and reduce students' confidence in their ability to read successfully in a new language (Wigfield et al., 2016; Taboada Barber et al., 2015).

Although motivation and emotion are recognized as critical influences on language learning outcomes, research that connects these factors specifically to reading comprehension in the middle school world language classroom remains limited. Most existing studies do not examine how teachers can identify and respond to these factors in ways that are actionable, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of adolescent learners. There is a need for research that not only examines these relationships but also provides practical insights for educators working in public school settings. This study seeks to contribute to this gap by investigating how reading motivation and emotional responses influence student engagement and comprehension in middle school L2 classrooms. By emphasizing the practical application of theory and data, the study aims to support educators in developing instructional strategies that foster both emotional well-being and reading success in world language education.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between reading motivation and emotional responses among middle school students in a world language classroom setting. Specifically, this research seeks to understand how these two factors influence student engagement and language comprehension during reading activities. Grounded in self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and control-value theory (Pekrun, 2006), the

study examines how both internal motivation and emotional reactions shape learners' experiences with second language reading. A mixed-methods approach will be used to gather and analyze data on students' reading motivations, emotional responses, and comprehension outcomes.

Contribution to Second-Language Acquisition Research

This study contributes to the field of second language acquisition (SLA) by expanding the focus on affective dimensions, which have often been underexplored in traditional SLA research. While many studies in SLA emphasize linguistic accuracy, grammar acquisition, and cognitive development, this research highlights the emotional and motivational factors that are also essential for successful language learning (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). By centering on the roles of emotion and motivation in reading tasks, this study aligns with an emerging strand of SLA research that views affective variables as fundamental to student comprehension, persistence, and performance. These insights help bridge theoretical understandings with practical applications, particularly for language learners in early adolescence.

Contribution to Educational Psychology Research

In addition to its contribution to SLA, the study engages with key areas of educational psychology by examining how motivation and academic emotions influence student performance in a second language setting. Self-determination theory and control-value theory provide complementary lenses for understanding how students' perceived autonomy, enjoyment, and anxiety affect their reading behaviors and outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Pekrun et al., 2017). This is particularly relevant for middle school students, a population known to experience a marked decline in reading motivation and enjoyment during early adolescence (Guthrie et al., 2007; McKenna et al., 2012). Understanding the emotional barriers and motivational shifts that

occur during this developmental stage is essential for designing instruction that re-engages students and supports academic growth across content areas.

Provide Practical Insight for the Classroom

Most importantly, this dissertation aims to provide practical insights for the field of world language education, with a strong focus on application in middle school settings. Teachers often encounter challenges in maintaining student interest in reading, especially as students begin to associate reading with performance pressure rather than enjoyment (Wigfield et al., 2016). The findings of this study are intended to support educators in implementing instructional strategies that foster comprehension and enhance student motivation and emotional resilience during reading tasks. Because reading is a core component of instruction in nearly every subject, the results of this study may offer transferable strategies that benefit educators across disciplines (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). By focusing on the intersection of emotion, motivation, and comprehension, this research promotes a more holistic understanding of how to support adolescent learners in meaningful and developmentally responsive ways. To better understand the lens through which this study was developed, it is important to consider my own background, experiences, and perspective as a researcher and practitioner.

Positionality Statement

Early Life and Reading Experiences

My personal and professional experiences have significantly shaped my interest in this research and the questions I seek to explore. I was raised in a small town in Oklahoma in a household where books and literacy were part of everyday life. My mother, a first-grade teacher who pursued graduate work to become a reading specialist, cultivated a strong reading culture in our home, even though she did not complete her program. From an early age, I was immersed in reading. I've even been told I began asking to learn how to read by the time I was three years

old. This early foundation fostered a lasting appreciation for reading and continues to shape my belief in its importance for learning, identity development, and academic success.

College and Spanish Language Study

As an undergraduate student, I began my academic journey with a psychology major. I was particularly interested in developmental psychology and learning about how people learn and grow cognitively and socially. When I started taking Spanish courses as a part of my degree requirements, I became increasingly fascinated by the cognitive processes involved in bilingualism and language learning. At one point, I considered pursuing graduate studies in psychology to further explore these interests. However, I ultimately decided to change my major to education with a minor in psychology, which allowed me to integrate both theoretical and practical perspectives on learning and development.

Teaching and Research Experience

My work as a public middle school Spanish teacher continues to influence the direction of my academic interests and the design of this research. I am especially drawn to research that connects theory to real-world classroom practice in meaningful ways. This dissertation represents the intersection of several fields that are personally and professionally significant to me, including educational psychology, literacy, second language acquisition, and K–12 instruction. My teaching experiences inform the research questions I ask, the way I interpret the data, and the significance I place on practical application, all while striving to put students at the center. I believe that for education research to be truly impactful, it must be relevant to the people who use it most often: teachers and students.

Pragmatism and Practicality of Research

As such, my perspective as a researcher aligns with a pragmatic paradigm, which emphasizes problem-solving, contextual understanding, and the practical value of research. Pragmatism supports methodological flexibility and focuses on what works in specific settings to address real educational challenges. This approach reflects my belief that research should inform practice, and that practice should inform research. Research and practice have a reciprocal relationship that should be nurtured. Through this study, my goal is to contribute to both the academic conversation and the development of strategies educators can use to improve student motivation, emotional well-being, and comprehension in the world language classroom.

By reflecting on my positionality, I aim to provide insight into how my personal history, academic background, and teaching experiences shape this dissertation. These influences affect not only the study's focus but also the values I bring to interpreting the findings. This research reflects my commitment to supporting middle school learners, improving classroom instruction, and bridging the gap between educational theory and everyday practice.

Definition of Key Terms

To ensure clarity, the following definitions are provided for key terms relevant to this study:

- **Motivation:** Refers to the internal and external factors that drive students' enthusiasm and persistence in learning. This study examines motivation in the context of students' desire to engage in reading and language learning (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

- **Self-Determination Theory (SDT):** A theory of motivation that highlights the role of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

- **Emotion:** The affective responses that influence students' engagement, comprehension, and learning experience in reading. Emotions such as confidence, frustration, and anxiety are examined for their correlation to language learning (Pekrun, 2006).
- **Control-Value Theory (CVT):** a framework for understanding emotions in academic contexts. It focuses on how perceived control over outcomes and the value placed on these outcomes influence emotional experiences (Pekrun, 2006).
- **Reading:** The process of decoding and interpreting text requires both cognitive engagement and comprehension skills. This study focuses on reading within the context of second language learning.
- **Reading Comprehension:** The ability to understand and derive meaning from written language, particularly in an L2 context, is influenced by cognitive and affective factors.
- **Second Language Acquisition (SLA):** The process by which people learn a language other than their native language (Ellis, 1997).
- **World Language (WL) Classroom:** An educational setting focused on the instruction and acquisition of languages other than students' native languages. In this study, the focus is specifically on Spanish as a world language. At times, the paper uses "WL" and "L1" (defined below) interchangeably when discussing reading in a *second language* in the *world language classroom*.
- **First Language (L1):** The language a person learns from birth and/or might use most fluently; often referred to as the *native language*.
- **Second Language (L2):** Any language learned after the first language, typically for communication in education, work, or society; not the speaker's native tongue. The term L2 is often used even when a person speaks three or more languages. At times, the paper

will be interchangeable with “WL” when discussing reading in a second language in the world language classroom.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions, which seek to uncover how students' emotional and motivational experiences influence their reading comprehension in the world language classroom:

1. In what ways might novice-level, middle-school Spanish students emotionally experience reading in class?
2. In what ways might novice-level, middle-school Spanish students perceive their sense of autonomy, relatedness, and competence when reading in class?
3. In what ways might the emotional and motivational feelings of novice-level, middle-school Spanish students correlate with their world language reading comprehension?

Significance of the Study

Highlighting Novice-Level Learners' Experiences

This study contributes to second language acquisition and educational psychology by better understanding the complex interplay among reading motivation, emotional experience, and language comprehension. While prior research has emphasized the cognitive and linguistic aspects of L2 reading, fewer studies have explored how emotional and motivational factors influence reading outcomes, particularly for early adolescent learners in a world language classroom. By focusing on novice-level middle school students, this study addresses a meaningful gap in the literature. It highlights a group of learners whose emotional and academic development is often underrepresented in second language reading research.

Real Classroom Research Setting

What makes this study especially significant is its focus on students' lived experiences in real-world classrooms. The participants are middle school learners enrolled in Spanish 1 courses in a public school district, and the data were collected during typical instructional time. This practical setting increases the relevance of the findings for teachers and schools seeking to improve engagement and comprehension in world language courses. Teachers often face challenges in maintaining student motivation and supporting emotional resilience, particularly during reading tasks that require sustained effort and risk-taking. By examining how students experience reading in terms of both emotion and motivation, the study provides insights that may help educators better respond to their students' needs and create more effective instructional strategies.

Forefronts the Importance of Emotions and Motivation

Beyond its practical implications for teaching, the study also contributes conceptually to a broader understanding of how adolescents learning an L2 experience reading. It challenges educators and researchers to consider not only what students are learning but also how they feel as they learn. The findings can inform future research, curriculum design, and professional development by emphasizing the importance of emotional engagement and motivational support in the reading process. In this way, the study not only extends academic knowledge but also provides tools and perspectives that help shape more inclusive and supportive language learning environments for middle school students.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study, like all empirical research, is subject to certain limitations and delimitations that shape the scope and interpretation of its findings. These elements are introduced here to provide context for the research design, participant selection, and intended outcomes. While a more comprehensive analysis of these issues will be presented in Chapter Five, this section serves to preview some of the key factors that may influence the generalizability and applicability of the study's results.

Limitations refer to potential constraints beyond the researcher's control. In this study, limitations may include sample sizes and potential variability in instructional contexts across classrooms. Because the research focuses on middle school students in world language classrooms within a specific public school setting, the findings may not be readily transferable to high school, elementary, or private school contexts. Delimitations, by contrast, reflect the researcher's intentional boundaries. These include the focus on reading tasks in the second language classroom, the decision to concentrate on middle school learners, and the use of a mixed-methods design. These parameters were selected to ensure a focused, developmentally appropriate investigation aligned with the study's goals. Full details on the study's limitations and delimitations, including their implications for future research and practice, will be discussed in depth in Chapter Five.

Conclusion and Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced the central themes of this study, including the role of reading motivation and emotional engagement in language learning, particularly in the middle school world language classroom. The significance of examining these factors in middle school, where students undergo substantial developmental changes, was highlighted. The research questions

and key terms were presented, offering a foundation for understanding how motivation and emotion influence students' reading comprehension and engagement.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters, each addressing key components of the research study, from theoretical background to methodology, findings, and interpretation.

- **Chapter 1, Introduction,** provides an overview of the study's purpose, background, and significance. It outlines the problem statement, research questions, definitions of key terms, and the study's delimitations and limitations. Chapter 1 establishes the foundation for understanding the correlation of reading motivation and emotional experiences with language learning in a middle school context.
- **Chapter 2, Literature Review**, presents an in-depth analysis of the existing literature on reading motivation, emotional experiences in education, and reading comprehension in second-language acquisition. This chapter outlines theoretical frameworks, including self-determination theory and control-value theory, and highlights gaps in current research, particularly in middle school world language classrooms.
- **Chapter 3, Methodology,** describes this study's mixed-methods research design. It details the selection of participants, instruments, and data collection methods, including quantitative scales for motivation and emotion, as well as qualitative tools such as open-ended questionnaires and interviews. The chapter also discusses ethical considerations, data analysis strategies, and limitations related to the research design.
- **Chapter 4, Findings,** presents the results from both quantitative and qualitative analyses. This chapter reports on the relationships identified between reading motivation,

emotional experiences, and reading comprehension among middle school Spanish learners. Quantitative data are provided through statistical analysis, while qualitative data illustrate students' personal experiences and insights, highlighting key themes from the study.

- **Chapter 5, Discussion/ Conclusion,** interprets the findings in the context of the research questions and theoretical frameworks. This chapter connects the results to broader implications for teaching practices in world language classrooms, discussing how emotional and motivational factors correlate with reading comprehension. Additionally, Chapter 5 addresses the study's limitations, offers educators recommendations, and suggests future research directions to extend the understanding of motivation and emotion in language acquisition.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction

Encouraging K-12 students to read for pleasure is a well-known challenge, as elucidated by Gallagher (2009). It becomes even more complicated for teachers in secondary schools, covering grades 6 through 12, where changing students' attitudes toward reading is harder (Guthrie et al., 2007; McKenna et al., 2012). This challenge is commonly addressed in English Language Arts classes and resonates in World Language (WL) classes as well. In WL classrooms, educators must consider students' attitudes toward language learning and reading, as these attitudes play a crucial role in language development and acquisition (Krashen, 1985). The link between increased anxiety and reduced language acquisition and the potential negative relationship with reading anxiety on performance in the WL classroom highlights the need to examine and tackle this issue (Krashen, 1985).

In this chapter, I will first provide context for my research by delving into the history of second language acquisition and Spanish education in the United States. I will discuss theoretical perspectives on key areas relevant to my research, beginning with a general overview of reading comprehension and then focusing on world language reading comprehension. Additionally, I will examine the roles of motivation and emotion in the language-learning process, drawing on research in positive psychology to understand how these factors influence students' engagement and success in reading. Furthermore, I will review theories of second language acquisition (SLA) and consider their application in K-12 world language classrooms, particularly focusing on how reading contributes to comprehensible input, a crucial factor in language acquisition. Finally, I will synthesize the current literature and research to provide a comprehensive overview of how

these interconnected elements—reading, motivation, emotion, and SLA theories—shape students' reading experiences in world language classrooms.

Historical Contexts

Spanish as a World Language Education in the United States

Spanish education has matured and transformed throughout its history in the United States. Spanish has transitioned from being taught primarily in higher education settings with limited to no research-based practices to being taught at all age levels with research-based practices. Additionally, the field has evolved from focusing solely on English-language learners who had the privilege of learning a second language for professional or academic purposes to placing greater emphasis on pedagogy for native Spanish speakers. This section will detail the history and current status of Spanish education in the U.S.

Early Spanish Education

In 1780, Thomas Jefferson brought Modern Languages professorships, including Spanish, to William and Mary College (The College of William and Mary, 2016; Herrera, 201). Jefferson was interested in languages and believed learning Spanish would become essential for the United States. Nonetheless, Spanish teaching materials were unavailable at the university level. Many years later, Mariano Cubí y Soler (1822) created Spanish teaching materials for professors in the United States. He thought that language learning was achieved through grammar and Spanish-to-English translation. He argued that one of the primary purposes of language learning was to understand the culture and become better global citizens; therefore, his methods centered on translating authentic Spanish poetry and literature (Cubí y Soler, 1824). While his methodologies were designed for English-speaking students learning Spanish as an L2

and are not supported by present-day literature, his work laid the groundwork for Spanish education in the U.S. (Rexine, 1977)

Growth of Spanish Education

The popularity of Spanish education continued to grow into the 20th century, and it still focused on English-speaking students learning Spanish as a world language (Zamora, 2013). Unfortunately, there was little to no interest in teaching Spanish to native speakers. The Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese was formed in 1917, which led to a push for greater emphasis on teaching Spanish to Spanish speakers (Roca & Colombí, 2016; Spinelli, 2016). In the 1930s, native speakers remained a topic of interest in the educational field. Then, following World War II, demand for Spanish education grew further. In 1958, President Eisenhower implemented the National Defense Education Act, which provided funding for many varios parts of education, including WL programs (Hunt, 2023). This bill is still recognized as one of the more influential pieces of legislation for WL.

Various instructional approaches were used over the following years, but many classrooms continued to emphasize memorization, translation, and grammar, as influenced by Cubí y Soler (Hamad, 2020). In contrast, in the 1980s, Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis shifted WL education towards a more holistic and proficiency-based approach (The Input Hypothesis will be further described in the SLA section). The transition towards a more contextual and communicative approach became apparent as Spanish programs expanded. For example, in 1989, the College Board - Advanced Placement organization introduced AP Spanish Language and Culture courses for high school students, providing holistic language objectives, standardized assessments, and curriculum. The current literature continues to support the trend toward

meaningful, contextualized experiences; current research does not support explicit grammar and translation instruction (Roberts, 2016).

Current State of Spanish Education

As Spanish teaching practices have evolved, the influence of comprehensible input and communicative approaches has remained evident and grown. The current literature does not support traditional, explicit grammar instruction; WL classrooms are developing into highly engaging spaces that leverage diversity and integrate literacy (Wong & Van Patten, 2008; Rondon-Pari, 2011). That is to say, language learning and teaching processes have become active, with classrooms shifting from teacher-centered to student-centered. (Toledo-López & Pentón Herrera, 2015). The current national standards for Spanish language education are 1) communication, 2) cultures, 3) connections, 4) comparisons, and 5) communities to help students gain cultural understanding, become lifelong learners, and use the language as part of their daily lives (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2006). In the same way, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) pushes teachers to use Spanish 90% of the time in class, underscoring the importance of communicative tasks and practices.

Another shift in Spanish education is the integration of technology. The use of technology in the 21st century has changed language education in the classroom, as shown by Dema & Moeller's (2012) studies. Language instruction has become more adaptable, allowing students to access information anytime and interact continuously with their peers and teachers. Additionally, online platforms for Spanish education allow students to take charge of their learning, with educators serving as facilitators. Students can expand their learning community and engage with native speakers in Spanish-speaking countries. This new strategy in Spanish education differs

from the traditional perspectives of early scholars. However, research suggests that technology is effective and beneficial (Dona et al., 2014; Toledo-López & Pentón Herrera, 2015). Many school districts now provide devices to all their students, a practice known as one-to-one education, and even evaluate teachers' use of technology in the classroom (Harper & Millman, 2016).

As described, Spanish language programs have steadily increased in demand and popularity over the years (The National K-12 Foreign Language Enrollment Survey, 2017). Spanish is often considered the most sought-after WL in the U.S. In contrast to the early days of Spanish education, students do not need to wait until they are in higher education. WL classes are now offered nationwide in K-12 public and private schools (The National K-12 Foreign Language Enrollment Survey, 2017). Nevertheless, the courses are only sometimes mandatory; other times, enrollment is by student choice only. The number of required WL courses for K-12 public school students varies by state, with some mandating two consecutive years of the same language and others just offering it as an elective. Unfortunately, only about 20% of secondary students are reported to be enrolled in a world language course, with Spanish having the highest enrollment (The National K-12 Foreign Language Enrollment Survey, 2017).

Second Language Acquisition Developments

SLA has a long history predating research on the development of L2 proficiency (Aljumah, 2020). Just as world language education has not always been evidence-based, thoughts on how people learn a second language have not always been grounded in actual SLA research. Actually, much of the early work and theories on SLA drew on what scholars understood about first-language (L1) acquisition. Currently, researchers are highly interested in the similarities and differences between L1 acquisition and SLA. This section will highlight SLA's developments and current state.

Early SLA Theories

SLA research has drawn upon multiple disciplines, including linguistics, psychology, sociolinguistics, neuroscience, and education. The field began as an extension of L1 acquisition studies. Early influences such as Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) and Leonard Bloomfield (1933) emphasized structuralist views of language and laid the groundwork for understanding linguistic systems. In the mid-20th century, behaviorist theories dominated both psychology and education, and language learning was viewed through the lens of stimulus-response conditioning (Skinner, 1957). This led to the development of the audiolingual method, which focused on repetition, drilling, and memorization to form language habits (Fries, 1945; Lado, 1957). While largely displaced in current theory, remnants of this method still appear in some instructional tools and programs today, such as Rosetta Stone (Bajorek, 2017).

In the 1960s and 1970s, cognitive theories emerged in response to behaviorism's limitations. Cognitive scientists, including Chomsky (1957, 1964), emphasized the role of internal mental processes and introduced the idea that humans are biologically predisposed to acquire language. His theory of Universal Grammar and the concept of a language acquisition device shifted the field toward understanding language as an innate capacity. As cognitive approaches took hold, so too did an interest in the role of input in language acquisition.

Growth of SLA Theories

One of the most influential figures during this cognitive shift was Stephen Krashen, who introduced several interrelated hypotheses that became foundational to language acquisition theory. Among these, the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982, 1985) had the most enduring impact, particularly on classroom instruction. Krashen proposed that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input - language slightly beyond their current level of

proficiency, often referred to as *i+1*. According to Krashen, as long as the input is understandable and meaningful, acquisition will occur naturally, without the need for direct instruction on grammar or form.

Krashen's model also included the Affective Filter Hypothesis, which posits that emotional factors such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence influence how much input learners can process. When students are relaxed and motivated, their affective filter is low, allowing them to acquire input more readily. These ideas directly linked the learner's emotional state to cognitive access to language, anticipating later developments in motivation theory and affective research in SLA. Krashen emphasized the importance of meaningful, low-anxiety learning environments where input is rich, compelling, and accessible to the learner.

His theories contributed to student-centered instruction, where the learner is viewed as an active participant in constructing meaning rather than a passive recipient of information. This shift parallels the rise of constructivist learning theory, which posits that learners construct knowledge through interaction with their environment and experiences, rather than absorbing facts from the teacher (Bruner, 1961; Piaget, 1972). These concepts became influential in education during the late 20th century and informed pedagogical shifts across content areas, including language learning (Brooks & Brooks, 1993). Krashen's framework complemented these ideas by encouraging classrooms that were designed around the learner's needs, interests, and readiness, laying the groundwork for what would become a more student-centered, communicative approach to language instruction (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Krashen's Input Hypothesis was later extended and critiqued. His ideas, such as Comprehensible Input and Affective Filter Hypothesis, remain highly influential, especially in novice-level language classrooms. For instance, Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis highlighted

the importance of learner production, and Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis emphasized the role of negotiation of meaning during interpersonal communication. These perspectives expanded on Krashen's foundational ideas, underscoring that meaningful input, interaction, and output are interconnected processes that support second-language development.

Sociocultural theories also began gaining traction in the 1980s and 1990s, largely influenced by Vygotsky's (1978, 1986) work on social interaction and the Zone of Proximal Development. These perspectives emphasized that learning occurs through social participation and collaboration. Researchers such as Lantolf and Thorne (2006) positioned language learning as a socially mediated process, encouraging instructors to incorporate peer collaboration and dialogue into instructional design. These ideas further solidified the movement toward student-centered, interaction-rich, and emotionally supportive learning environments that remain central to many world language classrooms today.

Current State of SLA

In more recent decades, SLA research has continued to evolve and diversify. Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) has emerged as a central paradigm, emphasizing the nonlinear, adaptive, and context-sensitive nature of language development (Papi & Hiver, 2020). Usage-based approaches have gained traction as well, highlighting how language is acquired through repeated exposure to real language in context, and how frequency and pattern recognition shape learning (VanPatten et al., 2020). Advances in cognitive neuroscience have contributed to the field by offering insights into how the brain processes language input and how neural plasticity supports acquisition across the lifespan (Kemmerer, 2022).

Contemporary research also reflects a growing interest in the affective and motivational dimensions of SLA. Rather than treating these as secondary considerations, current models

recognize emotions and motivation as core components of language learning that interact dynamically with input, interaction, and context. This shift is particularly relevant to classroom-based studies where learner engagement, identity, and social-emotional factors play a visible and influential role. As classrooms become increasingly diverse and learner-centered, there is a renewed emphasis on tailoring instruction to students' needs, emotions, and developmental stages (Ushioda, 2011).

The Relationship Between Spanish Education and SLA Theory

The history of Spanish language education in the United States stretches back much further than the formal study of SLA. For much of its early history, Spanish instruction relied on traditional, teacher-centered methods such as grammar-translation, with little regard for how languages are actually acquired. However, as SLA began to emerge as a research-based field, its influence on Spanish language education became more pronounced. Early theoretical models, particularly Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982), provided a basis for classroom practices that emphasized accessible, meaningful input through storytelling, conversation, and text. The incorporation of input-focused instruction into Spanish classrooms marked a significant departure from memorization and grammar drills.

Later developments, such as Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis and Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis, continued to inform language instruction by highlighting the role of language production and peer interaction. These theoretical advancements helped shape communicative and task-based instructional models that are now common in many Spanish programs. Yet despite this progress, gaps remain between theory and practice. Some teachers continue to rely on outdated approaches rooted in grammar-translation or behaviorism (Griffiths, 1991), while others focus exclusively on input, offering students no opportunities for scaffolded

output or interaction. This inconsistency underscores the importance of professional learning and theory-informed practice. A summary of the relationship between the research and practice is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Theoretical Developments in SLA and Their Influence on Spanish Language Education

Theory / Historical Development	**Key Concept**	**Impact on Spanish Language Education**
Grammar-Translation Method (Pre-SLA)	Focused on memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary, with translation tasks	Dominated early Spanish instruction; emphasized accuracy over communication
Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978)	Learning is mediated by social interaction, culture, and tools	Encouraged collaborative tasks, peer dialogue, and scaffolded learning experiences
Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982)	Comprehensible input is essential for acquisition	Encouraged reading-based and storytelling-focused instruction
Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985)	Producing language enhances linguistic processing	Led to the integration of writing, speaking, and

		summarization in world language curricula
Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996)	Interaction and negotiation of meaning support SLA	Validated classroom practices involving group work, task-based learning, and real-time feedback

Note: This table outlines key theoretical developments in second language acquisition and how each has influenced Spanish language pedagogy. It also highlights the relevance of each theory to the current study's design and findings, particularly concerning emotion, motivation, and reading comprehension in middle school contexts.

The current study builds upon these historical and theoretical foundations by examining how students emotionally and motivationally experience reading in the Spanish classroom. The evolution of SLA (from structuralist to cognitive, from behaviorist to sociocultural, and from teacher-centered to student-centered) provides a necessary backdrop for exploring how reading comprehension unfolds in dynamic, emotionally charged learning environments. These developments set the stage for the theoretical perspectives that guide this study and its literature review. The following section introduces the key frameworks informing this research, including perspectives on reading and comprehensible input, self-determination theory, control-value theory, and positive psychology.

Theoretical Perspectives

This section defines a few theoretical perspectives that underpin language learning, particularly in the context of reading comprehension and its role in world language (WL) classrooms. First, I will examine reading comprehension and the specific challenges it presents

in WL education. Central to this discussion is the concept of comprehensible input, which emphasizes the importance of accessible language in fostering acquisition. I will then turn to Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Control-Value Theory (CVT), both of which highlight the emotional and motivational factors that influence student engagement and reading success. Finally, positive psychology will be addressed in relation to promoting a supportive and motivating environment for language learners. These frameworks collectively inform a deeper understanding of how students approach reading in the WL classroom.

Reading Comprehension

Reading is a cognitively demanding process that requires integrating multiple component skills. It involves decoding written symbols, constructing meaning from text, and engaging with language at increasingly complex levels of comprehension (Pierson & Gallagher, 1983). The National Reading Panel identifies five essential elements that support skilled reading: comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, phonics, and phonemic awareness (Shanahan, 2005). Vocabulary contributes to overall understanding by helping readers make sense of the words they encounter. Fluency, or the ability to read smoothly and accurately with expression, reflects the automaticity necessary for sustained engagement. Phonics and phonemic awareness are foundational skills that involve decoding and manipulating the sounds of language (Yopp, 1992). Each of these components must work in harmony for compelling reading to occur, and a deficit in any one area can negatively relate with overall comprehension (Shanahan, 2005). Proficient readers must also be able to apply background knowledge, make inferences, and critically evaluate text content (Just et al., 1982).

In the context of world language (WL) learning, the cognitive complexity of reading is further intensified. Learners reading in a second language (L2) must navigate unfamiliar

grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, often without the automaticity they rely on in their first language (L1). Strategies that support L1 reading may not directly transfer to L2 contexts, and new strategies may need to be developed for the target language (Yamashita, 2002). Additionally, language transfer can lead to misinterpretations when learners unconsciously apply L1 patterns to L2 text (Gass, 1988). In WL classrooms, reading also entails cultural interpretation. Students often engage with authentic texts, such as stories, articles, and real-world documents, that present linguistic and cultural nuances not easily simplified (Gilmore, 2007). These texts demand both cognitive flexibility and emotional resilience, especially when students encounter abstract or culturally specific vocabulary with no direct equivalents in their L1. Research has shown that shared reading and guided discussion of such authentic materials not only support comprehension but also foster cultural awareness and student motivation (Young & Hadaway, 2006).

Motivation and emotion are essential factors in how students approach and comprehend texts, particularly in L2 contexts. Reading is not a purely cognitive act; it is also shaped by how learners feel about the task, themselves, and the classroom environment. Wigfield and Guthrie (1997, 1999) demonstrated that reading motivation is a strong predictor of how much students read and how well they comprehend texts, even after accounting for past reading achievement and background knowledge. Self-efficacy, or students' belief in their ability to succeed in reading tasks (Bandura, 1997), plays a key role in this motivational framework. More recent studies have extended these findings by emphasizing the importance of creating emotionally supportive classrooms, particularly for adolescent L2 learners. When students feel safe to take risks and are supported in developing autonomy and competence, their persistence and engagement increase significantly (Šimić Šašić et al., 2025; Kazakov, 2025). Emotionally regulated students are more

likely to persevere through difficult reading, stay focused, and benefit from classroom interactions (Boekaerts, 2011).

Given these interrelated challenges and supports, reading remains a vital instructional tool in the world language classroom. Authentic resources provide rich exposure to the target language in meaningful, culturally grounded contexts (Berardo, 2006; Krashen, 2013). These materials enhance vocabulary, reinforce grammatical patterns, and deepen students' understanding of the cultural products and practices embedded in language (Gilmore, 2007). Beyond linguistic development, well-designed reading tasks promote critical thinking and sustained engagement. For these reasons, reading should occupy a central role in the WL curriculum, not only as a source of comprehensible input but also as a pathway to intercultural competence (Aloqaili, 2012). Moreover, recent scholarship underscores the need for instructional practices that support both cognitive and emotional demands. Classrooms that include socioemotional scaffolding - such as promoting student voice, offering meaningful choices, and validating effort - help students develop resilience and confidence (Immordino-Yang et al., 2018). In this way, reading becomes more than a skill; it becomes a dynamic space where language learning, personal growth, and cultural understanding intersect.

Comprehensible Input

Stephen Krashen's (1985) contributions to second language acquisition (SLA) have been significant to our understanding of the language-learning process. He proposed the Input Hypothesis, a cornerstone theory that helps us understand how learners can gain proficiency in a second language. According to the Input Hypothesis, language acquisition occurs when learners receive understandable messages—comprehensible input (CI)—in the target language. Reading serves as a fundamental source of CI, allowing learners to encounter new vocabulary and

structures in context (Wright, 2019). Krashen recommends a formula called i+1, where "i" represents the student's current language and "i+1" represents one step beyond it. CI helps learners acquire language implicitly by exposing them to understandable input content slightly beyond their current competence. It's important to note that input may precede output, and learners may not produce language until they have received an abundance of CI. Krashen (1982) also suggests that world language learners must feel at ease to acquire language effectively, which he calls the affective filter.

Swain (1985; 2000; 2005) developed the Output Hypothesis based on Krashen's Input Hypothesis. Swain proposes that comprehensible input is crucial for language acquisition, but it is equally essential for language learners to produce language themselves (output) to deepen their understanding. Learners who engage in reading receive input and have opportunities to use the vocabulary and structures they encounter in their writing and speaking. According to the Output Hypothesis, learners benefit from comprehensible input and producing language in the L2. Learners who express their thoughts in the L2 become more aware of gaps in their linguistic knowledge, prompting them to seek more information. CI helps build a language system, and the output helps learners access it.

Long (1996; 1999) introduced the Interaction Hypothesis, which extends the concepts of input and output. According to the Interaction Hypothesis, language development improves when learners communicate with native speakers or other language learners. Long argues that interaction affords learners valuable feedback and opportunities to negotiate meaning, ultimately leading to enhanced language proficiency. Reading provides input and can lead to opportunities for interaction, mainly when learners discuss texts with peers or engage in instructional conversations. When readers encounter difficulties or misunderstandings, they may adjust their

approach by simplifying or paraphrasing, enhancing the comprehensibility of the input. This negotiation of meaning, facilitated by reading, allows learners to solidify their understanding and promotes greater engagement with the language (Paesani & Menke, 2023..

As previously mentioned, reading is an excellent way for learners to receive comprehensible input (Krashen, 1989; Tomlinson, 2012). Research shows that extensive reading might predict a learner's language acquisition and development (Pigada & Schmitt, 2012). The American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) identifies three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational (Breiner-Sanders et al., 2000). As an interpretive skill, reading works collaboratively with other language skills, such as speaking, listening, and writing. Exposure to new vocabulary, sentence structures, and grammar through reading allows learners to connect words and their meanings in context (Waring & Nation, 2004). This interaction enhances vocabulary retention and enables learners to use language more effectively in receptive and productive tasks.

Furthermore, reading is fundamentally a meaning-making process where learners construct understanding through their interactions with texts. This process can be further enriched through textual and instructional conversations, where students dialogue about the material they read. These discussions promote critical thinking and deepen comprehension, allowing students to articulate their interpretations and ask questions. Engaging in conversation about texts not only reinforces vocabulary but also supports the development of reasoning and analytical skills, essential components of language proficiency (Paesani & Menke, 2023)

Finally, by prioritizing reading as a key curriculum element, educators can create learning experiences integrating reading with speaking, listening, and writing. Such an integrated approach allows learners to build upon their reading experiences, applying new vocabulary and

concepts across different contexts. As learners share their thoughts and insights in discussions or written reflections, they enhance their language output and contribute to a more collaborative and supportive learning environment. This holistic approach ultimately leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the language, empowering students to become proficient and confident users of the target language **(**Paesani & Menke, 2023**).**

Reading Motivation and Emotions in the WL Classroom

Students' emotions and motivation to read are essential to the world language (WL) classroom (De Naeghel et al., 2012). When students are nervous or unmotivated, they tend to engage less in reading activities, directly correlating with their comprehension. According to Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, when students have a high affective filter - feeling anxious, stressed, or unmotivated - their ability to process and understand input diminishes. This emotional barrier makes it more difficult for students to internalize the language, negatively affecting their progress (Saito et al., 1997; Sparks et al., 2018; Bahmani & Farvadin, 2018).

The affective filter is a concept that refers to the emotional and psychological factors that can either facilitate or block language acquisition. A low affective filter makes students more receptive to language input, promoting better comprehension and retention. On the other hand, a high affective filter can create a mental block that prevents the learner from fully engaging with the material, regardless of their cognitive abilities. This highlights the importance of addressing students' emotional and cognitive needs in the WL classroom to create an optimal learning environment.

Most research on second language acquisition has focused primarily on theories like Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Swain’s Output Hypothesis (1985), and Long’s Interaction Hypothesis (1996). However, there is a notable gap in research that integrates cognitive and

affective factors. This gap is significant because language learning is not purely a mental process; motivation and emotions also play a crucial role. Recently, more interest has emerged in combining theories from both domains, recognizing that motivation and emotions, when aligned with cognitive theories, provide a deeper understanding of how language acquisition occurs (Swain, 2013). By addressing this gap, educators and researchers can develop more holistic approaches to language teaching that take learners' minds and emotions into account.

Self-Determination Theory

Ryan and Deci's (2000) self-determination theory (SDT) offers a helpful framework for understanding reading motivation in world language classroom contexts (De Naeghel et al., 2012). SDT identifies autonomy, competence, and relatedness as core psychological needs that must be met for intrinsic motivation to thrive; intrinsic motivation is beneficial for sustained reading engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In world language classrooms, research shows that when these three needs are supported, students are more likely to engage in reading for enjoyment, challenge, and personal growth, rather than out of obligation (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997; Wigfield et al., 2014). Recent studies have shown that autonomy-supportive learning environments increase reading persistence and motivation, particularly among adolescent L2 learners (Lanvers & Graham, 2022). These findings highlight the importance of designing instruction that supports student agency and connection to both content and classroom community.

Beyond intrinsic motivation, SDT recognizes a continuum of extrinsic motivation that also influences learner behavior. Extrinsic motivators (such as grades, teacher approval, or rewards) can prompt students to engage in reading tasks even if they lack initial interest (Becker et al., 2010). Crucially, SDT emphasizes the process of internalization, wherein externally driven

behaviors can become self-endorsed. Through "autonomous regulation," students begin to view reading as personally valuable, leading to more meaningful and consistent engagement. For example, a student may start reading Spanish texts to succeed on an assessment but, over time, may develop a genuine interest in stories, characters, or cultural themes. Recent work supports this progression, showing that even initially extrinsically motivated L2 learners can shift toward more intrinsic forms of motivation when competence and autonomy are consistently nurtured (Al-Hoorie & Oga-Baldwin, 2025). These insights affirm that effective world language reading instruction should address both motivational pathways to help students connect with texts meaningfully.

Emotion Regulation

SDT also accounts for the dynamic interplay between motivation and emotion. Emotion regulation, a key feature of SDT, helps explain how students manage their affective responses to academic tasks like reading (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Integrative emotion regulation is the process of accepting, reflecting on, and working through emotions. Integrative emotion regulation encourages deeper awareness of emotional experiences and promotes healthy, goal-aligned behavior (Weinstein et al., 2013). In contrast, controlled regulation (e.g., suppressing emotions to please others) and dysregulated responses (e.g., emotional outbursts or avoidance) can undermine learning.

Research suggests that students who practice integrative emotion regulation are more likely to experience positive outcomes, including enhanced engagement, stronger well-being, and more adaptive coping mechanisms (Benita, 2020). Recent studies suggest that emotion regulation strategies might correlate with students' persistence and resilience during cognitively and emotionally demanding reading tasks (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). These findings align

with Harley et al. (2019), who argue for closer integration between the emotion regulation components of SDT and the discrete emotions described in control-value theory (CVT). Exploring how students regulate frustration, anxiety, or confusion during L2 reading may help educators create emotionally responsive instruction that supports both motivation and learning outcomes.

Control-Value Theory

Control-Value Theory (CVT) is a valuable framework for examining the affective dimensions of language acquisition, including WL reading (Pekrun, 2006). According to CVT, emotions arise from learners' appraisals of how much control they feel over a task and the value they assign to it (Pekrun et al., 2002, 2007). These task-specific emotions - such as hope, enjoyment, pride, anxiety, shame, boredom, and hopelessness - can either support or hinder learning depending on the learner's sense of agency and perceived value of the activity. Recent studies continue to validate CVT as an effective lens for understanding how emotions influence engagement and outcomes in world language learning, particularly in contexts that require sustained attention and effort, such as reading (Pekrun et al., 2017; Dewaele & Li, 2021; Chou, 2023).

Applying CVT to WL reading enables educators to explore how students' emotional responses influence their reading persistence, comprehension, and motivation. For example, positive activating emotions like hope and pride have been shown to predict higher engagement and deeper processing of challenging L2 texts (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018). Conversely, negative emotions such as boredom and anxiety can lead to disengagement and surface-level processing. When learners feel in control of their reading strategies and believe the content has personal or academic value, they are more likely to enjoy reading and demonstrate perseverance.

This connection highlights how emotional responses, shaped by control-value appraisals, can directly affect L2 reading behaviors.

This emotional dynamic is especially pronounced among adolescent world language learners, whose cognitive and emotional regulation systems are still developing. Middle school students, in particular, often face the dual challenge of acquiring new linguistic structures while also managing the social and emotional complexities of adolescence. In such contexts, emotional experiences can significantly shape how students approach and persist through reading tasks. Recent research has suggested that emotions such as enjoyment and hope significantly contribute to reading resilience, even when linguistic tasks are complex or cognitively demanding (Li, Jiang, & Dewaele, 2020). These positive emotions have been shown to broaden students' cognitive flexibility, sustain motivation, and buffer against the discouraging effects of failure or confusion. As a result, learners who experience joy, curiosity, or optimism during reading are more likely to engage deeply, take interpretive risks, and recover quickly from setbacks. As the following section will explore, the nature of these emotions, whether activating or deactivating, may play a critical role in shaping students' reading behaviors and comprehension outcomes

Activating and Deactivating Emotions in Reading

Within CVT, emotions are further categorized as activating or deactivating, based on their influence on cognitive engagement. Activating emotions, whether positive (e.g., enjoyment, curiosity) or negative (e.g., anxiety, frustration), typically increases cognitive effort. These emotions can push students to persist through challenges, particularly when paired with high task value and moderate levels of control. In contrast, deactivating emotions (such as hopelessness, boredom, or shame) are associated with withdrawal and avoidance behaviors (Pekrun et al.,

2005). These emotions often emerge when learners feel a lack of control or perceive reading tasks as meaningless or irrelevant.

Recent studies in L2 contexts affirm that activating emotions like enjoyment, even when students encounter moderate levels of stress or difficulty, can promote deeper engagement with reading tasks and encourage more strategic learning behaviors (Guerberof Arenas & Toral, 2023; Rackauckas et al., 2025). For example, emotionally engaging texts that include humor, narrative elements, or personal relevance have been shown to increase cognitive investment and persistence in second language reading. On the other hand, boredom has been consistently associated with lower comprehension outcomes and reduced task persistence, particularly when learners feel disconnected from the content or lack a sense of agency in the learning process (Pekrun et al., 2010). Recognizing and addressing deactivating emotions is essential when designing reading instruction. Interventions that support student agency, such as offering a choice of reading topics or using culturally meaningful materials, have been found to potentially reduce boredom and foster activating emotional states in L2 learning environments (Man, 2025).

CVT complements Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), particularly in its emphasis on learner autonomy and task value. Both theories advocate for environments where students feel competent, connected, and autonomous: conditions that increase the likelihood of positive emotional engagement with reading (Zaccoletti, 2020). By aligning instructional practices with these psychological needs, teachers can better support student well-being and sustained motivation in language learning (Nguyễn, 2025).

Positive Psychology

Positive psychology is gaining momentum in second language acquisition research, offering a fresh perspective on how individuals acquire and engage with new languages

(MacIntyre et al., 2019). This approach emphasizes the importance of emotional well-being, resilience, and a positive mindset as key components of successful language learning. Central to positive psychology is Fredrickson's "broaden and build" theory, which posits that positive emotions expand individuals' cognitive capacities, enabling them to think more flexibly and engage in creative, exploratory thinking (Shao et al., 2020). In language learning, this expanded cognitive capacity helps learners overcome challenges, experiment with language use, and remain open to new linguistic and cultural experiences. MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) argue that positive emotions increase learners' enthusiasm and motivation, help them build lasting linguistic resources, and broaden their perspectives. Thus, a positive, emotionally enriched learning environment can significantly enhance language acquisition by supporting emotional and cognitive growth.

Integrating positive psychology with SDT and CVT provides a holistic view of the emotional and motivational processes involved in language learning. SDT highlights the importance of fulfilling basic psychological needs - autonomy, competence, and relatedness - to foster intrinsic motivation. When these needs are met, learners are more likely to experience positive emotions, which align with Fredrickson's theory by enhancing their cognitive engagement and motivation. Similarly, CVT underscores the role of perceived control and task value in shaping learners' emotions. By creating environments where students feel in control of their learning and value the outcomes, educators can cultivate positive emotional experiences, such as enjoyment and pride, further strengthening motivation. Together, SDT, CVT, and positive psychology suggest that fostering positive emotions in language classrooms can create a virtuous cycle in which increased motivation, emotional well-being, and linguistic development reinforce one another. In sum, applying these frameworks could enable educators to create emotionally

supportive and motivating environments that promote both language proficiency and personal growth (Wang et al., 2021).

Research Synthesis

Motivation is a driving force behind a student's willingness to engage with reading materials, potentially relating with the extent to which they invest cognitive effort in understanding and retaining information. A motivated reader is likely to approach challenges with persistence and adopt effective learning strategies, contributing to improved comprehension and overall language acquisition (Tullis & Fullmer, 2013). Reading motivation has been thoroughly explored in first-language (L1) contexts (Grabe, 2018). There is a growing body of research on world language reading motivation, yet much of it focuses on higher education, intermediate WL courses, or English as a second language (Teimouri et al., 2018).

Understanding and harnessing emotions could be pivotal in shaping learners' attitudes, engagement, and overall experience (Goetz et al., 2008; Pekrun, 2006). Recognizing emotions in the WL classroom can contribute to a holistic understanding of language learning dynamics, facilitating more effective, learner-centered approaches to language education (Swain, 2013). However, world language reading research has predominantly focused on anxiety, which is a meaningful emotion to understand; nonetheless, positive emotions such as enjoyment, hope, and pride are also important, and some research suggests they may be more important than anxiety (Shoa et al., 2019). There is a pressing need to integrate SDT and the CVT of achievement emotions into research on reading in WL education for middle school-aged students to address these gaps.

Overarching Objectives of Literature Review

This review examines the relationships among reading, motivation, and emotion in WL instruction. As a WL teacher and Ph.D. student, I want to enhance pedagogical practices that promote language proficiency and enjoyment of language learning, particularly through literacy. In this literature review, I aim to summarize research findings and insights on world language reading motivation and emotion. I argue that these two constructs are interconnected and that more research is needed to understand their relationship. Understanding the interplay of motivation and emotion could help improve language educators' pedagogical reading practices. Consequently, they can create a more dynamic and effective learning environment for middle school students in WL classrooms. I will comprehensively examine existing research on the theoretical constructs of SDT and CVT and use literature from positive psychology to elaborate on the discussion.

Procedure for Collecting Articles

In this synthesis, I follow Shanahan's (2000) advice to use four approaches: formulating questions, identifying key terms, conducting a systematic search, and selecting studies for inclusion.

Formulating Research Questions

My overarching inquiry was to understand how students experience motivation and emotion when reading in the WL classroom; this broad question guided subsequent questions and shaped the direction of my literature search. I developed follow-up questions targeting specific theoretical frameworks to refine my investigation. Questions such as "How can SDT inform motivation in the WL classroom?" and "How can CVT inform reading motivation?" provided a structured approach to exploring the intersections between motivation, emotions, and

language learning. Additionally, I aimed to understand the synergies between SDT and CVT, asking questions such as "How can CVT and SDT be used together to explore reading in the WL classroom?" These focused inquiries provided a roadmap for selecting articles that directly addressed the intricate relationship between theoretical frameworks and the emotional-motivational dynamics of reading in the WL context.

Identify Key Terms

Simultaneously, identifying key terms was pivotal in constructing a targeted and thorough literature search. The compiled list included terms such as "motivation," "reading motivation," "intrinsic motivation," "self-determination theory," "control-value theory," and various emotional factors, such as "reading enjoyment" and "reading anxiety." These carefully chosen terms reflected a deliberate effort to encompass the diverse facets of motivation, emotion, and relevant theoretical frameworks within the WL classroom. The specificity of key terms, such as "middle school world languages," ensured a focused exploration of the unique dynamics of motivation and emotion in this educational context. This strategic selection of key terms was a strong foundation for conducting a comprehensive review of the existing literature.

Conducting a Systematic Search

Due to the limited number of studies on reading motivation and emotion in middle school world language classes, there were no restrictions on publication date or the types of resources used in this research. I used two primary databases: the university's comprehensive library databases and Google Scholar. The university's libraries provided access to a range of resources, including books, articles, journals, visual materials, and dissertations. I also used the Interlibrary Loan service to obtain materials from libraries worldwide. Google Scholar, an open-access online database, provides access to scholarly literature across various formats and disciplines.

Using this combined search approach, I aimed to increase the inclusivity of the research synthesis regarding the dynamics of motivation and emotion in WL reading experiences among middle school students.

Selecting Studies for Inclusion

It is important to note that not all studies identified in the search are included in this research synthesis. Scholars have debated two issues regarding inclusion: quality and relevance. The author establishes standards to regulate the critical features of studies or research procedures; if these standards are not met, the study is eliminated (Shanahan, 2000). Since much of the literature on reading motivation and emotions has focused on L1, I did not exclude studies on this topic. However, I did prioritize a search for papers focusing on the world language experience. I also focused on studies that used self-determination, control-value theories, or positive psychology.. Finally, an underlying concept for this paper is that reading provides students with compelling and comprehensible input, which can enhance their proficiency and communicative skills; accordingly, studies focusing on grammatical correctness or errors were excluded.

In this research synthesis, I will first focus on reading motivation in the world language classroom, emphasizing SDT. Second, I will examine the role of emotions - such as anxiety, interest, and enjoyment - in reading, as proposed by CVT. Third, I will look for literature on positive psychology in world language contexts. Finally, I will identify gaps in the literature and suggest future directions. These sections aim to illustrate the role of reading motivation and emotions in novice-level world language classrooms. Additionally, the paper includes a table of relevant studies on reading, motivation, and emotions in the world language classroom.

Table 2

Characteristics of Studies

Identification	**Treatment**	**Subject**	**Methods**	**Context**
Motivation				
Takase, 2007	Intrinsic motivation	L1 reading motivation versus L2 reading motivation	mixed-methods	219 female high school students in Japan
Dhanapala, 2008	Intrinsic-Extrinsic Reading Motivation Model	L2 reading motivation in the WL classroom	quantitative	247 Japanese and Sri Lankan University Students
Wang & Guthrie, 2004	Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation	L1 Text comprehension and reading amount	quantitative	187 fourth-graders in the U.S. 197 fourth-graders in China
Cho et al., 2010	Reading Motivation and Engagement	English language learner reading	qualitative	Six elementary students and five teachers

		achievement in L2		
Komiyama, 2013	Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation	English language learners' reasons for reading in L2	quantitative	2,018 students from U.S. university language programs
McGoewn et al., 2012	Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation	L1 Reading achievement based on standardized testing	qualitative	1,811 students aged 7 to 13 in the U.S.
Ro, 2013	Reading motivation and anxiety	L2 reading for pleasure	mixed-methods	Case study with an adult L2 learner
Noel et al., 2000	Intrinsic motivation	L2 learners' reasons for learning	quantitative	University L2 learners
Sweet et al. 1998	Intrinsic and Extrinsic Reading	Teacher perceptions of students in L1	quantitative	68 teachers rated 274 students at an elementary

	Motivation			school in the U.S.
Schiefele, 1999	Reading Motivation and Interest	L1 Learning from a text	quantitative	Meta-analysis of 36 studies
Flowerday et al., 2004	Reading Motivation and Interest	L1 reading choice	quantitative	98 university students
McGweon, 2012	Reading motivation	L1 reading and gender identity	quantitative	98 8-11 year olds in the U.S.
Cheema, 2018	Reading Enjoyment and Motivation	L1 reading achievement	quantitative	Adolescents in 65 countries
Wang &Wang, 2025	Motivation and Engagement	Learning English as an L2 with AI	quantitative	840 University Students
Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007	L2 Motivation	Motivation Strategies for Language Learning	quantitative	387 English Teachers in Taiwan

Bass & Dewaele, 2023	L2 Writing Motivation	Writing self-efficacy and motivation	quantitative	Chinese University Students
Shahrokhi & Dehaghani, 2025	L2 Motivation	Willingness to Communicate	quantitative	356 University Students in Iran
Emotion				
Dewaele et al., 2018	L2 Enjoyment and Anxiety	Teacher and Learner variables in the WL classroom	quantitative	189 British high school students
Chou, 2021	L2 Reading emotions	L2 reading comprehension	quantitative	640 university students in Taiwan
Horwitz et al., 1986	L2 Anxiety	L2 participation in class	quantitative	225 university students
Teimouri et al., 2019	L2 Anxiety	L2 achievement	quantitative	Meta-analysis of 97 reports
Jin et al., 2012	L2 Anxiety	Positive psychology and WL classroom	quantitative	88 Chinese University Students

Shao et al., 2020	L2 positive and negative emotions	L2 performance	quantitative	550 Chinese University Students
Li et al., 2023	L2 Enjoyment, Boredom, and Anxiety	WL classroom experiences	quantitative	2002 Chinese Students
Davari et al., 2022	L2 achievement emotions	Validating AEQ for WL contexts	quantitative	748 Iranian University Students
Saito et al., 1999	L2 Reading Anxiety	L2 reading achievement and language achievement	quantitative	30 University students in the U.S.
Sparks et al., 2018	L2 Reading Anxiety	Perception of L2 skills	quantitative	266 U.S. High School Students
Beglar et al., 2012	L2 Reading Enjoyment	L2 Reading amount	quantitative	97 University students in Japan
Zoghi, 2012	L2 Reading Anxiety	L2 reading strategies	quantitative	139 High school students in the U.S.

Bahmani & Farvadin, 2017	L2 reading Anxiety	L2 text difficulty and L2 reading comprehension	quantitative	50 elementary students in the U.S.
Hamada & Takaki, 2021	L2 Reading Anxiety	L2 Reading Proficiency and Course Achievement	quantitative	150 University students in the U.S.
Elahi Shirvan & Taherian, 2018	L2 Enjoyment and Anxiety	Fluctuation of Emotions over the course of the L2 program	mixed-methods	367 University students in Iran
Li et al., 2021	L2 Boredom	L2 classroom experiences and teacher perceptions	mixed-methods	22 University Students and 11 Professors in China
Dewaele et al., 2020	L2 Anxiety and Enjoyment	L2 teacher personality and practices	quantitative	40 High School students in London
Elkhafaifi, 2005	L2 Anxiety	Listening comprehension	quantitative	233 University Students

Li, 2022	L2 Boredom and Enjoyment	Learner Variables and Teacher Variables	quantitative	868 University Students in China
Bernardo et al., 2009	L2 Academic Emotions	Students' EmotionWords	qualitative	676 University Students in the Philippines
Mleiki, 2025	L2 anxiety and enjoyment	Students' Emotions around Code-Switching	quantitative	120 Saudi EFL Students
Khajavy & Lüftenegger, 2024	L2 Pride	Language Learning	mixed-methods	71 EFL students ages 11-29

Analysis of Findings

In the above table, 17 studies were reviewed in the Motivation category. Of the 17 studies, 6 (35%) focused on K-12 education. More specifically, only 3 (17%) studies included participants in secondary school. This suggests a need for more studies using a secondary school population to study reading motivation. Also, 7 (41%) of the studies on motivation focused on the students' first languages. As previously discussed, this illustrates a gap in the literature for world language reading motivation studies. Finally, 19 (88%) studies used only quantitative methods. Overall, there is a lack of qualitative or mixed-methods research.

Twenty-three studies were reviewed in the Emotions category. 14 (60%) of the studies looked at L2 anxiety; 4 (17%) of the 12 anxiety articles also investigated enjoyment. As such, there is a concentration in the literature about L2 anxiety and a need for more research on positive emotions. 5 (21%) investigated students' emotions in K-12, and 3 (13%) examined secondary students' emotions. For this reason, there is a gap in the literature regarding L2 emotions among secondary students. 19 (82%) of the studies used only quantitative methods; this review recommends that future research use qualitative and mixed-methods approaches to further explore L2 emotions.

Ultimately, the 40 articles reviewed various aspects of reading motivation and emotions. The review showed a need for literature focusing on secondary students in both categories (motivation and emotion). Additional research employing qualitative and mixed methods was also identified for both categories. There is a lack of research about WL reading motivation in the motivation category. Finally, there is a gap in the literature about positive WL emotions.

The Role of Motivation

Motivation in world language reading is a pivotal aspect of language acquisition, drawing upon the foundational principles of compelling and comprehensible input established by Krashen (1985). Motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, has been proposed as essential to reading engagement and comprehension (Wigfield et al., 2014). Notably, there appears to be a disagreement in the literature about whether L1 intrinsic reading motivation transfers to L2 intrinsic reading motivation. Researchers such as Takase (2007) claim that L1 reading motivation is positively related to L2 reading motivation; thus, L1 motivation can be seen as a predictor. However, scholars such as Goodrich et al. (2013) argue that L1 and L2 reading motivation are

independent and do not affect each other. These differing claims highlight the importance of studying L2 reading motivation independently from L1 reading motivation.

Intrinsic reading motivation, wherein individuals engage in reading for the sheer pleasure of it and because they perceive value in the activity, is positively associated with reading comprehension in the L2 (Dhanapala, 2008). Dhanapala (2008) found that university-level English students in Japan who were intrinsically motivated to read in English showed greater gains in reading comprehension and subsequent vocabulary development, even when they spent less time reading. The researchers suggest that the intrinsic value they attached to the activity enhanced their understanding and proficiency growth. Conversely, extrinsically motivated students, driven by external factors such as grades, competition, or social interaction, showed significantly less increase in reading comprehension and vocabulary development, implying that pursuing external rewards can hinder deep engagement with texts. These findings are consistent with Wang and Guthrie's (2004) cross-national quantitative study of 384 fourth-grade students in the U.S. and China, which demonstrated that intrinsic motivation may predict both higher reading amount and stronger comprehension scores in L1 contexts.

To investigate the role that motivation plays and interrogate the differing consequences of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, researchers have developed reading motivation scales, such as the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), which gives insight into how motivation correlates with students' reading behaviors (Wang & Guthrie, 2004; Wigfield et al., 1996). Studies using these questionnaires, such as those by Cho et al. (2010), have shown that increased intrinsic reading motivation is strongly associated with heightened reading engagement, underscoring the importance of intrinsic motivation as a driving force behind effective language learning. SDT has emerged as a framework for understanding reading motivation (Komiyama,

2013; McGeown et al., 2012; Ro, 2013). This theory can help educators identify strategies to counteract the natural decline in academic motivation as students move from elementary to secondary education, emphasizing the need to create more autonomy-supportive environments to sustain students' interest in world language reading as they develop.

Komiyama (2013), in a large-scale study involving 2,018 university-level English language learners in the U.S., explored the reasons students read in their L2. She found that intrinsic goals such as enjoyment and self-improvement were more closely tied to reading comprehension and text engagement than extrinsic motives. Similarly, McGeown et al. (2012) analyzed standardized testing results for 1,811 students aged 7 to 13 and concluded that intrinsic motivation had a significant positive effect on reading performance, especially among younger students. Ro (2013) added a more personal lens through a case study of an adult L2 learner and observed that enjoyment and anxiety were often interlinked, revealing how L2 reading pleasure could be diminished by emotional barriers. These studies collectively illustrate that while intrinsic motivation supports long-term reading development, it must be nurtured carefully through pedagogical sensitivity to learners' psychological states.

Noels et al. (2000) provided further evidence for SDT's applicability by identifying that intrinsic reasons for learning an L2 were associated with stronger learning outcomes in university students. Sweet et al. (1998) examined the perceptions of 68 teachers who rated 274 U.S. elementary students and found that teachers perceived higher levels of intrinsic motivation among more academically successful readers. In a meta-analysis of 36 studies, Schiefele (1999) concluded that interest was not only a consistent predictor of reading motivation but also influenced recall and text-based learning strategies. Flowerday et al. (2004) supported this in a

university study, in which students who selected texts aligned with their interests demonstrated better comprehension, highlighting the value of personal relevance in sustaining motivation.

Gender identity and cultural background might also intersect with motivation. McGeown (2012) found gender differences in L1 reading motivation among 8- to 11-year-old children in the U.S., with girls reporting higher levels of enjoyment and engagement. Cheema (2018) conducted a large-scale validation of this trend across 65 countries. These two studies demonstrate that reading enjoyment may be significantly correlated with reading achievement across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

Emerging research is beginning to focus on digital and AI-mediated language learning environments. For example, Wang and Wang (2025) surveyed 840 university students and found that adaptive, AI-based reading tools increased both engagement and intrinsic motivation when students perceived control and relevance in the task. More recently, Bass and Dewaele (2023) explored writing motivation and self-efficacy among Chinese university students, suggesting strong links between confidence and sustained motivation, even when transitioning between reading and writing tasks. Shahrokhi and Dehaghani (2025) argued that motivation also predicts L2 learners' willingness to communicate, suggesting that fostering intrinsic motivation in reading may have broader relationships with language production and classroom engagement.

Reading Motivation Across Development

Reading motivation tends to change significantly across the lifespan, influenced by developmental stages, social factors, and academic demands. As shown in the chart, students' motivation to read is generally high during early childhood and elementary school, when intrinsic factors such as curiosity and enjoyment play a central role. At this stage, young readers are often motivated by the pleasure of reading itself, positive reinforcement from teachers and

parents, and an eagerness to explore new stories and ideas (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997; Baker & Scher, 2002). However, as students transition to middle childhood and adolescence, a notable decline in intrinsic reading motivation occurs, particularly around the middle school years. Peer influence, academic pressures, and a shift toward extrinsic rewards such as grades begin to shape students' engagement with reading (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Anderman et al., 2008).

During adolescence and high school, this decline continues, with many students reading more for extrinsic reasons - such as academic achievement and future career goals - rather than for pleasure or personal interest. By the time students reach young adulthood, reading motivation becomes more specialized, often aligning with academic or vocational interests (Schiefele et al., 2012). This trend suggests that as students age, reading becomes increasingly tied to external goals, and motivation is often driven by the perceived relevance of the material to their future aspirations. In adulthood, reading motivation varies widely depending on personal interests and career needs, with a greater focus on lifelong learning (Guthrie et al., 2004). Understanding these shifts in motivation is crucial for educators, especially in world language classrooms, as motivation during the middle school years plays a pivotal role in students' engagement and success with reading in a second language.

This developmental pattern highlights the importance of supporting intrinsic motivation for reading during critical periods, especially in middle school. As seen in Table 3, middle school students experience a significant drop in motivation, which can negatively relate to their reading comprehension and engagement, particularly in WL contexts. Addressing this gap through motivational strategies and fostering a supportive classroom environment may help counteract the decline and encourage sustained reading interest.

Table 3

Reading Motivation Across Development

Age Group	Developmental Stage	Characteristics of Reading Motivation	Key Studies
Early Childhood (3-6)	Pre-literacy and Early Reading	High intrinsic motivation; enjoyment of reading activities; motivation driven by curiosity and teacher praise.	Wigfield & Guthrie (1997); Baker & Scher (2002)
Elementary (6-10)	Developing Reading Skills (Grades 1-5)	Generally high intrinsic motivation; reading for pleasure; motivation influenced by parental involvement and school environment.	Eccles & Wigfield (2002); Guthrie & Davis (2003)
Middle Childhood (10-12)	Transition to More Complex Reading (Grades 5-6)	Motivation declines; peer influence increases; the importance of success	Eccles & Wigfield (2002); Anderman et al. (2008)

		in school subjects increases.	
Early Adolescence (12-14)	Developing Identity and Interests (Middle School)	There is a significant decline in intrinsic motivation for reading, particularly among boys, as their focus shifts toward extrinsic rewards such as grades.	Unrau & Schlackman (2006); Becker et al. (2010)
Adolescence (14-18)	Academic and Social Pressures (High School)	Further decline in reading motivation; extrinsic motivators (grades, future aspirations); reading for information rather than pleasure.	Guthrie et al. (2007); Schiefele et al. (2012)
Young Adults (18-24)	College and Vocational Training	Motivation depends on alignment with academic/career goals, as well as	Schraw & Bruning (1999); Morgan & Fuchs (2007)

		increased interest in specialized, academic, or career-related reading.	
Adulthood (25+)	Lifelong Learning	Motivation is tied to career development, personal interest, and lifelong learning goals; it varies widely depending on personal and professional needs.	Schiefele et al. (2012); Guthrie et al. (2004)

Self-determination theory

This shift in reading motivation across the lifespan underscores the importance of understanding the underlying psychological factors that drive student engagement. To further explore these motivational dynamics, this section will examine SDT. SDT focuses on human motivation and distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It posits that individuals have three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy involves a sense of choice, with individuals having a voice in their actions. Competence is the desire to feel adequate and capable, achieved through

mastery and accomplishment. Relatedness pertains to the need for social connections and positive relationships.

The literature supports the idea that SDT is applicable in the WL classroom and that students who experience intrinsic motivation may be more likely to consider studying languages (Noel et al., 2000; Davis & Bowles, 2018). Noels et al. (2000), using a quantitative survey of university students, found that intrinsic reasons for learning a second language were associated with greater persistence, enjoyment, and success in language learning. However, SDT also emphasizes a motivational continuum ranging from extrinsic to intrinsic, with extrinsic motivation driven by external rewards, such as grades or praise. Research indicates that intrinsic motivation, in which students engage because of personal interest and satisfaction, might lead to deeper learning and a longer-lasting commitment to language acquisition (Anjomoshi & Sadighi, 2015). This was similarly supported by Komiyama (2013), who examined 2,018 university students in U.S. language programs and found that students motivated by enjoyment or personal interest in English reading achieved higher comprehension outcomes than those with performance- or reward-driven goals.

Autonomy

Within the autonomy framework, researchers have explored interest and choice in WL reading. Reading interest refers to a person's consistent inclination towards a particular domain (Alexander & Murphy, 1998). Readers with a high level of interest usually experience involvement, stimulation, or enjoyment while reading and have background knowledge in the domain of their interest (Renninger, 2000). Studies have suggested that interest correlates with deep processing of individual texts, higher reading grades for elementary school students, and knowledge and strategies of college students (Alexander & Murphy, 1998; Sweet et al., 1998;

Schiefele, 1999).

Research has also shown that children may remember passages more accurately when they are interested in the topic (Renninger, 1992). Research has even posited that students choose texts that interest them when they can select their books (Flowerday et al., 2004). Flowerday et al. (2004) reported that when 98 university students were allowed to choose their reading materials, they showed increased motivation and better comprehension outcomes. The sense of choice may foster greater ownership of their language-learning journey, promote autonomy in decision-making, and create a more engaging, personally relevant reading experience. Moreover, when students are given structure, such as clear guidelines or well-organized choices, it enhances their feelings of autonomy while maintaining a sense of competence (Reeve, 2006). This structured autonomy can help students internalize extrinsic motivations, moving them along the motivation scale toward more intrinsic forms of motivation.

Competence

In the realm of competence, SDT emphasizes the importance of building students' confidence and proficiency in reading (McGeown, 2023). Language educators might differentiate reading tasks to match students' skill levels and scaffold more complex texts as their competence grows. By providing opportunities for success and acknowledging progress, educators empower students with the competence needed for effective language acquisition through reading. As discussed above, student choice in reading can leverage autonomy and make reading more enjoyable; students who enjoy reading tend to show more reading confidence and higher reading achievement (Cheema, 2018). In an analysis of PISA data from adolescents in 65 countries, Cheema (2018) found that reading enjoyment was among the most consistent predictors of high reading achievement globally. The connection between autonomy and

competence is evident in these studies, illustrating that students feel more empowered to make their own choices when they feel competent.

Students may also feel more confident when they have a sense of autonomy (Ryan & Powelson, 1991). However, it is essential to note that extrinsic rewards can undermine intrinsic motivation by shifting focus from the joy of reading to the pursuit of external validation (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). Creating an environment where competence is built through meaningful tasks rather than external rewards is critical to fostering sustained intrinsic motivation. In brief, the basic psychological needs work together to build intrinsic motivation, as elaborated on in the context of relatedness. McGeown et al. (2012) also found that, among 1,811 U.S. students aged 7 to 13, intrinsic reading motivation significantly predicted performance on standardized literacy assessments.

Relatedness

The principle of relatedness highlights the importance of connecting the content and students' personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, and interests. By selecting reading materials that resonate with students' sense of relatedness, language educators might bridge the text and their lived experiences and strengthen intrinsic motivation (Bishop, 1990). Students can experience relatedness to peers in the classroom and even to characters in a text. As such, cultural relevance also plays a crucial role in motivating world language readers, as culturally relevant texts can foster greater interest, engagement, and a personal sense of significance (Wood & Jocius, 2013). Research has also argued that creating engaging, challenging, collaborative reading environments significantly enhances intrinsic motivation. For instance, in a study conducted with 4th-grade English language learners, Cho et al. (2018) found that collaborative,

interactive environments promoted higher levels of intrinsic motivation. Reciprocally, the students improved their reading skills and continued to experience intrinsic motivation.

Relatedness, especially when combined with structure that supports autonomy and competence, helps students feel emotionally connected to their learning, further facilitating movement along the SDT motivational continuum from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. The basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are reciprocally supportive; thus, when one is leveraged, all could be boosted (Reeve, 2002). Sweet et al. (1998), based on teacher ratings of 274 elementary students in the U.S., found that those who demonstrated a stronger personal connection to texts were also more likely to show intrinsic motivation and improved academic performance.

The relationship between secondary WL classrooms and reading, as well as SDT, may have significant implications for language acquisition. Emphasizing relatedness, competence, and autonomy can foster an intrinsically motivating and enjoyable reading experience. However, it is essential to recognize that moving students along the motivation scale from extrinsic to intrinsic is often challenging, requiring intentional teaching practices that balance structure, autonomy, and support. Even then, teachers cannot make their students be motivated (Brandt, 1995). It is important to continue exploring this field of study to understand its implications for language education. Concerning motivation, investigating emotions is paramount to discussing reading in novice-level WL classrooms.

The Role of Emotions

The position of emotion in world language reading is critical to understanding how students engage with texts. Emotions and effects associated with reading are pivotal in shaping the reading experience, affecting motivation and comprehension. To comprehensively examine

the role of emotion in world language reading, it is essential first to define the terms. Emotions are complex psychological states involving subjective experience, physiological responses, and expressive behaviors (Dewaele et al., 2018). In the realm of language learning and reading, the literature has acknowledged that both positive and negative emotions can influence reading behaviors and outcomes (Chou, 2021). However, much of the research in the area has focused on emotions in the general WL classroom experience, rather than on reading. This trend is reflected in studies like Bernardo et al. (2009), who examined emotion-related vocabulary and found that emotional experiences were often described in broad academic contexts rather than explicitly tied to reading.

As previously noted, Krashen (1985) recognized the role of the affective filter, namely anxiety, in language acquisition. As such, world language anxiety is a prominent negative emotion in WL education research. Horwitz et al. (1986) identified world language anxiety as a significant factor affecting language learners, causing discomfort and apprehension in language-related activities. The scholars coined the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety scale, which has become popular in WL education research. Teimouri et al. (2019) suggest that world language anxiety can harm language classroom achievement, highlighting the importance of addressing and mitigating anxiety in language classrooms. Support for this is found in Elkhafaifi (2005), who demonstrated that anxiety significantly interfered with Arabic language learners' listening comprehension, suggesting that skill-specific anxiety is a critical area of concern.

On the contrary, there has been a paradigm shift towards investigating and emphasizing positive emotions in WL education (Jin et al., 2021). The significance of this development is particularly pronounced and recognized in the area of WL reading instruction. Reading plays a pivotal role in language development, and an assets-based approach can vastly improve the

reading experience (MacIntyre, 2021). By recognizing and building on students' emotional strengths, educators can create a more supportive and encouraging atmosphere for language learners. This approach mitigates anxiety and enhances the overall enjoyment of reading, fostering a positive emotional connection to language acquisition (MacIntyre, 2021). As such, a more in-depth exploration of emotions in WL reading instruction is necessary: CVT could be a helpful framework for this exploration (Pekrun, 2006).

Control-Value Theory

The Control-Value Theory of Achievement Emotions, developed by Pekrun in 2006, provides a framework for understanding how emotions are intertwined with learning, which researchers and teachers can utilize in reading in a second language (world language). This theory claims that perceived control and perceived value are closely tied with prospective and introspective emotions (Pekrun, 2006). The relationships among perceived control, perceived value, prospective outcome, and retrospective outcome significantly influence the emotions individuals experience. Perceived control refers to the extent to which individuals believe they can affect the result of a situation. High levels of perceived control are often associated with positive emotions such as joy, pride, and hope. Similarly, perceived value reflects the importance individuals assign to a task or activity, which is crucial in shaping their motivation and effort. When the perceived value is high, it can also lead to feelings of joy, pride, and hope (Harley et al., 2019). Recent work by Khajavy and Lüftenegger (2024) supports this framework. The researchers found that L2 learners who experienced pride often had higher self-perceived value in their language tasks.

On the other hand, prospective outcome pertains to the anticipated results of an action, which can shape emotional responses based on expectations. Positive expectations can evoke

hope and joy, while negative anticipations may lead to anxiety. Additionally, a retrospective outcome involves reflecting on past experiences and their outcomes, which can significantly affect current emotional states. Positive reflections can lead to pride, whereas negative reflections may trigger feelings of shame, sadness, or anger. Furthermore, individuals may experience boredom when they perceive low levels of both control and value in a task, leading to disengagement. In world language reading, this theory could potentially offer insights into how students' emotions are influenced by their perceptions of their ability to control and understand the material and the value they ascribe to the reading task. Li (2022) provides further potential evidence for CVT's relevance by showing that both boredom and enjoyment in L2 classrooms were strongly influenced by learners' perceived task value and their teacher's classroom management.

The application of the CVT to WL instruction is an emerging area of research, with the work of scholars such as Shao et al. (2019, 2020) indicating growing interest in understanding how this theory can inform classroom practices. The theory suggests that fostering positive emotions, such as enjoyment, through engaging and meaningful language experiences can enhance students' motivation and perception of task value, subsequently improving language learning outcomes. Enjoyment is significant in WL education, as highlighted by Li et al. (2023). In parallel, when students enjoy reading, it positively influences their emotions and, in turn, their motivation to engage with world language texts (Chou, 2021). Creating enjoyable learning environments and offering culturally and personally relevant materials can lead to more positive emotional experiences and greater motivation. This link between teacher practices and emotion is also emphasized by Dewaele et al. (2020), who found that teacher personality and instructional style were significant predictors of both enjoyment and anxiety among high school WL students.

The development of tools such as the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire-Foreign Language Class (AEQ-FLC) by Davari et al. (2022) is crucial for assessing and understanding students' emotional experiences in foreign language learning settings. This questionnaire is adapted from the AEQ (Pekrun et al., 2011), which evaluates emotions using the CVT. This questionnaire allows researchers to explore the various emotions students may experience while reading in a world language. Furthermore, Chou (2021) underscores the importance of positive emotions in reading and their connection to language proficiency. Positive emotions, such as curiosity and fascination, not only enhance the reading experience but also improve language learning outcomes. When students experience positive emotions while reading in a world language, it bolsters their motivation to read more and, as a result, progresses their language proficiency. However, most world language research has focused on anxiety.

Negative Emotions

Reading anxiety in a second language refers to the emotional and psychological distress individuals experience when reading in a world language (Saito et al., 1999). This anxiety often stems from fears of making mistakes, comprehension challenges, or judgment, which can hinder successful language learning and acquisition (Sparks et al., 2018). Studies have suggested that learners who experience high anxiety levels while reading in a second language often struggle to comprehend and engage with the text effectively (Beglar et al., 2012; Kuru-Gonen, 2007). Anxiety increases cognitive load, burdening working memory during task performance (Chen & Chong, 2009). Anxiety-induced cognitive load hampers reading comprehension, limiting the ability to fully engage with the text and appreciate its cultural and literary elements (Teimouri et al., 2019). Expanding on this, Mleiki (2025) found that Saudi EFL learners often experienced a

mix of anxiety and enjoyment while reading, showing that emotional responses are complex and may co-exist within single reading activities.

The relationship with reading anxiety in the WL classroom extends beyond comprehension difficulties. Learners who experience anxiety may also engage in avoidance behaviors, such as refraining from reading activities or skipping over complex texts altogether (Dykstra et al., 2023). Avoiding reading tasks may further reinforce learners' anxiety, leading to a cycle of underachievement and continued reading challenges. Unsurprisingly, when students engage in reading avoidance, they tend to read less frequently and a more limited variety of texts, which could impede their ability to find texts or genres that are interesting to them (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). WL researchers and educators must be able to identify when students are experiencing reading anxiety to understand the phenomenon further.

Positive Emotions

Positive psychology is gaining popularity in WL education and SLA as it focuses on strengths and positive effects (Jin et al., 2021). It focuses on positive interventions and emotions. Anxiety is a significant concern for WL teachers and researchers as it may affect acquisition (Krashen, 1985). Previously, the approach to language anxiety was to focus on reducing its symptoms, such as negative arousal, distracting thoughts, and negative beliefs (Horwitz et al., 1986). Recently, researchers have started exploring strengths that could apply to SLA. A study by MacIntyre et al. (2015) discusses a strengths-based approach to dealing with anxiety in language learning. Language anxiety is a widely studied emotion in SLA and has many sources and consequences that can seriously disrupt learning and communication. Complementing this perspective, Mleiki (2025) found that L2 learners often reported not only anxiety but also enjoyment, suggesting that positive and negative emotions may co-occur and interact rather than

exist in isolation. This complexity reinforces the value of a strengths-based approach that includes managing anxiety while also amplifying positive experiences.

A shift toward centering on positive emotions has led to the development of scales such as the Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) scale. The FLE scale measures students' positive emotional experiences during foreign language learning (Dewaele et al., 2020). Unlike FLA, which often centers on a negative emotion, the FLE scale captures a positive feeling. Additional studies have employed the FLE scale to explore the dynamics of positive emotions in language classrooms (Elahi Shirvan et al., 2021; Elahi Shirvan & Taherian, 2021; Jin & Zhang, 2021). Research comparing FLE and FLA about teacher practices claims that FLA is less influenced by teacher practices and instructional methods than FLE (Dewaele et al., 2018). As such, enjoyment and anxiety are argued to be two separate constructs with differing effects on learning (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). This emphasizes promoting positive emotional experiences, such as enjoyment, to optimize language-learning environments.

This distinction is echoed in Dewaele et al. (2020), who suggested that while teacher practices might have had a relatively modest potential effect on learners' anxiety, they played a significant role in shaping enjoyment. Their study reinforces the idea that enjoyment is not merely the absence of anxiety but a distinct emotional experience that might be created through specific instructional strategies. Li (2022) adds to this body of work by examining how boredom and enjoyment co-exist in L2 classrooms, concluding that high enjoyment levels were associated with learner autonomy, task variety, and perceived instructional quality. These findings suggest that fostering positive emotions is not only possible but dependent on thoughtful pedagogical design and a responsive classroom environment. Additionally, Khajavy and Lüftenegger (2024) contributed to this growing focus on positive academic emotions by identifying L2 pride as a

meaningful construct in motivation and identity development. Their mixed-methods study with learners aged 11–29 revealed that feelings of pride were most often linked to perceived improvement and teacher recognition.

The need for researchers to delve into and expand investigations of CVT within WL reading instruction is underscored by the need to deepen our understanding of the motivational and emotional intricacies of language learning. A deeper exploration of CVT can offer valuable insights into perceived control and value dynamics in the context of reading activities (Shao et al., 2019). Researchers who conduct more comprehensive studies can reveal subtle factors that shape students' experiences in world language reading tasks. These studies could delve into the complex interplay between learners' perceived control over their reading environment, their subjective value of language proficiency, and their subsequent relationship to their overall language development (Swain, 2013).

Moreover, a more robust body of research on CVT in WL reading instruction could inform evidence-based pedagogy (Shao et al., 2019, 2020). Learning how emotional factors influence language learning can guide the development of targeted strategies and interventions that resonate with learners' needs. As researchers uncover patterns and dynamics through empirical studies, they help create pedagogical frameworks that empower educators to implement effective, tailored approaches. This, in turn, can lead to the cultivation of a more dynamic learning environment. Thus, investing in extended research endeavors on CVT is not only a scholarly pursuit but also a practical endeavor that holds the promise of elevating the quality of language instruction and positively relating to the experiences of language learners.

The Motivation and Emotion Connection

Motivation and emotion are closely related and difficult to separate (Lazarus, 2000). One perspective suggests that motivation catalyzes emotional experiences. When individuals are motivated to pursue a particular goal or outcome, their emotional responses can be heightened. For example, anticipating achieving a long-desired objective may evoke positive emotions such as joy or excitement. Conversely, obstacles or setbacks in pursuing a goal may trigger negative emotions like frustration or disappointment. In this way, motivation acts as a dynamic force that shapes the emotional landscape, influencing the valence and intensity of one's emotional experiences.

Additionally, emotions can serve as potent motivators (Pessoa, 2009). Emotional reactions often guide decision-making processes and can influence the direction of future behavior. For instance, the fear of failure may motivate an individual to work harder to avoid negative outcomes. Positive emotions, such as the satisfaction derived from accomplishing a task, can be reinforcing factors, promoting continued effort towards similar goals (Morrish et al., 2018). Understanding the intricate connection between motivation and emotion provides valuable insights into the complexities of human behavior. It contributes to developing effective strategies for promoting well-being and goal attainment.

Integrating SDT and CVT principles into WL reading instruction could lead to greater intrinsic motivation and autonomy, while acknowledging the influence of perceived control and value in the language-learning process. When learners experience a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their language learning pursuits, they are more likely to exhibit intrinsic motivation and positive emotions. Conversely, external pressures, lack of autonomy, or feelings of inadequacy may lead to negative emotions, hindering motivation. The emotional experiences associated with language learning, whether positive or negative, can create a

feedback loop that influences motivation, as learners' emotional states shape their cognitive and behavioral engagement with the language.

Understanding the relationship between motivation and emotions is paramount for designing effective language-teaching strategies. By fostering positive emotional experiences and cultivating intrinsic motivation, language educators can create a more supportive and enriching learning environment that enhances learners' overall language acquisition experiences (Rahimi & Bigdeli, 2014). Educators might be able to promote autonomy and relatedness by aligning reading tasks with students' interests, cultural backgrounds, and proficiency levels (Flowerday et al., 204). Simultaneously, educators can integrate the emphasis on the perceived value of language proficiency into instructional strategies, as highlighted by CVT.

Providing students with personally relevant reading materials and articulating the real-world applications of language skills could enhance the perceived value of the reading activities (West et al., 1993). Students might have the opportunity to experience a sense of ownership over their learning, viewing language acquisition as a meaningful and personally relevant endeavor. Educators who incorporate SDT and CVT principles into their instructional practices may foster an environment in which students develop the necessary language skills while cultivating a lifelong love of reading in a WL context. Ultimately, the connection between these theories could transform language instruction, making it more student-centered, motivating, and conducive to comprehensive language development.

SDT and CVT Connections

I argue that SDT and CVT can be studied together, as they share many complementary links; understanding one could lead to a deeper understanding of the other and, therefore, a more profound knowledge of students' experiences. The relationship between SDT and CVT can be

illustrated through their shared components, particularly concerning the three basic psychological needs outlined in SDT: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. *Autonomy* refers to the need for individuals to feel in control of their actions. In CVT, this concept is closely linked to perceived control: greater autonomy leads to greater *perceived control* over outcomes, thereby enhancing motivation. Similarly, *competence* represents the need to feel effective in one's activities. In CVT, increased competence enhances the *perceived value* of tasks, motivating individuals to engage more fully with those activities. Lastly, *relatedness* pertains to the need for social connections and influences emotional regulation. Strong relationships provide support that can help individuals better manage their emotional responses.

Emotion regulation is another critical aspect. In SDT, effective emotion regulation involves managing emotions in ways that align with personal values and goals, while in CVT, it integrates with both *prospective* and *retrospective outcomes*. Effective emotion regulation can positively influence anticipated emotional responses and reflections on past experiences. Perceived control is essential for fulfilling the need for autonomy, as individuals who feel in control are more likely to be motivated. In CVT, *perceived control* also affects the evaluation of *outcomes*, shaping emotional responses in response to perceived success or failure.

Perceived value is closely linked to the fulfillment of competence and relatedness. When individuals find value in tasks, their motivation tends to increase. This concept is echoed in CVT, where *perceived value* drives engagement and influences emotional responses based on the importance assigned to specific tasks. The *prospective outcome,* or anticipated success, is vital in enhancing motivation and fostering positive emotional states such as hope and joy. In CVT, this aspect affects how individuals approach tasks and manage their emotional responses in response to expected outcomes. Lastly, the *retrospective outcome* involves reflecting on past experiences,

which can enhance feelings of competence and relatedness, thereby influencing future motivation. In CVT, this reflection evaluates past emotional responses, shaping future engagement based on previous outcomes. Together, these components highlight the intricate interplay between SDT and CVT in understanding motivation, emotion, and engagement in various contexts.

Positive Psychology

An emerging avenue for further theoretical integration lies in the lens of positive psychology, which provides a framework for examining SDT and CVT together. The two theories are complementary perspectives on human flourishing. Positive psychology shifts focus from remediating deficits (e.g., reducing anxiety) to cultivating strengths (e.g., enjoyment, resilience, curiosity), aligning with both SDT's emphasis on nurturing basic psychological needs and CVT's focus on the emotional outcomes of achievement contexts. When considered through this strengths-based lens, the motivational "why" of SDT and the emotional "how" of CVT may begin to converge. Positive psychology encourages educators and researchers to look not only at the presence of motivation or emotion but at their quality, direction, and potential for growth over time.

In practical terms, positive psychology also urges a move beyond reactive interventions toward the proactive design of curriculum, classroom climates, and relationships that align with students' motivational needs and emotional trajectories. In doing so, it offers a research field that encourages the operationalization of SDT and CVT in tandem. For example, rather than treating perceived control and autonomy as parallel variables, scholars might explore how they co-activate in learners during moments of reading success or struggle. Similarly, pride or hope could be examined in relation to how well learners feel their need for competence is being met.

Thus, positive psychology becomes more than a thematic link between SDT and CVT; it offers a methodological invitation to study them together, yielding new insights into how motivation and emotion co-construct world language reading experiences. Table 4 illustrates my argument for their relationship.

Table 4

Self-Determination Theory, Control Value Theory, and Positive Psychology Relationships

Component	**Self-Determination Theory (SDT)**	**Control-Value Theory (CVT)**	**Positive Psychology**
Basic Needs	1. *Autonomy*: Need to feel in control. 2. *Competence*: Need to feel effective. 3. *Relatedness*: Need to feel connected.	Links to *perceived contro*l (autonomy) and *perceived value* (competence). Emotions arise from *achievement appraisals*.	Supports all three needs as pathways to well-being and flourishing (Ryan & Deci, 2000).
Perceived Control	Supports *autonomy*: When individuals feel control over learning, motivation increases.	High perceived control enhances *activating emotion*s (e.g., hope); low control fosters *deactivating emotions* (e.g., hopelessness).	Viewed as essential for personal agency and growth mindset development.

Perceived Value	Related to *competence* and *relatedness*: Value is enhanced when individuals feel capable and socially supported.	High *value* linked to *pride, joy*; low *value* associated with *boredom*.	Value enhances meaning and engagement.
Prospective Outcome	Anticipated satisfaction of needs enhances *intrinsic motivation.*	Expectation of success leads to *hope* and *enjoyment.*	Central to cultivating *hope*, *optimism*, and *curiosity*.
Retrospective Outcome	Reflection on past *autonomy* and success strengthens motivation and *internalized regulation.*	Success reflection brings *pride*; failure reflection can lead to *shame*.	Encourages reflective practices to build self-awareness and gratitude.
Activating Emotions	Typically related to growth-oriented motivation when aligned with personal values.	Positive and negative emotions can *activate* and help maintain effort.	Encourages the activation of growth-related emotions as part of the '*broaden and build*' theory.

Deactivating Emotions	Linked to controlled motivation when needs are thwarted or unsupported.	Positive and negative emotions can be *deactivating*, leading to procrastination or disengagement.	Seeks to minimize deactivating emotions by fostering engagement and *flow*.
Emotion Regulation Types	*Integrative Regulation* (internalized values); *Controlled Regulation* (external pressures).	Anticipated and reflected emotions influence ongoing emotion regulation strategies.	Fosters integrative strategies like *mindfulness, gratitude,* and *emotional intelligence.*

Gaps in the Literature and Implications

A discernible gap persists in the literature regarding the emotional and motivational aspects of WL reading, particularly in middle school classrooms and among novice-level language learners. Middle school classrooms are important in students' cognitive and emotional development, necessitating focused research on how emotions and motivation intertwine in this unique context (Oelsner et al., 2011). Additionally, novice-level language learners constitute an underexplored population whose early experiences can significantly influence their long-term language learning trajectories (Oga-Badlwin & Fryer, 2018). Understanding the intricate dynamics of emotions and motivation in these educational settings is imperative, as positive early WL experiences lay the groundwork for sustained engagement and proficiency (Guz & Tetiurka, 2016). Bridging this research gap is essential for enhancing motivation and creating a supportive foundation for continued language acquisition.

Reading motivation research has focused chiefly on the L1; studies that have examined differences between L1 and world language reading motivation have yielded mixed results. While the interest in studying emotions in WL classrooms is growing, there remains a need for more comprehensive research in this area. Exploring students' emotional experiences, both positive and negative, can offer valuable insights into how emotions relate to the reading process and language acquisition, particularly for novice learners. Integration of these aspects, including self-determination and control-value theories, is crucial to a holistic understanding of the language-learning process. Although positive psychology research has begun to fill this gap, further research is needed to explore how motivational and emotional factors interact and influence world language reading experiences, particularly among early language learners (Alrabai, 2022).

There is also a need for varying types of research methods. The majority of the literature also uses quantitative research methods. More qualitative research is warranted to delve deeper into students' experiences and perspectives (Mirhosseini, 2020; Swain, 2013). Qualitative studies can provide rich, in-depth descriptions of students' emotions, motivations, and reading practices, shedding light on the complex dynamics in the world language classroom. Furthermore, action research is essential for identifying and implementing practical, effective strategies that enhance intrinsic motivation and foster positive achievement emotions among language learners. Educators and researchers could collaboratively design and evaluate interventions through action research, ultimately informing evidence-based practices that optimize reading motivation and emotional experiences for novice world language learners.

Understanding the significance of intrinsic motivation and positive emotions, and their connection in shaping engaging world-language learning experiences, is crucial. Future research

should employ qualitative methods, action research, and integrated exploration of motivation and emotions to address these gaps. These studies will help develop evidence-based teaching practices that could enhance reading motivation and emotional experiences for new second language learners, thereby creating more inclusive and effective language education environments.

Conclusion and Chapter Summary

Reading is a cornerstone in language acquisition and is important in fostering linguistic competence and overall language proficiency (Krashen, 2013). Reading involves decoding skills, understanding vocabulary, and comprehending textual meaning (Shanahan, 2005). It exposes language learners to comprehensible input, vocabulary, grammatical structures, and cultural contexts. Learners engage with authentic language resources through reading, contributing to a deeper understanding of the target language (Berardo, 2006). Moreover, reading facilitates the development of critical thinking skills as learners analyze and interpret information within the linguistic context (Aloqaili, 2012). The act of reading not only enhances overall language comprehension but also language production, making it a crucial component of language acquisition.

This literature review calls for researchers to investigate the relationship between WL reading instruction, SDT, and CVT (Shao et al., 2019; Pekrun, 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2000). By exploring these concepts, we can expand our understanding beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries and use various research methods to develop a more refined, practical approach to teaching WLs. The review focuses explicitly on novice-level and middle school settings, where exploring reading motivation and emotions reveals a complex landscape ripe for further investigation. While SDT and the CVT of achievement emotions offer valuable frameworks for

understanding these constructs, there remains a significant gap in research, particularly concerning novice language learners' motivational and emotional experiences.

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature on reading comprehension in general and in world language (WL) contexts, with a particular focus on motivation, emotion, and positive psychology. I examined how these affective factors, along with second-language acquisition theories and the role of comprehensible input, may shape students' reading experiences in K-12 WL classrooms. By exploring how motivation and emotion contribute to reading comprehension, I have laid the groundwork for understanding how these elements influence students' success in the middle school Spanish classroom.

This literature review also frames my research questions, which investigate how students emotionally and motivationally experience reading in a middle school Spanish classroom. In the next chapter, I will outline the research methods to explore these questions, including data collection techniques and the analysis approach.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

After reviewing the literature on middle-school Spanish students' reading motivation and emotion, it is apparent that research in this area is limited, as most studies have focused on older or younger students or students in first-language classrooms. Additionally, much of the research has been quantitative, with very little research exploring the qualitative emotional and motivational experiences of middle school students. These areas leave a gap that may be filled, assisting world language teachers in improving their practice. This study seeks to bridge the considerable gap in the current literature by adopting a unique approach that delves deeper into the intricacies of emotions and motivation within a secondary Spanish 1 setting.

Restatement of Research Questions

I propose a mixed-methods design focused on middle school and novice-level language learners, acknowledging the unique challenges and developmental aspects inherent to this stage of education. By focusing on this specific population, I aim to untangle (or potentially further tangle) the intricacies of emotional and motivational experiences in world language reading, providing tailored insights pertinent to the early stages of language acquisition and learning. I will investigate the following research questions:

1. In what ways might novice-level, middle-school Spanish students emotionally experience reading in class?
2. In what ways might novice-level, middle-school Spanish students perceive their sense of autonomy, relatedness, and competence when reading in class?

3. In what ways might the emotional and motivational feelings of novice-level, middle-school Spanish students correlate with their world language reading comprehension?

Theoretical Framework

This study's theoretical framework draws on self-determination theory (SDT) and control-value theory (CVT) to explore the emotional and motivational experiences of novice-level middle school Spanish students during world language reading comprehension (Pekrun, 2006; Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT, a leading figure in motivation research, underscores the importance of fulfilling basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In the language-learning context, autonomy reflects students' desire for control over their learning, competence pertains to their need for proficiency in world-language reading, and relatedness underscores the importance of social connections (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Incorporating principles from positive psychology, SDT highlights how fostering these psychological needs can lead to higher levels of intrinsic motivation and emotional well-being, which are crucial for enhancing learning outcomes (Seligman, 2011).

Concurrent with SDT, CVT, rooted in achievement motivation, delves into how students might regulate their learning behaviors based on the perceived value and controllability of tasks. Task value, encompassing factors such as relevance and interest, along with perceived control over the learning process, becomes pivotal in shaping students' motivational and emotional responses (Pekrun, 2006). Positive psychology intersects with CVT by promoting positive emotions and enhancing students' perceptions of task value and control (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). Students might engage more deeply with reading tasks by cultivating emotions such as enjoyment and pride, which, in turn, foster persistence and comprehension success.

Synthesizing SDT's emphasis on fulfilling basic psychological needs and CVT's exploration of task value and perceived control, the framework provides a comprehensive lens for examining the complex interplay between psychological factors and the task-specific characteristics of world language reading comprehension. The integration of positive psychology principles underscores the importance of fostering emotional resilience and intrinsic motivation in educational settings (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014), positioning emotional and motivational well-being as critical to academic success. By intertwining these theories, the framework establishes a robust foundation that enables an exploration of students' multifaceted experiences. This approach thoroughly explains how autonomy, competence, relatedness, task value, and perceived control collectively shape the emotional and motivational dimensions of novice-level middle school Spanish students engaged in world language reading activities.

Epistemology

In this study, my epistemological approach is grounded in constructivism and pragmatism, two complementary perspectives that shape how knowledge is understood and applied. Constructivism posits that knowledge is not passively received but actively constructed by individuals through their interactions with the world (Piaget, 1970). In the context of this research, students' experiences with world language reading comprehension are understood as unique, dynamic processes shaped by their backgrounds, emotions, and motivations. This aligns with the study’s focus on how novice-level middle school Spanish learners construct meaning during reading tasks, depending on their emotional and motivational states.

Pragmatism emphasizes the practical consequences of ideas and the importance of applying knowledge to real-world contexts (Dewey, 1938). From this perspective, the study explores theoretical concepts such as self-determination theory and control-value theory and

applies these insights to enhance educational practices. Pragmatism allows for a flexible, outcome-focused approach that aligns the study's findings with practical interventions in world language classrooms. This ensures that the knowledge gained is actionable and beneficial for teachers and students. Combining constructivist and pragmatist epistemologies enables this research to bridge theoretical exploration with practical implications, fostering a holistic understanding of how emotional and motivational factors influence world language reading comprehension among middle school learners.

Mixed-Methods

This research investigates the emotional and motivational experiences of novice-level middle school Spanish 1 students during world language reading comprehension. The study will employ a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods to comprehensively address the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This approach allows the collection of quantitative measures to assess emotions and motivation alongside qualitative data that captures students' experiences in greater depth (Jang et al., 2014). Including qualitative and quantitative data enables a more holistic understanding, capturing the richness of individual narratives alongside the statistical patterns that may emerge (Norris et al., 2015).

While quantitative measures provide statistical trends, they may lack the depth to fully understand the intricate emotional and motivational processes (Norris et al., 2015).
In contrast, qualitative data obtained through open-ended interviews offers in-depth insights into students' experiences. The interviews will shed light on subtle aspects that might not be fully captured by quantitative measures alone (Miles & Huberman, 1984). This method allows participants to express their emotions, perceptions of autonomy, relatedness, and competence, providing a deeper context for the quantitative findings.

The study will employ a multistage, explanatory sequential design to strengthen the research framework. The multistage method provides a structured approach to data collection, enabling a step-by-step examination of both quantitative and qualitative phases (Creswell, 2014). In the explanatory sequential design, quantitative data are collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data collection that explains or elaborates on the quantitative results. This design is particularly beneficial for answering the research questions. It allows the quantitative findings to guide the qualitative inquiry, ensuring that the qualitative data addresses specific patterns and trends observed in the quantitative phase (Ivankova et al., 2006).

Furthermore, the mixed-methods design is instrumental in addressing potential quantitative gaps. By combining the strengths of both methods, the study achieves a more robust dynamic understanding of the emotional and motivational dynamics during world language reading. In this context, qualitative data serves as a bridge, filling gaps by capturing the complex, context-specific aspects of students' experiences. It addresses potential limitations associated with relying solely on one method. This methodological triangulation contributes to the overall validity and reliability of the study, ensuring a more comprehensive and contextually grounded exploration of the research questions (Roever & Phakiti, 2017). The participant selection, the measures chosen, the data collection procedures, and the explanations of the choices are outlined below.

Research Design

The research design for this study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses to explore the complex relationships among emotion, motivation, and reading comprehension among novice-level middle school Spanish students. Mixed-methods research, which combines quantitative data to identify broad patterns with

qualitative data to provide personal, in-depth perspectives, is especially beneficial for exploring the connections among motivation, emotion, and reading comprehension (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). By employing both data types, the study aims to reveal underlying patterns and trends alongside individual students' subjective experiences and perceptions, offering a holistic view of how these psychological factors interact in a language learning context.

The quantitative component consists of two scales administered in class to measure students' motivation and emotional states related to their Spanish studies. To avoid response fatigue and ensure focus, the emotion scale will be administered first, followed by the motivation scale on a different day. This separation reduces cognitive load and minimizes potential confounding factors, providing a clearer picture of each variable individually (Wise & DeMars, 2005). Following the surveys, qualitative data will be gathered through in-person interviews. The interviews offer insights into each student's unique perspectives and emotional and motivational dynamics (Mertens, 2015).

Students will complete a reading comprehension assessment at the end of the semester to evaluate their reading comprehension skills. The reading assessment is a part of the end-of-year exam that all Spanish one students take in the district. This final assessment, conducted after administering the motivation and emotion scales, is designed to prevent recent reading scores from influencing the students' self-perceptions and emotional responses. This sequence authenticates students' motivational and emotional states about reading before they encounter a high-stakes assessment (Dörnyei, 2007). The study aims to provide an undisturbed view of students' emotional and motivational experiences across the semester by positioning the reading assessment at the end of data collection. The reading assessment is also from the public school district and all students take the assessment, ensuring ecological validity. This multi-stage

approach will offer a comprehensive understanding of the emotional and motivational influences on reading comprehension, contributing valuable insights into the dynamic nature of these psychological factors in middle school world language learning.

Participants

The participants in this study were 156 students enrolled in Spanish 1 courses across three public middle schools in the same school district where the researcher is employed. All participants were in either seventh or eighth grade, representing the novice-level learners of Spanish. None of the participants were heritage or native speakers of Spanish; all were learning it as a second language in school. Although the researcher works as a teacher in the district, none of the participating students were enrolled in the researcher's classes, ensuring a separation between researcher and direct instructional influence and avoiding bias. The decision to focus on this age group is grounded in the significance of understanding emotional and motivational factors that correlate with language learning. Prior research emphasizes that middle school learners represent a formative stage where affective factors can significantly shape long-term language engagement (Lambelet & Berthele, 2015).

Recruitment for the study was conducted through classroom visits to each participating Spanish 1 class. During these visits, the researcher explained the study's purpose and procedures to students and invited them to participate voluntarily. Students were provided with access to three required documents: a student assent form, a parental consent form, and a FERPA release form. These documents were made available and submitted digitally through the school's learning management system (LMS) to streamline distribution and collection. The FERPA form was necessary because the study used existing reading assessment data retrieved from school

records. The classroom teachers were not involved in the recruitment, distribution, or collection of the forms.

To enable data matching across the various data sources, student names were collected first. However, all personally identifiable information was removed during the data analysis phase, and the final dataset was fully anonymized to protect confidentiality and comply with ethical research standards. Ten students were randomly selected to participate in individual in-person interviews. These interviewees were chosen using a simple random sampling approach from the larger participant pool and represented all three middle schools, ensuring diversity of perspectives in the qualitative portion of the study.

The study employed a convenience sampling strategy, a nonprobability sampling method in which participants are selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate (Etikan et al., 2016). This method was appropriate for the study's school-based context, enabling efficient data collection while respecting the structure of classroom instruction. Although convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of findings, it is widely used in educational settings due to logistical feasibility and ethical constraints. The accessibility of students through the school LMS and classroom visits enabled a high level of participation without disrupting instructional time. Selecting this sample helps address a gap in research on middle school language learners, a group often overlooked in second-language acquisition studies.

Data Collection Instruments and Tools

Quantitative Data

Participants will complete the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire and the Reading Motivation Scale on Qualtrics during designated class periods. The public school district is one-to-one, meaning every student has a school-supplied device. Afterward, at the end of the

semester, students will complete the reading comprehension assessment on paper during class. This choice of data collection during class periods ensures a controlled, consistent environment for participants, minimizing external influences on their emotional and motivational responses.

Achievement Emotions Questionnaire - Foreign Language Class

The study will utilize the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire - Foreign Language Class (AEQ-FLC) (Davari et al., 2022) to measure emotional experiences. This choice is grounded in the questionnaire's validation and ability to capture a range of emotions experienced by students in an academic setting. By using a well-established instrument, the study ensures the reliability and validity of the emotional data collected. A copy of this tool can be found in Appendix B.

Adolescent Reading Motivation Scale

Motivational data will be collected using a reading motivation scale based on self-determination theory, as used by De Naeghel et al. (2012) and Lee (2015) and further reviewed for validity by Davis et al. (2018). This scale was selected for its specificity in measuring motivational aspects related to reading, which aligns with this study's focus on world language reading comprehension. Additionally, this scale is rooted in self-determination theory, one of the main theoretical frameworks for this study. Using a scale tailored to reading motivation, the research ensures the relevance of the motivational data obtained. A copy of this tool is available in Appendix C.

Reading Comprehension Assessment

A reading comprehension assessment developed by WL education professors at the University of Oklahoma for use in the local public school district will be used in this study to evaluate students' Spanish reading proficiency. Although the assessment has not undergone

formal validation, it was intentionally designed for novice-level language learners and is administered district-wide as part of the end-of-year common assessment for all Spanish 1 students. The assessment evaluates students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, and is aligned with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines. Specifically, the reading section presents students with varied texts and prompts to determine whether their comprehension aligns with, exceeds, or falls below the district's target of Novice Mid proficiency. The consistent implementation of this assessment across schools enhances the reliability and comparability of student performance. This aligns with current scholarly approaches that emphasize authentic, discourse-length texts to assess interpretive reading in novice-level language learners (Sletova, 2025). A copy of the reading comprehension portion used in this study is included in Appendix A.

Qualitative Data

Semi-Structured Interview

Following the questionnaire, 10 students participated in a semi-structured interview with the researcher during the "Flex" time. In this district, students have a "flex" time in their schedule that is for study hall or homeroom. Completing the interviews during this time ensured that students were not pulled out of their instructional hours during the school day. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews makes them especially effective for delving into complex experiences and emotions because the interviewer can adapt questions to clarify responses or probe deeper into areas of interest (Seidman, 2013). The interview questions were based on students' classroom reading experiences. This approach aligns with qualitative best practices by grounding the interviews in each participant's unique experiences and motivations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Interview questions are in Appendix D.

Conducting semi-structured interviews improves the study's validity by collecting information through multiple formats (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Combining quantitative with in-depth interviews, this data collection design captures a holistic view of the emotional and motivational factors influencing student engagement and motivation in the course.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study occurred in three phases to ensure accuracy and reduce potential response bias. First, all participating students completed two self-report instruments: the emotion and motivation surveys. These surveys were administered digitally through the school's learning management system and were completed independently by students without influence from peers or instructors. Collecting this data first ensured that students' responses reflected their general experiences with reading in Spanish rather than being shaped by interactions with the researcher or performance on an upcoming assessment.

Following the surveys, a random sample of 10 students participated in individual, in-person interviews. The interviews were conducted in a private setting at each of the three schools. Conducting interviews after the surveys prevented contamination of survey responses by interview discussions, a risk when qualitative reflection precedes quantitative self-report (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). This structure also helped minimize interviewer effects on students' cognitive framing of motivation, as suggested by research on sequencing and response order bias in language studies (Sudina, 2021).

The final phase involved collecting each student's reading comprehension assessment, which was administered as part of the district's standard end-of-year Spanish 1 exam. All Spanish 1 students, regardless of their research participation, complete this assessment as part of regular instruction. Administering the surveys and interviews helped to ensure that responses

were not biased by students' perceptions of their own performance on the final exam. The goal of ordering the dates in this way was to ensure that the surveys reflected students' ongoing experience with language learning rather than short-term reactions to test results (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008).

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics.

Descriptive statistics involves organizing, summarizing, and presenting data to provide a clear and concise overview of their main features (Marshall & Jonker, 2010). It encompasses various measures and techniques for describing and analyzing a dataset's central tendencies, variability, and distribution. Standard descriptive statistics include the mean, median, and mode, which convey the typical or central values of observations. Additionally, measures such as range, variance, and standard deviation quantify the spread or dispersion of the data points. Descriptive statistics will be calculated for the emotion survey, motivation survey, and reading comprehension assessment. This statistical approach provides a quantitative overview of the central tendencies and variabilities in students' emotional and motivational experiences.

Comparative Analyses.

To examine whether students experienced certain emotions more frequently than others in relation to reading in Spanish, a paired-samples t-test was conducted. These tests compared the mean scores of positive emotions with those of negative emotions reported in the survey responses. The goal was to determine whether students, overall, experienced one emotion more dominantly than the other in the context of world language reading. This type of within-subjects analysis is particularly useful in second language affective research, where emotions play a critical role in learner engagement (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016; Field, 2018).

Correlational Analyses.

To explore relationships between students' emotional states, motivational beliefs, and reading comprehension performance, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed. These analyses revealed the strength and direction of associations among the variables. Understanding these interrelations helps illustrate how affective and motivational constructs function together in language learning settings (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). Correlational analysis also provided a foundation for determining which variables might serve as significant predictors in subsequent regression models.

Predictive Analyses.

To further investigate the extent to which emotional and motivational factors predicted students' reading comprehension scores, simple and multiple regression analyses were conducted. Simple linear regressions tested the predictive power of individual variables. Multiple regression models evaluated how combinations of predictors influenced reading proficiency when considered together. These predictive analyses provided more profound insight into the psychological variables that contribute to language-learning outcomes (Janubas & Deysolong, 2024; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

Qualitative Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

The qualitative research method for this study is thematic analysis, selected for its systematic, adaptable framework for uncovering patterns and themes within the narratives of novice-level middle school Spanish students during world language reading comprehension (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Thematic analysis is a qualitative method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within data, allowing for detailed exploration of the subjects under investigation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The deductive approach within thematic analysis aligns

seamlessly with the study's objective of integrating established theoretical frameworks, specifically self-determination theory and control value theory. The analysis aims to systematically identify and interpret themes related to autonomy, relatedness, competence, and control value within participants' qualitative responses by employing these frameworks as a guiding lens. The flexibility of thematic analysis enables the exploration of emergent themes, ensuring that the complexity of emotional and motivational experiences is comprehensively captured.

Familiarization

To initiate the thematic analysis, the researchers familiarize themselves with the data by immersing themselves in the transcripts and reading and re-reading them to develop a deep understanding of the participants' experiences, perspectives, and underlying meanings. This initial step provides a holistic overview of the dataset and helps identify potential areas of interest for further exploration.

Generating Initial Codes

Following familiarization, the process generates initial codes, breaks the data into smaller units such as sentences or paragraphs, and assigns descriptive codes to capture each unit's core meaning and significance. This systematic and iterative coding process allows flexibility and adaptation as the analysis progresses.

Searching for Themes

After initial coding, the researcher groups related codes to form preliminary themes representing overarching concepts within the data. This phase involves a balance of inductive and deductive reasoning, enabling the identification of both emergent and pre-existing themes.

Reviewing Themes

To ensure that the identified themes are valid and reliable, the researcher will rigorously review them for coherence, distinctiveness, and grounding in the data. This review also considers theoretical and methodological implications, ensuring themes are conceptually sound and empirically supported.

Defining and Naming Themes

In the final stages of analysis, the researchers will define and name each theme, developing clear definitions that capture its essence and distinguish it from others. Descriptive names will be assigned to each theme to accurately reflect their content and significance, enabling a clear, concise presentation of the findings.

This methodological choice is relevant to the study as it facilitates an investigation of the diverse and subjective nature of students' emotional and motivational states (Jang et al., 2014). The thematic analysis provides a structured means to organize qualitative data. It enables an in-depth examination of the underlying patterns that contribute to the understanding of world language reading comprehension. Through this approach, the study aims to uncover the essence of students' experiences, shedding light on the interplay between theoretical constructs and experiences in the context of language learning in a middle school setting.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted with full ethical oversight from both the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Oklahoma and the research ethics committee of the participating public school district’s Board of Education. The IRB approved all study procedures, including recruitment, data collection, and consent protocols, with special attention to the protection of minor participants in an educational setting. The use of digital student assent,

parental consent, and FERPA forms, distributed and collected through the district's learning management system, was explicitly approved to ensure confidentiality and minimize classroom teachers' involvement in the recruitment process.

To further protect student privacy and avoid any perception of coercion, students were pulled for interviews during non-instructional times, not during their Spanish classes. This scheduling ensured that Spanish teachers were unaware of which students participated, thereby maintaining confidentiality within the school environment. Although the researcher is employed in the same school district, none of the participating students were enrolled in the researcher's classes, eliminating the need for additional safeguards related to dual roles.

These steps align with ethical principles outlined in the *Belmont Report* (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979), including respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. By following both university and district procedures, the study was designed to minimize risks, protect the autonomy and rights of student participants, and uphold the integrity of the research process.

Methodological Significance of this Study

The methodological design of this study is significant for its careful alignment with the population of interest and the research questions being investigated. Working with novice-level middle school students in a world language classroom presents unique challenges that demand a developmentally appropriate approach. By combining survey instruments, interviews, and a district-provided reading assessment, the study triangulated data across multiple sources, enhancing the reliability of the findings and offering a more holistic view of students' emotional and motivational experiences (Wang & Li, 2025). The sequencing of data collection (surveys first, interviews second, and assessment last) was a deliberate methodological decision aimed at

minimizing both performance bias and interviewer effects, which are especially critical when working with adolescents in academic contexts (Šimić Šašić, Heaysman, & Otto, 2025).

This study also contributes methodologically by demonstrating how ethical research can be conducted in a public school setting, including digital consent processes and the handling of confidential data. Involving both a university IRB and a district-level research committee ensured that protocols met rigorous ethical standards while still remaining feasible in a real-world school environment. Notably, the study's design enabled the collection of meaningful data from students without disrupting instruction or placing pressure on classroom teachers, thereby preserving the authenticity of students' responses. These practices align with current recommendations for conducting ethical, student-centered research in linguistically and emotionally sensitive contexts (Qanwal & Siddiq, 2025).

Finally, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods strengthens the study's contribution to second language acquisition research. While large-scale language learning studies often rely solely on test scores or self-report surveys, this mixed-methods approach brings student voices to the forefront through interviews. It explores relationships among variables through statistical modeling. This methodological blend is increasingly encouraged in the field for its ability to uncover outcomes and the underlying processes that lead to success or struggle in language learning (Bilgiç & Kutlu Demir, 2025). As such, the methods used here provide a model for future studies exploring the complex interplay of affective and cognitive factors in adolescent language learners.

Conclusion and Summary of Chapter

This chapter has detailed the research design and methodology used to investigate the emotional and motivational experiences of novice-level Spanish 1 students and how those

experiences relate to their reading comprehension performance. The chapter began by describing the participants, 156 seventh and eighth-grade students from three public middle schools, and the steps taken to ethically recruit them through district-approved digital consent procedures. Special attention was given to ethical considerations, including Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, district-level research approval, and protective measures to ensure confidentiality and minimize the influence of classroom teachers or the researcher's role as a district teacher. Data collection was structured intentionally to reduce bias, with surveys administered first, followed by interviews, and finally the reading assessment. The structure allowed the data to reflect students' general experiences rather than their immediate reactions to assessments or interviews.

The instruments and analyses employed in this study were selected to provide both descriptive and inferential insight into the complex interplay of emotional, motivational, and academic variables. Paired-samples t-tests explored differences in positive and negative emotional experiences, while correlation and regression analyses examined the relationships between affective factors and reading performance. Multiple regression techniques provided a more robust understanding of how various predictors interact to influence students' reading outcomes. These methodological choices support a comprehensive and statistically sound approach to answering the study's research questions. With the foundation established in this chapter, the following chapter presents the findings and results of the analyses. Chapter 5 also offers a detailed look into the patterns, trends, and significant findings that emerged from the quantitative and qualitative data collected.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative findings from a mixed-methods study that explored the emotional and motivational experiences of novice-level middle school Spanish students during reading tasks. The goal of the analyses was to investigate three primary research questions: (1) In what ways might novice-level, middle-school Spanish students emotionally experience reading in class? (2) In what ways might novice-level, middle-school Spanish students perceive their sense of autonomy, relatedness, and competence when reading in class? (3) In what ways might the emotional and motivational feelings of novice-level, middle-school Spanish students correlate with their world language reading comprehension?

The chapter is organized into three major sections. First, the **quantitative data** is presented, offering statistical insights into patterns of emotion, motivation, and reading comprehension across the sample. Second, the **qualitative data** provides in-depth perspectives from student interviews, highlighting how learners personally interpret and experience these constructs. Third, a **synthesis section** integrates both data strands to explain how emotional and motivational factors work together to inform comprehension outcomes. Within each section, results are aligned to the study's three research questions, using both theoretical constructs and student voice to illustrate the dynamic interplay between emotion, motivation, and second-language reading performance.

Quantitative Data

The quantitative data for this study were derived from three primary sources: a reading comprehension assessment, an emotion survey, and a motivation survey. Each of these instruments is described in detail in Chapter 3: Methods. To thoroughly address the three research questions, multiple analyses were conducted, each tailored to the nature of the data and

the available sample sizes. Because not all participants completed every measure, statistical analyses were performed on both full and overlapping subsamples to ensure accurate interpretation of the relationships among variables. The table below presents a detailed breakdown of the total number of participants and the specific subgroups that completed each measure or combination of measures.

Table 5

Quantitative Participant Sample Breakdown by Measure

Measure or Combination	Sample Size
Total Participants	156
Reading Assessment Only	83
Motivation Only	66
Emotion Only	109
Reading & Emotion	61
Reading & Motivation	28
Reading, Motivation, & Emotion	28

Note. This table summarizes participant sample sizes for each measure and overlapping subsets used in the quantitative analysis. Totals reflect the sample size that completed each respective measure or combination of measures.

RQ 1: Emotional Experiences

The first research question asks **how novice-level, middle-school Spanish students emotionally experience reading in class.** A series of statistical analyses were conducted to

explore students' self-reported emotional experiences related to classroom reading tasks. These analyses aimed to examine both the overall emotional trends and the nuances of individual emotions across a sample of 109 students. This section will detail the descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, paired-samples t-test, and repeated-measures ANOVA that were conducted.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlational Analysis

Students rated the frequency with which they experienced eight specific emotions while reading in Spanish class: three positive emotions (enjoyment, hope, and pride) and five negative emotions (anger, anxiety, shame, hopelessness, and boredom). Ratings were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Not at all") to 5 ("Very often"). Descriptive statistics indicated that students generally experienced more positive emotions than negative ones. Mean scores for positive emotions were as follows: enjoyment ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.93$), hope ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.96$), and pride ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.00$). Negative emotions were rated substantially lower: anger ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.07$), anxiety ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.06$), shame ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 1.01$), hopelessness ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.12$), and boredom ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.02$). Table 6 displays these descriptive data.

To explore the relationship between emotional valences, a Pearson correlation was calculated between positive and negative emotion scores. Results revealed a significant negative correlation, $r = –.475$, $p < .001$, indicating that students who experienced more positive emotions tended to report fewer negative emotions and vice versa. This suggests a polarized emotional profile: students who felt enjoyment, pride, and hope were less likely to report feelings of boredom, anxiety, or hopelessness at the same time.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Frequency Ratings During Reading in Spanish Class

Emotion	**Valence**	***M***	***SD***
Enjoyment	Positive	3.72	0.93
Hope	Positive	3.54	0.96
Pride	Positive	3.45	1.00
Anger	Negative	2.60	1.07
Anxiety	Negative	2.95	1.06
Shame	Negative	2.74	1.01
Hopelessness	Negative	2.77	1.12
Boredom	Negative	2.95	1.02

Note. Participants rated the frequency with which they experienced each emotion on a scale from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very often). Positive emotions were generally experienced more frequently than negative emotions. A Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant negative correlation between positive and negative emotional scores ($r = -.475$, $p < .001$), indicating that students who experienced higher levels of enjoyment, pride, and hope tended to report fewer negative emotions, such as boredom, anxiety, and hopelessness.

Paired-Samples t-Test: Positive vs. Negative Emotions

To determine whether the frequency of positive emotional experiences significantly differed from that of negative emotional experiences, a paired-samples t-test was conducted.

Positive emotion scores ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.79$) were significantly higher than negative emotion scores ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 0.86$), $t(108) = 7.273$, $p < .001$. The mean difference was 0.98, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.71 to 1.25. The finding confirmed that students were significantly more likely to report positive than negative emotions during reading tasks in Spanish class. A paired-samples correlation between the two categories also supported this contrast, $r = -.484$, $p < .001$. Table 7 shows this contrast between negative and positive emotions.

This analysis was chosen to assess whether the aggregate difference between positive and negative emotions was statistically meaningful, using each student's own paired scores to control for between-subject variance. The results provide strong evidence that students' emotional experiences were not evenly distributed between positive and negative feelings, but instead leaned decisively toward the positive.

Table 7

T-Test and Correlation for Emotional Valence Ratings

Comparison	***M***	***SD***	***t***	***p***	**95% *CI (LL, UL*)**
Positive vs. Negative Emotions	0.98	—	7.273	< .001	0.71, 1.25

Note. Positive emotion scores ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.79$) were significantly higher than negative emotion scores ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 0.86$), indicating that students experienced enjoyment, hope, and pride more frequently than negative emotions such as anxiety and shame. A paired-samples correlation between the two categories was also significant, $r = -.484$, $p < .001$, suggesting that as positive emotional experiences increased, negative experiences decreased.

Repeated-Measures ANOVA and Pairwise Comparisons

To examine how individual emotions varied in intensity and frequency, a repeated-measures ANOVA with pairwise comparisons was conducted among all eight emotions. This approach was appropriate for identifying within-subject differences in reported emotional experiences across multiple related variables, as supported by prior educational and psychological research using similar designs (Bashiri Abarghani & Bahramipour, 2025).Results revealed potential significant differences across individual emotion pairs, indicating that students experienced certain emotions more intensely and more frequently than others.

Comparisons Among Positive Emotions

Among the three positive emotions, students reported enjoyment significantly more frequently than both hope (M = 0.18, SE = .03, $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [0.07, 0.28]) and pride (M = 0.27, SE = .05, $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [0.12, 0.42]. Although hope was rated higher than pride, this difference was not statistically significant *(*p = 1.000). These findings suggest that enjoyment may be the most immediate and accessible emotional experience for students during reading tasks, whereas hope and pride may be more context-dependent or reflective.

Comparisons Among Negative Emotions

Among the negative emotions, anxiety and boredom were reported most frequently, while anger, shame, and hopelessness were generally rated lower. For example, boredom was significantly higher than anger, M = 0.77, SE = .13, $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [0.35, 1.20], and anxiety was significantly higher than shame, M = 1.04, SE = .14, $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [0.59, 1.50]. However, not all negative emotions differed from one another. For example, shame and hopelessness did not differ significantly (p = 1.000), suggesting that students experienced these particular emotions with similar intensity. These patterns suggest that while some negative emotions (e.g., boredom

and anxiety) were relatively common, others (e.g., hopelessness and anger) were less central to students' emotional experiences during reading.

Positive vs. Negative Emotions: Specific Pairwise Differences

Enjoyment was reported significantly more often than each of the five negative emotions:

Anger: $M = 1.12$, $SE = .15$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.65, 1.59]

Anxiety: $M = 0.77$, $SE = .13$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.35, 1.20]

Shame: $M = 1.00$, $SE = .13$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.56, 1.43]

Hopelessness: $M = 0.50$, $SE = .15$, $p = .034$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.99]

Boredom: $M = 0.77$, $SE = .13$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.35, 1.20]

Similarly, hope was significantly higher than hopelessness *(*$M = 1.30$, $SE = .16$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.80, 1.79]) and boredom ($M = 1.17$, $SE = .14$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.71, 1.63]). Pride was reported significantly more frequently than all five negative emotions, including anger ($M = 1.39$, $SE = .16$, $p < .001$), anxiety ($M = 1.04$, $SE = .14$, $p < .001$), shame ($M = 1.26$, $SE = .15$, $p < .001$), hopelessness *(*$M = 0.77$, $SE = .16$, $p < .001$), and boredom ($M = 0.77$, $SE = .16$, $p < .001$). Table 8 below lists the differences between positive and negative emotions.

Table 8

Reading Emotions

Emotion Comparison	**Mean Difference**	***SE***	***p***	**95% *CI***
Enjoyment > Anger	1.12	.15	< .001	[0.65, 1.59]

Enjoyment > Anxiety	0.77	.13	< .001	[0.35, 1.20]
Enjoyment > Shame	1.00	.13	< .001	[0.56, 1.43]
Enjoyment > Hopelessness	0.50	.15	.034	[0.02, 0.99]
Enjoyment > Boredom	0.77	.13	< .001	[0.35, 1.20]
Hope > Hopelessness	1.30	.16	< .001	[0.80, 1.79]
Hope > Boredom	1.17	.14	< .001	[0.71, 1.63]
Pride > Anger	1.39	.16	< .001	[0.85, 1.93]
Pride > Anxiety	1.04	.14	< .001	[0.60, 1.47]
Pride > Shame	1.26	.15	< .001	[0.81, 1.71]
Pride > Hopelessness	0.77	.16	< .001	[0.28, 1.26]
Pride > Boredom	0.77	.16	< .001	[0.30, 1.24]
Shame ≈ Hopelessness	—	—	1.000	—

Note. Comparisons reflect significant and non-significant pairwise differences in emotional ratings during reading tasks. SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval. Comparisons are

based on a repeated-measures ANOVA with Bonferroni-adjusted post hoc tests. '>' indicates a significantly higher score. " " indicates no significant difference.

These findings collectively support the interpretation that positive emotional experiences not only dominated overall affective responses to reading tasks but were also significantly more intense than their negative counterparts. The consistency of these effects across multiple pairwise comparisons suggests a stable and meaningful pattern in students' emotional landscape.

RQ 2: Motivation

The second research question asks: **In what ways might novice-level, middle school Spanish students perceive their autonomy, relatedness, and competence when reading in class**? To investigate this, three motivational constructs were examined: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and self-regulation. These measures reflect key components of Self-Determination Theory, encompassing both internal and external motivational drives and students' capacity for self-regulation.

A sample size of 66 completed the motivation and self-regulation survey, which is notably smaller than the full dataset used in other analyses. This discrepancy in sample size occurred because two of the three teachers did not administer the motivation scale to their students. While this limited sample size constrains generalizability and increases the risk of underpowered results, full statistical analyses were still conducted to explore potential trends and relationships, which, at times, is done in exploratory educational research involving small samples (May, 2025). These findings are best understood as preliminary and will be revisited in Chapter 5 with additional discussion of methodological implications and future research directions. This section will fully describe the descriptive statistics, correlational analyses, and regression analyses conducted.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive results revealed that students reported the highest levels of extrinsic motivation ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.68$), followed by self-regulation ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.81$), and intrinsic motivation ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.80$), all based on a 5-point Likert scale. Table 9 shows this descriptive data. These results suggest that many students were motivated primarily by external rewards or expectations. However, the students also demonstrated moderately strong self-regulatory behaviors and some internal enjoyment of reading in Spanish. The discrepancy between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation may reflect the influence of grades, teacher approval, and classroom norms on students' engagement with reading tasks.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for Motivation Types During Reading in Spanish Class

Motivation Type	***M***	***SD***
Extrinsic Motivation	4.25	0.68
Self-Regulation	3.70	0.81
Intrinsic Motivation	3.37	0.80

Note. Students rated their motivation on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Students reported the highest levels of extrinsic motivation, indicating a strong influence of external rewards or expectations. Moderate levels of self-regulation and intrinsic motivation suggest that students also engaged in self-managed behaviors and experienced internal enjoyment from reading in Spanish.

Correlational Analysis

To understand the relationships among the three constructs, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. Intrinsic motivation was positively and significantly correlated with self-regulation,$r = .526$, $p < .001$, indicating that students who reported greater internal enjoyment or interest in reading also tended to exhibit stronger behavioral regulation (e.g., focusing attention and persisting through challenges). Similarly, extrinsic motivation was positively associated with self-regulation ($r = .437$, $p < .001$), though to a slightly lesser degree. Interestingly, the correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was positive but nonsignificant ($r = .184$, $p = .139$), indicating that these two forms of motivation operated primarily independently. Table 10 details these correlations. These findings suggest that either type of motivation - internal or external - can support self-regulated reading behaviors, although they do not always seem to co-occur.

Table 10

Correlations Among Motivation Variables and Self-Regulation

Variables	***r***	***p***	**Significance**
Intrinsic – Self-Regulation	0.526	< .001	**
Extrinsic – Self-Regulation	0.437	< .001	**
Intrinsic – Extrinsic	0.184	.139	n.s.

Note. Pearson correlation coefficients are shown. $^{**}p < .001$. n.s. = not significant. Results indicate that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were positively associated with self-regulation, but the two were not significantly correlated.

Regression Analysis

To examine how well intrinsic and extrinsic motivation jointly predicted students' self-regulation, a multiple linear regression was conducted. This method was selected to assess the unique and combined contributions of each motivational type to students' ability to regulate their reading behaviors. The overall model was statistically significant, $F(2, 63) = 20.65$, $p < .001$, explaining approximately 40% of the variance in self-regulation ($R^2 = .396$, Adjusted $R^2 = .377$). This large effect size underscores the strong relationship between motivational beliefs and students' ability to manage their own learning in a language classroom context.

Both predictors contributed significantly to the model. Intrinsic motivation emerged as a stronger predictor, $\beta = .461$, $t = 4.63$, $p < .001$, than extrinsic motivation, $\beta = .352$, $t = 3.53$, $p < .001$. Table 11 shows this finding. These results suggest that while both motivational forms play an important role, students' internal enjoyment and interest in reading may be particularly powerful in supporting their self-regulatory efforts. This finding aligns with research highlighting the benefits of promoting autonomy and interest in academic contexts.

Table 11

Multiple Regression Predicting Self-Regulation from Motivation Types

Predictor	**β**	***t***	***p***	***R²* (Adj. *R²*)**
Intrinsic Motivation	.461	4.63	< .001	.396 (.377)

Extrinsic Motivation	.352	3.53	< .001	—

Note. Results from a multiple regression analysis predicting students' self-regulation from intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. $F(2, 63) = 20.65$, $p < .001$. The model explained 39.6% of the variance in self-regulation. Both predictors were statistically significant, with intrinsic motivation showing a stronger effect size.

In summary, students who reported greater motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, also tended to exhibit higher levels of self-regulation. The data suggest that fostering both forms of motivation may be beneficial for promoting engaged, strategic reading behaviors. However, due to the limited sample size, these results should be interpreted cautiously and considered exploratory. They offer a strong rationale for a deeper investigation into how different motivational orientations interact and correlate with early world language learners.

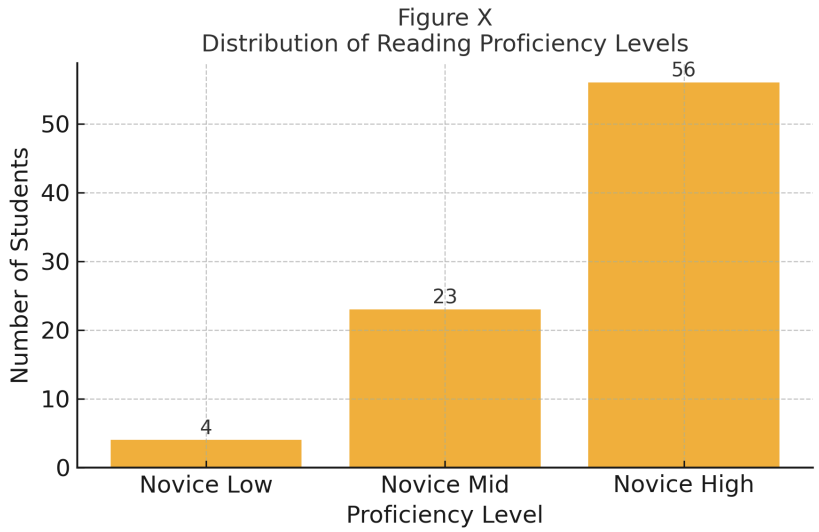
RQ 3: Reading Comprehension

To begin to answer the third question: **In what ways might the emotional and motivational feelings of novice-level, middle-school Spanish students correlate with their world language reading comprehension?** Descriptive statistics for reading comprehension needed to be run. Students' reading comprehension scores were rated on a 3-point proficiency scale consistent with ACTFL performance descriptors: 1 = Novice Low, 2 = Novice Mid, and 3 = Novice High. The target level for Spanish I students by the end of the school year was Novice Mid. Among the 83 participants with available reading comprehension data, the average score was 2.61 ($SD = 0.57$), indicating that students, on average, surpassed the target performance level and approached the novice-high level.

A frequency analysis revealed that the majority of students (67.5%) scored at the Novice High level, reflecting a generally strong performance across the sample. 28% of students scored at the Novice-Mid level, the course's goal proficiency level. 4.8% of students scored below the expected level, at the Novice Low level. Figure 1, below, illustrates the reading scores. These scores are represented in the bar graph below. This distribution suggests that most students demonstrated comprehension of the reading passages presented to them. No inferential statistics were conducted within this section, as the goal was to describe student performance and provide context for subsequent analyses exploring relationships between reading comprehension and emotional or motivational variables.

Figure 1

Distribution of Reading Proficiency Levels



Note. This figure shows the distribution of reading proficiency levels among students who completed the reading comprehension assessment. Most participants were classified as Novice High (n = 56), followed by Novice Mid (n = 23), and a small proportion were Novice Low (n =

4). Out of the total sample size of 156, the reading score subsmaple size 83. Proficiency levels were categorized using ACTFL performance descriptors.

RQ 3: Emotions and Reading Comprehension

To continue answering the third research question, 61 students completed both the emotion survey and the reading assessment. Both Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression analyses were conducted. These two statistical approaches were selected to serve complementary purposes in the analysis process. Correlation analysis was used first to identify the *strength and direction of linear associations* between students' reported emotions and their reading performance. This provides foundational insight into whether variables are related at all (Tohidi Nasab, 2025). However, correlations do not indicate the unique contribution of each variable when considered alongside others. To address this limitation, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether positive and negative academic emotions could *predict* reading outcomes and to assess the *independent effect* of each variable on reading scores while controlling for the others. This approach can be used in educational research to identify how specific emotions uniquely influence academic performance after accounting for overlapping variance with related variables (Ganotice et al., 2025).

Correlation Analyses

Pearson correlations were computed among positive and negative emotions and reading comprehension scores to assess whether students' emotional experiences were significantly associated with their reading proficiency. The analysis revealed that positive emotions were significantly and positively correlated with reading scores ($r = .430$, $p < .001$), while negative emotions were significantly and negatively correlated with reading scores ($r = –.460$, $p < .001$). Table 12 lays out these correlations. These findings suggest that students who reported

experiencing higher levels of enjoyment, pride, and hope during reading tended to earn higher scores on their comprehension assessments. Conversely, students who reported experiencing more anxiety, boredom, and hopelessness tended to earn lower reading scores.

Table 12

Correlations Between Emotions and Reading Comprehension Scores

Variable Pair	***r***	***p***
Positive Emotions – Reading Comprehension	0.430	< .001
Negative Emotions – Reading Comprehension	-0.460	< .001

Note. Pearson correlations were calculated to assess the relationship between emotional valences and students' reading comprehension scores. Positive emotions (enjoyment, pride, hope) were positively associated with reading comprehension, while negative emotions (anxiety, boredom, hopelessness) were negatively associated. All correlations were significant at $p < .001$.

Multiple Regression Analysis

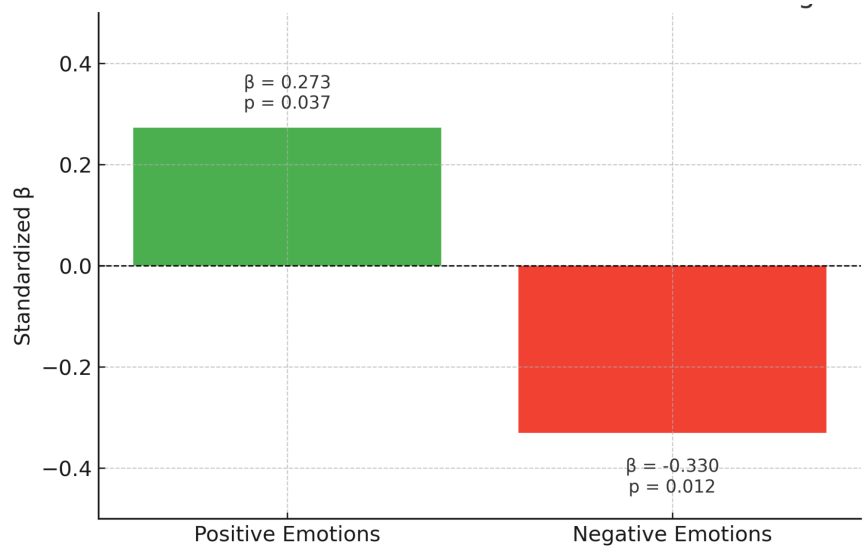
To extend the correlational findings and determine whether emotions could *predict* reading outcomes when considered together, a multiple linear regression was conducted. This analysis enabled the examination of each emotion category's unique contribution to reading performance while holding the other variables constant. It also provided an estimate of how much of the variance in reading scores could be explained by students' emotional experiences. The regression model was statistically significant, $F(2, 58) = 10.67$, $p < .001$, and accounted for 26.9% of the variance in reading comprehension scores ($R^2 = .269$). Figure 2 displays the

potential effect of emotion on reading comprehension. Both positive and negative emotions emerged as significant predictors:

- Positive emotions significantly predicted higher reading scores (β = .273, *p* = .037).
- Negative emotions significantly predicted lower reading scores (β = –.330, *p* = .012).

Figure 2

Standardized Beta Coefficients: Emotional Predictors of Reading Comprehension



Note. This figure displays standardized beta coefficients from a regression analysis examining emotional predictors of reading comprehension scores. Positive emotions significantly predicted higher reading performance (β = .273, *p* = .037), while negative emotions significantly predicted lower performance (β = –.330, *p* = .012). Bars represent the direction and strength of each predictor's effect.

These results indicate that students who felt more positively about reading tended to perform better. In contrast, those who experienced greater negative emotion tended to perform worse. Taken together, the correlation and regression results provide compelling evidence that students' emotional experiences in the world language classroom are meaningfully linked to their reading comprehension performance. While correlation helped establish significant associations,

regression analysis confirmed that these emotions are not merely statistically related to reading; they also help explain performance differences. This suggests that instructional practices that foster positive emotional engagement and reduce negative affect may play a critical role in supporting literacy development in novice-level world language learners.

Motivation and Reading

To further answer the third question and explore how students' motivational characteristics may influence their reading comprehension, both Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted. These statistical approaches were chosen to examine different aspects of the relationships among variables: correlation identifies the strength and direction of associations between variables, while regression allows simultaneous assessment of multiple predictors and their unique contributions to an outcome variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

This section of analysis used a subset of the full sample, as only a portion of students completed both the motivation survey and the reading comprehension task. Among these, 28 students had fully matched data across intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and reading score variables. Given the limited sample size, all results should be interpreted as exploratory. Although complete inferential analyses were conducted to support consistency across constructs and research questions, these findings primarily serve to prompt further investigation. They are revisited in Chapter 5 as part of the study's limitations.

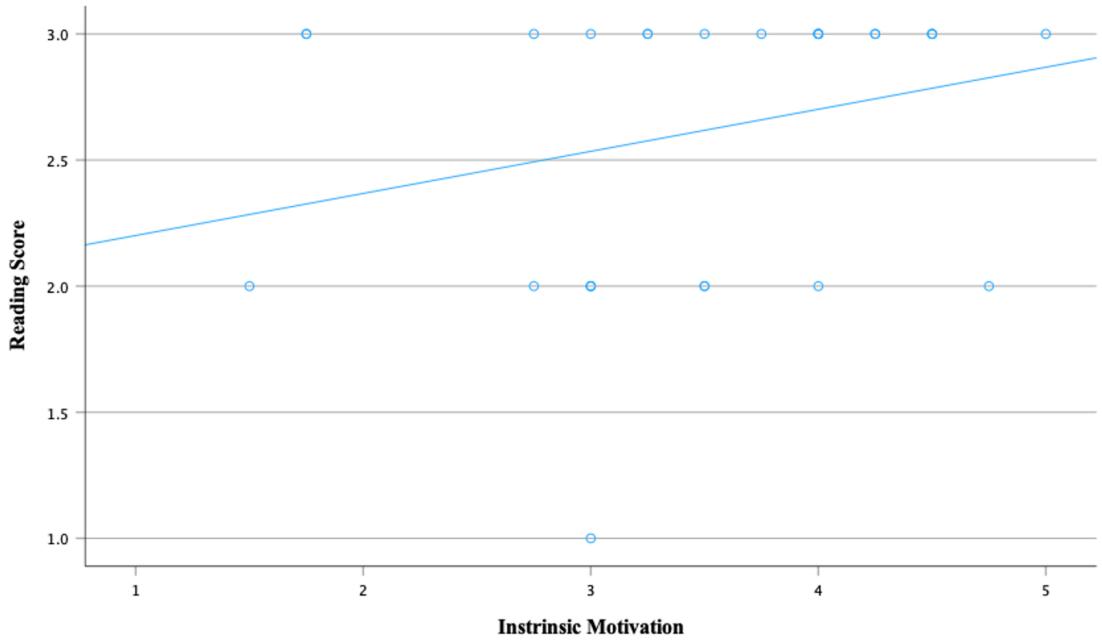
Correlational Findings

Pearson correlations revealed no statistically significant associations between motivation constructs and reading comprehension within the subsample. Intrinsic motivation demonstrated a moderate, positive correlation with reading scores ($r = .244$, $p = .105$), but this was not

statistically significant. Neither extrinsic motivation (r = .080, p = .694) nor self-regulation (r = –.007, p = .974) showed a correlation with reading comprehension performance. Figure 3 shows a positive trend in the current study, although it was not significant, suggesting that intrinsic motivation may improve reading comprehension scores.

Figure 3

Intrinsic Motivation and Reading Scores



Note. Pearson correlations were computed to assess the relationship between motivation constructs and reading comprehension performance. None of the correlations was statistically significant. Intrinsic motivation showed a modest, positive trend that did not reach significance (p = .105), while extrinsic motivation and self-regulation were not associated with comprehension scores.

Regression Analysis

To further investigate whether motivation could predict reading performance when considered collectively, a multiple regression analysis was conducted with intrinsic motivation,

extrinsic motivation, and self-regulation as predictors of reading comprehension scores. The overall regression model was not statistically significant, $F(3, 24) = 0.93$, $p = .440$, with an R^2 of .104. This means that only about 10.4% of the variance in reading scores was explained by the combination of motivational predictors. Among the three variables, intrinsic motivation emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .353$, $p = .145$), although it did not reach statistical significance. Extrinsic motivation ($\beta = .096$, $p = .678$) and self-regulation ($\beta = –.099$, $p = .682$) showed weaker contributions. Table 13 shows this data.

Table 13

Multiple Regression Predicting Reading Comprehension from Motivation Constructs

Predictor	β	*p*	R^2
Intrinsic Motivation	0.353	.145	.104
Extrinsic Motivation	0.096	.678	—
Self-Regulation	-0.099	.682	—

Note. Multiple regression analysis examining the relationship between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and self-regulation as predictors of reading comprehension scores. The overall model was not statistically significant, $F(3, 24) = 0.93$, $p = .440$, with $R^2 = .104$. Although intrinsic motivation showed the strongest predictive trend, none of the variables were significant predictors.

The findings from both the correlation and regression analyses suggest that, in this small sample, students' motivational orientations were not significantly associated with their Spanish reading comprehension scores. However, the positive trend observed between intrinsic motivation and reading performance (in both correlation and regression models) may suggest a

potentially meaningful relationship that could emerge with a larger, more statistically powerful sample. Importantly, the strong associations between motivation and self-regulation reinforce the idea that motivational qualities may contribute to students' behavioral engagement and learning strategies, even if they do not directly correlate with immediate performance outcomes.

Motivation, Emotion, and Reading

To further explore how motivational and emotional factors may jointly influence reading comprehension, a set of Pearson correlation analyses was conducted using a subsample of students ($n = 28$) who had matched data across motivation, emotion, and reading variables. This analysis aimed to examine the broader interplay among self-regulation, motivational constructs (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation), and academic emotions (positive and negative), and how these relate to students' reading comprehension performance.

Pearson correlation was selected for this phase of analysis because it allows for a straightforward examination of bivariate relationships among continuous variables, especially when working with relatively small samples (Kausar, 2025). This method provides insights into the strength and direction of associations, highlighting whether certain patterns found earlier in the data persist when emotional and motivational constructs are examined together. By including all relevant predictors in a single matrix, this analysis provides a more comprehensive view of how these psychological dimensions may be interrelated and jointly influence reading performance.

Correlation

The results reveal that self-regulation was positively and significantly correlated with intrinsic motivation ($r = 0.525$, $p < 0.001$), extrinsic motivation ($r = 0.433$, $p < 0.001$), and positive emotions ($r = 0.479$, $p = 0.002$). These findings suggest that students who exhibit higher

levels of motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, also tend to manage their learning behaviors more effectively. Additionally, students who experience more positive emotions during reading appear better able to self-regulate. In contrast, self-regulation was negatively associated with negative emotions ($r = –.328$, $p = .045$), suggesting that emotional distress may disrupt students' ability to stay focused and organized during reading tasks.

As expected based on previous analyses, positive and negative emotions were strongly negatively correlated ($r = –.482$, $p < .001$), confirming that these affective states operate as psychological opposites in this context. While intrinsic motivation was positively correlated with positive emotions ($r = .233$) and negatively (though weakly) correlated with negative emotions ($r = –.132$), neither association reached statistical significance in this smaller subsample. Similarly, extrinsic motivation showed a modest positive correlation with positive emotions *(*$r = .325$, $p = .050$) and a non-significant negative correlation with negative emotions ($r = –.147$). Table 14 lays out the correlations among motivation, emotion, and self-regulation.

Table 14

Correlations Among Motivation, Emotions, and Self-Regulation

Variable Pair	***r***	***p***
Self-Regulation – Intrinsic Motivation	0.525	< .001
Self-Regulation – Extrinsic Motivation	0.433	< .001
Self-Regulation – Positive Emotions	0.479	.002

Self-Regulation – Negative Emotions	-0.328	.045
Positive Emotions – Negative Emotions	-0.482	< .001
Intrinsic Motivation – Positive Emotions	0.233	n.s.
Intrinsic Motivation – Negative Emotions	-0.132	n.s.
Extrinsic Motivation – Positive Emotions	0.325	.050
Extrinsic Motivation – Negative Emotions	-0.147	n.s.

Note. Pearson correlation coefficients are shown. $^{**}p < .05$. n.s. = not significant. Self-regulation was significantly positively correlated with both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and positive emotions, and negatively correlated with negative emotions. Positive and negative emotions were strongly negatively correlated, consistent with theoretical expectations.

Total Integration of Quantitative Data

These findings align with the earlier reported results, suggesting that positive emotions and self-regulatory strategies are essential contributors to students' reading experiences in the world language classroom. The correlations among variables reinforce the idea that emotions and motivation work in tandem to influence reading, with self-regulation serving as a potential bridge between students' feelings and their performance. Although reading comprehension scores were

not significantly associated with motivational constructs in this smaller matched sample (as described earlier), the broader relational patterns observed here continue to emphasize the importance of fostering both emotional and motivational well-being in adolescent language learners.

In summary, the quantitative findings suggest that novice-level middle school Spanish students' emotional experiences were significantly related to their reading comprehension outcomes. Specifically, students who reported more positive emotions (such as enjoyment, confidence, or pride)tended to score higher on reading assessments. In contrast, those who experienced more negative emotions (such as frustration, boredom, or anxiety) tended to perform lower. Although motivational variables, such as intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and self-regulation, did not directly predict reading comprehension scores in this study, they were significantly associated with students' emotional experiences. These findings suggest that motivation may indirectly influence reading performance by shaping how students feel during reading tasks.

To better understand how these emotional and motivational dynamics play out in students' lived experiences, the following section explores qualitative interview data. These student interviews provide rich insight into how novice-level learners perceive reading in Spanish class, including the emotions they associate with it, the types of support that help them engage, and the factors that either encourage or inhibit their motivation. Through these firsthand accounts, the data offer deeper context to the quantitative trends and illustrate the human side of second-language reading in middle school classrooms.

Qualitative Data

The qualitative component of this mixed-methods study examines the emotional and motivational experiences of novice-level middle school Spanish students as they participate in reading tasks. Ten of the middle school participants were also interviewed: three 8th-grade girls, two 8th-grade boys, three 7th-grade girls, and two 7th-grade boys. All of these students were in Spanish 1 classes and also took the surveys and reading comprehension assessment. None of the students were heritage or native Spanish speakers, although one did have family in Mexico. Drawing on these student interviews, this section offers rich narrative descriptions of how learners perceive and emotionally respond to reading in the target language, and how these responses affect their comprehension. Using SDT and CVT as guiding frameworks, students' voices reveal key psychological constructs (such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness) and affective states (including enjoyment, anxiety, pride, and frustration) (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Pekrun, 2006). Through their reflections, a more complete picture emerges of how classroom experiences support or hinder engagement with world language texts.

Thematic Analysis

This study employed thematic analysis as the primary method for analyzing the qualitative data collected from the interviews. Thematic analysis is a commonly used method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data. Following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), the analysis aimed to explore how students described their emotional and motivational experiences in relation to reading in Spanish class. This approach is particularly well-suited to educational research, where researchers seek to understand participants' subjective experiences while also connecting them to theory.

Familiarization

The first phase of analysis involved familiarization with the data. After conducting interviews and collecting written responses, I reviewed the transcripts multiple times. While reading, I made notes about recurring ideas. This reading helped me to become deeply acquainted with the content and context of student experiences. Early notes informed the next step of analysis, where initial ideas about possible themes began to emerge organically from the data.

Generating Initial Codes

In the second phase, I manually generated initial codes. While the coding process was inductive, meaning codes were derived directly from the data rather than from a pre-existing list, it was also informed by two theoretical frameworks central to this study. These frameworks were SDT and CVT (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Pekrun, 2006). Coding was completed independently, without the use of qualitative software, to remain closely connected to the data and grounded in the students' actual language.

Searching for Themes

Once the data were coded, I began grouping similar codes into categories that reflected broader patterns across interviews. For example, comments about peer support, teacher encouragement, and reading with classmates were grouped under the theme of relatedness. Similarly, student expressions of joy, pride, and humor during reading were examined as part of their emotional engagement with texts. This third phase required close attention to theoretical alignment and coherence across responses. Each category was evaluated to ensure it reflected a meaningful pattern rather than isolated instances.

Reviewing Themes

The next phase involved reviewing and refining themes. During this stage, I returned to the raw data to ensure that each theme was supported by sufficient evidence and clearly distinct from others. I examined how well the themes aligned with the research questions. This process confirmed the relevance of the themes. It also helped eliminate overlapping or redundant themes, ensuring the final set captured the essence of students' emotional and motivational experiences.

Defining and Naming Themes

Finally, the themes were named, defined, and linked explicitly to the study's research questions. Each theme was constructed to reflect students' voices while also being grounded in the constructs of SDT and CVT. For example, the theme of autonomy included student quotes about choosing how and with whom to read. In contrast, the theme of autonomy included moments when students discussed either managing or struggling with unfamiliar texts. These themes are presented in the findings section, with verbatim quotations to illustrate how middle school students perceived their emotions, motivation, and reading comprehension in Spanish class.

Overall, this thematic analysis provided a systematic, theory-informed approach to exploring the emotional and motivational dimensions of language learning. The process ensured that themes were grounded in the students' lived experiences and the established constructs of educational psychology. By using this approach, the study offers an interpretation of student voice that highlights how classroom environment, emotional support, and instructional design interact to shape world language reading experiences.

RQ 1: Emotional Experiences

This section presents findings on **Research Question 1**, **which examines the emotional experiences of novice-level middle school Spanish students as they engage in reading activities**. Drawing on Control-Value Theory (Pekrun, 2006), this analysis examines how students described their positive and negative emotional responses to reading in Spanish class. While students did report moments of anxiety, frustration, or embarrassment, the interviews overall had a positive tone, highlighting joy, pride, hope, and motivation. These findings are organized into two main categories: positive emotions and negative emotions. Each is explored through a detailed narrative and the students' own words.

Positive Emotions: Joy, Pride, and Hope

Students frequently described feeling genuine enjoyment while reading in Spanish class. Much of this joy stemmed from classroom activities that were playful, creative, and interactive. One student said, "When we read funny stories, it does not even feel like school." Another added, "We laugh so hard that I remember the words better." Another 8th-grade girl mentioned that when she reads books, she chooses them herself and often understands the jokes. She shared, "I will read something and just start laughing because its so ridiculous, so funny, I'm just like 'What am I even reading'... Then I want to show my friends in class because they will think it's funny too, maybe". One 7th grade girl recalled a particular book about a sloth that, "left her house with another animal on a motorcycle and our teacher joked about her wanting a bad boy… it was really funny." Dramatizations and humor appeared to be particularly powerful as one 7th grade boy shared, "sometimes we act things out from the and we just get to play around, but then I remember it." These experiences transformed reading from a task into something playful

and engaging. “I like having Spanish with my teacher, and it's just, like, amazing to learn it,” another student reflected.

There also seemed to be a strong preference for fictional books, or books about stories the participants had not heard before. Four students mentioned this specifically. One 8th-grade boy was discussing his favorite texts from the year and said that he liked that they are “different than from the stories here [Oklahoma]... Because we might have already know most of the stories here.” The same students later brought up that he had really enjoyed a book they read about a cursed piñata “ that came back to life and it was like stalking these people, these friends, and it rode past them on a motorbike, and it was just like, like haunting them, I guess you could say. And I think that I understood it, and it made it a positive experience”. A 7th grade girl added to this topic when she said that the books in Spanish tend to “be fun, like, not just a boring story.” She also reflected on the first book they read in the class and how that experience was different from the last one. “I just think, like, Perezosa, you could… predict the ending, which is something I don’t like. But I feel like Mata la Pinata, I didn't expect them to, like, see the little papelito at the end, right?... So it was more like a real book that I would actually read.” Another 7th-grade girl added that she liked fictional stories more, “as opposed to, like, nonfictional stuff. Like, if it's, like, everyday life, then that's kind of boring.” Finally, a 7th-grade boy claimed, “ new stories make you want to read more stories”, highlighting the importance of novelty.

Pride was also evident as students noticed their own growth. “It's really rewarding... like I achieved a milestone,” said one eighth-grade girl. Another echoed this sentiment: “Oh, my gosh. Yes. I'm a genius. I speak Spanish. Like, I understand it. I am totally fluent in it now.” Students also shared how understanding a complete sentence, or even a whole story, without help was a moment of celebration. Even more, three students mentioned feeling really proud when they

were able to read Spanish outside of class. One 7th-grade girl stated that, “ if I see like something in Spanish, when I'm out of like, school and I sometimes see Spanish and get it. That is exciting.” Another 8th-grade girl added that “It feels like super, like special, because you know, like another language. You can kind of like show off.” An 8th-grade boy, who otherwise did not like his Spanish class, said he was proud that he could read one of his uncle’s newspapers in Spanish.

Even students who had missed school or started late expressed positive surprise at their own progress. “I was just, like, surprised by myself because I, like, knew it and knew what was going on,” said one student who had returned after an illness. Another shared, “Every week I understand more. It makes me feel like I can really do this. Hope emerged as a quieter, but no less critical, emotional thread. Students understood that fluency was a process and expressed confidence in their ability to grow. “I’m not great at it yet, but I know I’ll get better,” one said. Another summarized the long-term perspective: “It just surprises me how much Spanish I’ve learned.”

Negative Emotions: Anxiety, Frustration, Shame, and Boredom

Despite the dominant positive tone, students did share instances of emotional struggle, especially in early learning phases or during public reading tasks. Anxiety was the most frequently mentioned negative emotion. “I would say I feel more nervous... I’m nervous that I'll pronounce something wrong,” one student admitted. Another described the fear of translating aloud: “Sometimes I kind of totally forget what it says, and it's, like, kind of embarrassing.”

Frustration was typically associated with difficulties in vocabulary or recall. “I get really frustrated because... I've heard it multiple times. Why don't I remember?” asked one student. This feeling often emerged when students expected to recognize a word but couldn't retrieve it.

While shame was rarely named explicitly, it emerged in how students described moments of self-consciousness. “It's kind of embarrassing... everybody seems to know what it means most of the time,” one student said. Another offered, “Sometimes I feel dumb when I get a word wrong.” These comments highlight the vulnerability that can come with language learning, especially in public contexts.

Boredom was the least discussed emotion, but it appeared in specific reading formats. “It’s boring when we just read by ourselves,” said one student, suggesting that engagement was linked to interaction and novelty rather than the task of reading itself. One 8th grade boy said that he did not think reading in Spanish class was important because he often felt bored saying, “there’s not alot of depth to them [the books]”. As mentioned earlier, it seemed like boredom while reading was more often mentioned with genre or the reading activity, rather than the students only finding the act of reading a book boring. That is, for middle school language learners, tasks and genres seem to serve as ways to combat reading boredom.

Resilience and Emotional Support

Significantly, even when discussing emotional challenges, students almost always followed up with a strategy or support that helped them cope. Classmates and teachers played a central role in this emotional resilience.

“My friends always help me if I’m stuck,” said one student. Another noted, “Our teacher is really encouraging. She says we’re all learning and not to worry.” These relationships provided a buffer against the pressures of public speaking, unfamiliar words, or moments of confusion. Students also developed internal strategies. “If I don’t know what something says, I look around for the clues on the wall,” explained one student, referencing visual supports in the classroom. In fact, five students mentioned looking around the room for vocabulary help. Another said, “I just

try to sound it out or ask a friend." A couple of students mentioned specific reading strategies, such as skimming the text before reading, using context clues, keeping their own student-made dictionary, and using the dictionaries in the back of some books. These coping mechanisms reflect both metacognitive skill and growing confidence.

One 8th-grade boy summed up his feelings about language learning positively when he said, "Well, like, I…think about, like, how I'm still new to it. So, and I'm still trying to understand it… I don't expect to yet. So it's still, like, okay to be not knowing everything, how to pronounce everything. And I just tell myself, I guess that it's okay to pronounce things, not exactly how they are supposed to do. We're still learning Spanish currently. So it's not like an annoyance or anything."

Summary of Emotional Experience Findings: Emotional Richness and Growth

The emotional experience of reading in Spanish class was diverse, but fundamentally growth-oriented. While students experienced nervousness, frustration, and embarrassment at times, these were often offset by feelings of joy, pride, and hope. They articulated their emotions with self-awareness and reflected a straightforward narrative of improvement and support. Their voices show that, with the right structures in place (supportive peers, creative teaching, and opportunities to succeed), second language reading can be joyful and empowering.

RQ2: Motivation

This section addresses **Research Question 2, which examines how middle school students in a novice-level Spanish class perceive their sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness while reading in the target language**. These three components, central to Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), are critical to fostering intrinsic motivation and engagement. Drawing on student interviews, this section offers an in-depth analysis of how these

needs were met or challenged in the classroom reading context, highlighting student voice through direct quotations.

Perceived Autonomy: Choice, Control, and Self-Direction

Students frequently described experiences that indicated a sense of autonomy in reading activities. Autonomy was expressed through the ability to choose reading partners, select strategies for decoding unfamiliar words, and engage with the text. These opportunities empowered students to feel in control of their learning process. As mentioned before, students mentioned looking at the classroom walls for vocabulary help. Another shared, "I try to sound it out or ask a friend before I ask the teacher." These responses suggest that students were equipped with the necessary tools and felt encouraged to make independent decisions during reading tasks.

Partner reading was a recurring theme that reinforced autonomy through choice. A student said, "I like reading with someone I know. It helps me concentrate and not feel nervous." Another remarked, "Sometimes the teacher lets us pick partners, and that makes it easier. You're more comfortable." A 7th-grade girl recalled a partner reading activity where she got to help her friend because she "understood the full sentence that my partner was reading, and it just made me feel really good, because it was like a sentence that she didn't understand. And so I was like, whoa. I just learned that whole sentence by myself." These preferences show that the freedom to collaborate with peers fostered a sense of control. Even more, when students read with a partner, they still recognize their own abilities and achievements.

In addition to logistical autonomy, students also mentioned taking creative liberties in their reading. One said, "Sometimes I make up my own voice when I read aloud. It makes it more fun." Another described marking up texts in a personal way: "I like highlighting or circling stuff I understand. It helps me remember." One 8th-grade student mentioned that her teacher gave

them time every week to choose their own book to read, and that this was her favorite part of class. These actions reflect both metacognitive awareness and emotional investment in learning.

Students often mentioned using personal strategies for decoding texts without relying on the teacher. “I look at the pictures and try to guess,” said one. Another added, “I break the word into parts I know or think about if it's a cognate”. One 7th-grade student even mentioned asking his friends for synonyms to a word instead of the translation, “so I could try and figure it out.” These behaviors illustrate students' growing confidence and initiative when faced with unfamiliar content.

Perceived Competence: Growth, Mastery, and Confidence

Seven of the students articulated a strong sense of progress in their reading ability. This growing competence contributed significantly to their motivation and sense of achievement. An 8th-grade girl said, “Most of the time when, like, you, or like when you remember or hear a word that like, you've been trying to remember or understand. That's really exciting when, like, you hear it, and you’re like ‘oh, I know that word”. One 7th-grade boy compared it to learning to read in his first language: “I feel like you have to read a lot of the language. I read a lot when I was younger. I feel like I was way ahead in reading and just English in general, like in the first grade. So I feel reading always helps. I mean, for sure, it's how a lot of people learn vocabulary.” Two students described tangible milestones in their reading journey. One said, “Now I can read a full paragraph without stopping. Before, I had to ask a lot.” Another noted, “I was just, like, surprised by myself because I, like, knew it and knew what was going on.” Such remarks reveal that students were aware of their academic growth and were proud of their increasing fluency.

Students also pointed to the role of repeated exposure in building their confidence. “We go over the words a lot before the story,” said one of them. “So when I read it, I already kind of

know what it means." Another shared, "When we reread the story the next day, I'm faster. I don't need to stop as much." One 7th-grade student also mentioned activities they do outside of reading helped him when reading, such as "a simple question asking me to, like, draw something or, like, write something, like, our bell work. It's really easy to understand [the book] because, like, we go over those words, like, every day." These comments suggest that strategic scaffolding helped students internalize vocabulary and reading patterns.

The ability to self-correct and persist also reflected competence. One particularly confident 8th-grade boy claimed, "I just don't get frustrated", while others did express frustration, but described how they were able to move forward. "Even if I mess up, I try again," said one student. "I don't get embarrassed anymore." Another said, "I used to hate reading out loud, but now I kind of like it. I know I can do it." One 7th-grade boy mentioned a specific strategy that he uses, " just taking deep breaths and just. Yeah. Just trying to calm down. Think about what we've learned. And just tell myself, you know, I've got this, it's easy." Such shifts in self-perception signal an increasing sense of self-efficacy and comfort with the target language.

Perceived Relatedness: Connection, Support, and Classroom Belonging

Students consistently emphasized the importance of social connection in their reading experiences. Relatedness emerged through relationships with classmates, teacher encouragement, and classroom culture. One 8th-grade girl shared, "I felt like I hadn't learned anything, and then my teacher told me that I obviously had because I laugh at his jokes in Spanish." Another 8th-grade girl said, "I have good friends in class and they help me." These simple but powerful statements illustrate the emotional safety students felt when reading together.

Reading activities such as choral reading or partner work contributed to a shared sense of purpose. "When we read all together, it feels less scary," one student noted. "You're not the only

one making mistakes." Another added, "I like it when we read out loud together. It feels like a group. I can look at my friend when something crazy happens. Like 'Woah!'" Students also described bonding moments that arose through reading. "I remember the story where the dog couldn't stop dancing," one said, laughing. "We all kept saying the silly line, and I still remember it." Another shared, "The piñata story was so funny. Everyone was laughing when they got chased by the piñata on a motorcycle." These emotionally resonant moments built classroom rapport and connectedness. Some students also commented on how mutual struggle created camaraderie. "We all mess up sometimes," said one student. "But we help each other. No one makes fun of you." Another agreed, "It's like, we're all trying. It's okay to not know everything." This culture of peer support significantly reduced anxiety and promoted risk-taking in reading.

Summary of Motivation Findings: Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness in Action

Interview data reveal that autonomy, competence, and relatedness were deeply embedded in students' reading experiences. Students felt a sense of choice in how they approached tasks, confidence in their growing abilities, and a sense of emotional safety within their classroom community. Their voices reflect a dynamic and affirming learning environment where motivation was cultivated through meaningful engagement and supportive social structures. These findings underscore the importance of fostering all three psychological needs to enhance student motivation and reading success.

RQ3: Reading, Emotion, and Motivation

This section explores **Research Question 3, examining how novice-level middle school Spanish students perceive the influence of their emotions and motivation on their reading comprehension.** Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as Control-Value Theory (Pekrun,

2006) and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), this analysis reveals that students' emotional states (both positive and negative) profoundly shape their ability to interpret and retain content. In addition, motivational drivers such as perceived success, peer support, and enjoyment help students engage more deeply with texts, even when faced with linguistic challenges. All findings are supported with verbatim quotes from student interviews.

Positive Emotional States Enhance Comprehension

Nine students reported that positive emotions emerged when they recalled or recognized Spanish words during reading. Students indicated that feelings of excitement and pride often accompanied these moments of recognition. They explained that these emotions increased their confidence and attention, which in turn supported their ability to comprehend the text. The data suggest that positive affect functioned as a reinforcing factor, encouraging persistence with difficult material and making comprehension more accessible.

Motivation and Peer Influence as Comprehension Catalysts

Motivational elements, particularly peer support and curiosity, played a critical role in comprehension. Students described actively using resources to help themselves understand texts. One student said, “I ask a friend that's next to me because I have this good friend in class... She's really good at Spanish. And I ask her, and she tells me what it means.” Another described the experience of figuring things out: “When you're like trying, like, to sound something out or something like that... and then, like, you hear it when it's put together and it sounds so much smoother and nicer.” In moments where students were given independence, they leaned into problem-solving. “I kind of like to sound it out and try to, like, have it, like, I just similar, like, word. That, like a cognate,” said one student, illustrating her growing awareness of language patterns and strategies.

Negative Emotions Disrupt Reading Processes

Despite many positive narratives, five students described how anxiety, frustration, and self-doubt negatively influenced their reading experiences. These emotions often created mental barriers that disrupted comprehension. Some students explained that nervousness about misunderstanding or misinterpreting a sentence made them hesitant to engage fully with the text. Others recounted feeling frustrated when they recognized that they had encountered a word multiple times before but still could not recall its meaning, which reinforced feelings of inadequacy. These emotional disruptions frequently led to hesitation or avoidance of the task. At the same time, three students described using coping strategies to manage these challenges. They reported drawing on available resources—such as asking a peer for clarification, referencing notes, or scanning the classroom environment for contextual clues—which illustrates resilience and resourcefulness even when experiencing negative emotions.

Engaged Reading Promotes Deeper Understanding

Engagement with content, especially humorous or narrative-driven stories, enhanced students' ability to recall and comprehend. "Well, I'm a fan of the stories and topics. I like that they're like easy to understand," said one student. Students also highlighted the connections between reading and other skills. "I feel like it helps more with listening to a lot of the time," one said. A 7th-grade girl asked, "Isn't it the same with writing? Like the more I write the better I read because I know the words? And then the more I read the better with writing because I can remember." This suggests an integrated approach to skill development, where comprehension reinforces other language domains.

Summary of Reading, Emotion, and Motivation Findings: Emotional-Motivational Pathways to Comprehension

The findings indicate that students' emotional and motivational experiences played a central role in shaping their reading comprehension in the middle school Spanish classroom. Positive emotions such as pride, accomplishment, excitement, and hope were consistently associated with persistence, attentional focus, and retention of meaning. When students successfully recognized or recalled a word, or when they managed to comprehend a text after effort, they described feelings of satisfaction that reinforced their motivation and sense of competence. These findings are consistent with research in positive psychology, which emphasizes the roles of enjoyment, pride, and hope in sustaining engagement and building resilience in language-learning contexts (MacIntyre et al., 2019). Similarly, they align with control-value theory, which highlights how positive achievement emotions foster deeper processing and more adaptive learning outcomes (Pekrun, 2006).

Conversely, negative emotions such as anxiety, frustration, and self-doubt frequently disrupted the reading process. Students reported that these emotions created mental blocks that interfered with concentration, sometimes leading to hesitation or avoidance. This pattern resonates with previous findings in world language learning that identify anxiety as a key barrier to performance and comprehension (Horwitz, 2001). Within the control-value framework, these negative emotions reflect low perceived control and high task value, leading to maladaptive learning experiences that undermine engagement with texts.

Despite these challenges, many students demonstrated coping mechanisms that enabled them to re-engage with reading tasks. Peer support, teacher scaffolding, and strategic tools - such as using notebooks, scanning the classroom environment for contextual clues, or seeking

clarification - were important in mitigating emotional disruption. These strategies echo prior research on learner self-regulation, showing that using cognitive and social resources can offset the effects of negative affect on comprehension. Additionally, engaging, personally meaningful content appeared to buffer against discouragement by sustaining interest and motivation, underscoring the importance of meaningful input in line with Krashen's (1982) comprehensible input hypothesis.

The qualitative data also provide insights into the complex and often contradictory emotional landscapes of middle school readers. Students frequently balanced nervousness with excitement, or frustration with pride, suggesting that emotional experiences in language learning are dynamic and fluid rather than static. Across the themes of emotional experience, motivational needs, and reading comprehension, the data underscore the influence of the social and instructional context. Classroom relationships, opportunities for peer interaction, and autonomy-supportive structures played an important role in shaping how students experienced reading tasks. These findings echo calls in the motivation literature (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Dörnyei, 2020) for environments that foster relatedness, competence, and autonomy in order to sustain learner engagement.

Importantly, even when students expressed difficulty or discouragement, they often displayed resilience and a willingness to persist. This suggests that negative emotions, while disruptive, did not necessarily preclude continued effort if adequate support and coping strategies were available. These findings highlight the need for emotionally safe, autonomy-supportive classrooms where students can take risks, recover from setbacks, and experience a sense of progress in their reading development.

Ultimately, the findings demonstrate that reading comprehension in a second language cannot be understood solely as a cognitive process. Instead, comprehension is deeply embedded within students' emotional and motivational experiences. By situating these findings within positive psychology, control-value theory, and second language acquisition research, the study contributes to a more holistic understanding of how middle school learners experience reading in Spanish. These insights highlight the importance of instructional approaches that integrate emotional well-being with cognitive development, creating conditions in which students can thrive both academically and affectively in their world language learning.

Synthesis: Mixed Methods Incorporation

Guided by a multistage mixed-methods approach, the current study first established an empirical map of the phenomenon and then explained it qualitatively (Ivankova et al., 2006). In Stage 1 (quantitative), statistical results showed that students experienced positive emotions more frequently than negative ones and that positive and negative emotion composites were strongly and inversely related. Crucially, positive emotions correlated with, and uniquely predicted, higher reading scores, whereas negative emotions correlated with, and uniquely predicted, lower scores. By contrast, motivational constructs related robustly to self-regulation, but did not directly predict reading in the small matched subsample. Taken together, these patterns provided preliminary answers to the research questions: (RQ1) students' emotional experiences during reading skewed positive; (RQ2) students reported relatively high extrinsic motivation and meaningful links between motivation and self-regulation; and (RQ3) emotions, more than motivation per se, bore a direct relationship to reading performance in this dataset. These results also generated the targeted "why/how" prompts that structured Stage 2.

Stage 2 (qualitative) followed the logic of an explanatory sequential design, sampling interviewees from the assessed population and using quantitative patterns to frame probes (Ivankova et al., 2006). Students' narratives clarified the mechanisms implied by Stage 1. For RQ1, learners described joy, pride, and hope arising from humorous, dramatized, and novel texts, while anxiety and frustration clustered around public performance and lexical gaps, explaining the observed polarity between positive and negative emotions. For RQ2, students provided concrete accounts of autonomy (choice of partners/strategies), competence (noticing growth, self-correction, fluency milestones), and relatedness (peer/teacher buffering), thereby illuminating the quantitative components of motivation during reading. For RQ3, students' descriptions showed how positive affect boosted attention, persistence, and strategic behavior, whereas anxiety and boredom disrupted focus.

Stage 3 (integration) generated meta-inferences. The convergence between statistics and student voice strengthens the view that emotions may function as proximal drivers of comprehension outcomes in novice L2 readers. At the same time, motivation shapes the regulatory and social conditions that make positive emotions more likely. In practical terms, the multistage design answers the three RQs by (a) characterizing students' emotional landscape (more positive than negative, with systematic within-valence differences), (b) situating motivation within an autonomy/ competence/ relatedness ecology, and (c) specifying an emotion-forward explanatory pathway to reading performance, with motivation operating primarily to enable beneficial emotions. The step-by-step structure of the multistage, explanatory sequential design was essential: quantitative results identified the patterns worth explaining; qualitative accounts provided mechanism and context; and their integration yielded coherent,

actionable explanations that would not have been as convincing if either strand stood alone (Creswell, 2014; Ivankova et al., 2006). Table 15 below summarizes the steps described above.

Table 15

Summary of Mixed-Methods Design and Findings

Stage	**Methodological Focus**	**Key Data Collection**	**Findings/Outcomes**
Stage 1: Quantitative	Statistical analysis of survey and reading scores	Administered emotion and motivation scales; conducted correlation and regression analyses	Positive emotions predicted reading comprehension; motivation correlated with self-regulation but not with comprehension
Stage 2: Qualitative	Explanatory interviews with selected students	Interviewed students based on survey results; coded themes aligned with RQs	Student narratives explained emotional patterns, motivational dynamics, and reading experiences.
Stage 3: Integration	Meta-inference development through data convergence	Synthesized quantitative trends and qualitative themes	Emotions seem to act as proximal drivers of reading comprehension;

			motivation may work with emotions via autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Conclusion and Chapter Summary

Taken together, the multistage, explanatory-sequential findings show a coherent story. Quantitatively, students reported more frequent positive than negative emotions during reading, and these emotions mattered for performance: positive emotions correlated with higher reading scores, while negative emotions correlated with lower scores. Motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) related strongly to self-regulation but did not directly predict reading, suggesting its primary role may be indirect. Qualitatively, students' narratives explained these patterns: joyful, novel, and interactive texts fostered pride, enjoyment, and hope that supported attention and persistence; anxiety and boredom clustered around public performance and lexical gaps, disrupting focus; and autonomy, competence, and relatedness experiences underpinned self-regulatory strategies and emotional resilience. In sum, the results indicate that emotions serve as primary drivers of comprehension, with motivation shaping the conditions that enable positive outcomes.

In Chapter 5, I interpret these findings through Self-Determination Theory and Control-Value Theory, articulate pedagogical implications for novice-level L2 reading, and consider study limitations. I also outline directions for future research, including expanding matched samples and examining task and genre effects more precisely. This discussion expands

the Chapter 4 evidence into actionable recommendations for classroom practice and an agenda for further inquiry.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how reading motivation and emotions influence reading comprehension among middle school students enrolled in novice-level Spanish courses. This study, grounded in self-determination theory (SDT) and control-value theory (CVT), examined how students' emotions (such as enjoyment, anxiety, and boredom), along with their motivation, influenced their engagement and overall comprehension in reading tasks (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Pekrun, 2006). Through analyzing these factors, the study sought insight into how emotionally supportive, motivation-rich classrooms might foster reading success and language acquisition in the middle school world language classroom.

It is important to note that the middle school years are also a time when engagement in learning can be either reinforced or strained by emotional factors (Terwilliger, 2025). In world language learning contexts, where students encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, syntax, and cultural materials, these emotional responses might significantly effect the learning process (Pishghadam et al., 2023). Nevertheless, there has been limited research focusing on how emotional and motivational constructs specifically influence reading comprehension in the middle school world language classroom. This study aimed to fill this gap and provide valuable insights into the unique emotional and motivational experiences of middle school students in beginning Spanish classrooms.

The study was centered on these three research questions:

1. In what ways might novice-level, middle school Spanish students emotionally experience reading in class?
2. In what ways might novice-level, middle school Spanish students perceive their sense of autonomy, relatedness, and competence when reading in class?

3. In what ways might the emotional and motivational feelings of novice-level, middle school Spanish students correlate with their world language reading comprehension?

These research questions were designed to offer a comprehensive view of students' experiences. The questions explore measurable relationships between constructs and students' personal explanations of their emotional and motivational states during Spanish reading tasks. Much of the existing research in second language acquisition regarding emotions and motivation has primarily focused on negative emotions (particularly anxiety) or targeted older populations, such as those in high school and university settings. As stated, this study focuses on middle school students in Spanish Iclassrooms. From a theoretical perspective, this study applies SDT and CVT to middle school world language reading, contributing to the existing body of research and prompting further study. In practice, the findings offer world language educators actionable insights into the emotional and motivational factors that relate to students' reading experiences, thereby empowering them to create more supportive and engaging classrooms.

To address the research questions and explore the interrelationships among motivation, emotion, and reading comprehension, the current study employed a multistage, explanatory-sequential mixed-methods design that combined quantitative and qualitative procedures. This methodological choice enabled a thorough analysis that integrated the strengths of both numerical data and rich descriptive insight. The participants were middle school students from three different Spanish 1 classes. The three middle schools were from the same public school district. Importantly, the researcher did not teach these students, thereby minimizing potential bias and enhancing the objectivity of the data collection process.

This mixed-methods study used two quantitative surveys with Likert-scale items, adapted from validated tools, to measure intrinsic motivation, perceived autonomy, competence, and

academic emotions, including pride, anxiety, and enjoyment. Further, the reading comprehension section of their district-wide final assessment was gathered to assess Spanish reading comprehension. The reading comprehension scores and the results from the emotions and motivation surveys were analyzed to identify trends and relationships. Additionally, I interviewed a sub-section of the students to gather quantitative data. The data analysis used both descriptive and inferential statistics for the quantitative results (surveys and reading comprehension assessment), as well as thematic coding for the qualitative data (interviews). This approach yielded a thorough understanding of the emotional and motivational factors that may affect students' reading comprehension in world language classrooms.

In this chapter, I will present the findings along with their potential connections to CVT, SDT, and Spanish reading comprehension. I will also suggest ways this study might add to and expand upon the current literature in these research areas. Then, I will present the study's implications, both theoretically (for research and the literature) and practically (for educators in the classroom). The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the study's limitations and delimitations.

Interpretation of the Findings

Reading motivation, emotions, and comprehension were examined in the study through surveys and student interviews. While Chapter 4 presented the statistical findings and discussed themes that emerged from interviews and their potential reinforcement, this chapter aims to explore how these findings advance, contradict, and elaborate on the existing literature in the relevant areas of study. Through the findings, two major themes were compiled: (a) positive emotions enhance Spanish reading experiences and outcomes, and (b) the interaction between emotions and motivation while reading in Spanish.

Positive Emotions Enhance Spanish Reading Experiences and Outcomes

This section explores positive emotions and their potential relationships to reading experiences and outcomes in world language classrooms. It integrates quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive picture of the findings. It also details specific approaches and strategies that students mentioned in their interviews regarding emotions: play, peer collaboration, and humor.

Significant Qualitative and Quantitative Findings on Emotions

This study provides empirical evidence that positive emotions significantly enhance Spanish reading experiences and outcomes in middle school world language learners. Across both quantitative and qualitative findings, positive emotional responses (joy, pride, and hope) emerged more frequently and more powerfully than negative emotions. Positive emotions were significantly associated with higher reading comprehension scores. These findings support previous work based on Control-Value Theory and highlight a growing trend in SLA research toward fostering positive emotional environments rather than mitigating negative emotions. (Pekrun, 2006; MacIntyre et al., 2021; Jin et al., 2021).

Positive Emotions

Positive emotions were significantly and positively correlated with reading comprehension ($r = .430$, $p < .001$) and emerged as a significant predictor in a regression analysis ($\beta = .273$, $p = .037$). These findings corroborate recent research by Shao, Pekrun, and Nicholson (2022), which identified that achievement emotions might mediate language performance. Additionally, the results indicate that students who experience positive emotions are significantly less likely to experience negative emotions ($r = –.475$, $p < .001$). These findings

are particularly meaningful because they acknowledge that emotions cannot only influence students' experiences but also shape and mold them.

The student participants in the current study expressed pride while reading in Spanish. Specifically, students felt proud when they could understand Spanish texts independently or apply their reading skills outside of the classroom. Several students expressed excitement when they independently understood an entire text. One student even mentioned that she could "show off" her skills to her friends and family. These findings align with Pekrun's (2006) three positive academic achievement emotions: pride, joy, and hope. These emotional markers clearly demonstrate the importance of fostering a positive affect in middle schoolers while reading in Spanish.

Negative Emotions

While positive emotions were prevalent in students' reflections on Spanish reading, negative emotions remained, particularly in social settings that students perceived as high-stakes. Students most frequently mentioned anxiety when reading aloud or translating in front of peers. Anxiety was often linked to a fear of mispronunciation or forgetting vocabulary. For example, one student stated, "I am nervous that I will pronounce something wrong," and another shared, "Sometimes I feel dumb when I get a word wrong." These findings mirror a longstanding and significant body of research on foreign language anxiety and align with findings that anxiety negatively correlates with reading (Horwitz et al., 1986; Teimouri et al., 2019; Saito et al., 1999; Bahmani & Farvadin, 2017). Likewise, these findings support CVT, which suggests that low perceived control, such as difficulty decoding unfamiliar words or lacking confidence in pronunciation, might lead to negative emotions like anxiety and shame (Pekrun, 2006).

Self-Regulation

Students rarely reported anxiety-driven avoidance behaviors when it came to reading. Instead, students often mentioned coping strategies along with the challenges they experienced. Several students mentioned using classroom visuals, taking deep breaths, saying affirmations, seeking help from peers, or skimming before reading the entire text. These findings contrast with research that suggests foreign language anxiety typically leads to withdrawal or avoidance (Dykstra et al., 2023). On the contrary, these results may indicate that reading provides opportunities for self-regulation. In their study of English language learners, Novianti and Tersta (2024) found that structured reading activities promoted metacognitive strategies and encouraged students to regulate their own learning processes. These findings reinforce the idea that reading can foster independent learning and self-directed growth. Boredom was the least reported emotion among students, but it did emerge, primarily related to specific reading tasks or genres. One student commented, "It's boring when we just read by ourselves." This observation corresponds with the findings from Li et al. (2023) and Pawlak et al. (2020), who argue that repetitive or seemingly meaningless reading tasks can be boring for students. In the current study, boredom was usually associated with the text type or reading task rather than the act of reading in and of itself.

Alignment With CVT and SDT

The emotional patterns identified in this study closely align with activating and deactivating emotions in the CVT framework. CVT posits that activating emotions (such as enjoyment, hope, and anxiety) promotes engagement and effort. In contrast, deactivating emotions (such as boredom, hopelessness, and shame) might lower motivation and persistence. These emotions emanate from learners' judgements of the perceived control and value of the

task. In this study, students who felt confident in their reading comprehension and found the content interesting reported experiencing emotions like enjoyment, pride, and hope. These positive emotional responses were positively correlated with the students' engagement behaviors and higher reading comprehension scores. These findings support CVT's assertion that high levels of perceived control and value might predict both positive emotions and academic success (Shao et al., 2022; Khajavy, 2023).

Interestingly, this study continues to present an interpretation of negative emotions within the context of middle school world language learning. While feelings of boredom and shame were often linked to disengagement, anxiety emerged as a more complex emotional state. Some students reported that anxiety was an obstacle. However, it also seemed to serve as a motivator when the students said they felt supported. One student, for example, joined the course late and expressed anxiety about being behind in reading a class novel. Despite these difficulties, she worked closely with a peer and received consistent support from the teacher. Over time, her comprehension improved, and she developed a sense of pride.

Learning Environments

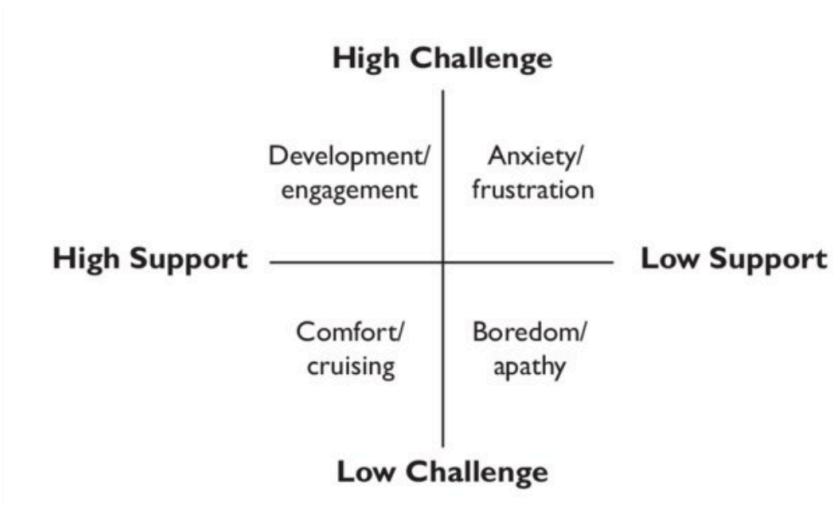
The student's experience illustrates how emotional responses are shaped not only by internal evaluations but also by the learning environment and the relationships within it. Although a full discussion of sociocultural theory is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is worth briefly considering its relevance to the present findings. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes that learning is a socially mediated process and occurs most effectively within the zone of proximal development, where learners engage in tasks slightly beyond their independent capability with appropriate support (Vygotsky, 1978). This theoretical perspective highlights the importance of guided interactions, whether from teachers or peers, in helping students overcome

academic challenges. In the context of this study, such support appeared to moderate students' emotional responses to demanding academic tasks.

This framework aligns with the "high challenge, high support" model, which asserts that students are more likely to thrive when cognitive demands are accompanied by sufficient scaffolding (Mariana, 1997; Hammond, 2015). Figure 4 below, by Michell and Sharpe (2005), illustrates this relationship. When students in this study encountered difficult reading tasks, their emotional responses were closely tied to whether they received structured assistance. Rather than simply experiencing anxiety as a negative force, some students came to view it as part of the learning process when it happened in a supportive environment. These findings mirror previous research indicating that well-scaffolded academic challenges can help transform emotional tension into productive engagement (Baroa et al., 2023).

Figure 4

Model for High Challenge and High Support



Overall, this study extends existing research on the dual nature of academic emotions and suggests that both internal appraisals and external classroom dynamics and interpersonal relationships influence learners' emotional activation. While CVT and SDT offer valuable

frameworks for understanding how learners evaluate their experiences and develop motivation, their insights can be deepened through integration with sociocultural perspectives. When considered together, these frameworks reveal a more holistic picture of how social support, peer collaboration, and meaningful classroom interactions shape learners' perceptions of internal appraisals of control and value. By incorporating elements of sociocultural theory, this research demonstrates the importance of both individual agency and relational dynamics, highlighting the powerful interplay between challenge, support, and emotional development.

Play

Students described reading experiences characterized by humor, novelty, and peer interaction as the most positive and memorable. Students discussed acting out scenes in class and laughing with peers, which they claimed helped them retain vocabulary. These affective experiences align with the principles of play-based learning, where emotional engagement and cognitive stimulation reinforce one another (Hamdi et al., 2025). There is a significant body of research on early childhood and the benefits of play-based learning on language acquisition, oral language development, emotional safety, and risk-taking (Güneş, 2025). However, there seems to be considerably less literature on play-based learning in secondary education, and even less regarding world language students. This study prompts dialogue about the unique qualities of middle school-aged world language learners. It examines the potential benefits of integrating play-based learning into these contexts.

Peer Work/ Collaboration

Students described reading with peers in pairs or small groups as particularly enjoyable and supportive. One student highlighted the benefits of "ping-pong" reading (taking turns reading and translating aloud), which allowed for real-time clarification and questions without

the pressure of speaking in front of the entire class. Another student reflected on the social joy of sharing jokes in the text, emphasizing how reading with a friend created space for laughter and connection. These reflections reinforce research underscoring the role of peer-based learning in language classrooms. Namaziandost (2024) suggests that collaborative peer activities reduce anxiety and foster a growth-oriented mindset, while Rabahi and Makhlouf (2025) emphasized the importance of peer-based strategies in building learner autonomy and emotional support. Further, Bjorn (2023) demonstrated that peer collaboration in reading tasks can promote metacognitive reflection and engagement. These findings help explain why peer-supported reading strategies, beyond improving comprehension, also enhance emotional safety, confidence, and intrinsic motivation, adding qualitative depth to existing literature.

Humor

Students in this study frequently highlighted the role of humor in fostering positive emotional experiences during reading. Enjoyment often emerged when engaging with fictional texts, particularly those featuring comical or suspenseful plots. This aligns with research suggesting that humor in language-learning environments can reduce anxiety and increase learners' willingness to participate. For example, Dewaele et al., (2018) found that learners exposed to humorous instruction reported higher levels of enjoyment and lower anxiety, facilitating more active engagement. Similarly, Bell and Pomerantz (2016) emphasized that humor in second-language classrooms supports affective engagement and builds social bonds, thereby encouraging greater participation. In the current study, students consistently pointed to humorous texts and teacher-led jokes as motivators for reading. One student described a book about a cursed piñata as "so ridiculous" that it made reading feel more fun and approachable.

These findings reflect and extend prior work by demonstrating how humor not only reduces anxiety but can also increase intrinsic motivation (Qamar, 2025).

In summary, promoting positive emotional experiences can significantly improve world language reading comprehension. The findings support and expand on existing theories and research. Previous studies have validated instruments like the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale and the AEQ-FLC, but there have been few applications of these frameworks specifically to world language reading comprehension (Dewaele et al., 2020; Davari et al., 2022). This study therefore, offers a new perspective on how such measurement tools can be applied across various contexts. The results also fill a gap in the literature by focusing specifically on positive emotions reading in middle school world language classrooms, an area dominated by research on anxiety, general classroom affect, or age groups other than middle schoolers (Horwitz et al., 1986; Teimouri et al., 2019). This research promotes a shift towards enhancing positive emotions and fostering strengths-based learning environments, in line with ongoing research and work in positive psychology (MacIntyre et al., 2021; Chou, 2021).

The Interaction Between Emotions and Motivation While Reading in Spanish

This section addresses the roles of motivation and emotion in world language reading among novice-level middle school students. Although the statistical analyses in this study did not reveal significant direct relationships between motivation/emotions and motivation/reading comprehension, the qualitative findings and theoretical integration paint a more intricate picture. Specifically, students' emotional and motivational experiences emerged as critical to understanding how they engage with reading in the Spanish classroom.

The interpretation of these findings draws upon three key theoretical frameworks: SDT, CVT, and Positive Psychology. By interweaving these theories, the data both backs existing

literature and illuminates potential paths forward. I will start by introducing the quantitative and qualitative findings. Next, I will explain the connection between the basic needs of SDT and CVT appraisals. I will also address emotional regulation across both theories. Finally, I will describe these two theories and their findings from a positive psychology perspective.

Quantitative and Qualitative Findings: Motivation and Emotion Intertwined

From a quantitative standpoint, intrinsic, extrinsic, and self-regulation did not significantly predict reading comprehension scores in the matched sample. However, intrinsic motivation showed a positive trend (r = .244), suggesting that a significant relationship might emerge with a larger sample. The small sample size will be further discussed in the implications section of this chapter. More importantly, self-regulation was strongly correlated with both intrinsic motivation and positive emotions. This result suggests that motivated students were more emotionally engaged and more effective at managing their learning behaviors.

The qualitative data offered robust support for these trends. Students frequently referenced how emotional experiences influenced their motivation to engage with Spanish reading tasks. When they felt engaged, had supportive peers, or experienced successes, they reported feeling more willing to persist through challenges. The students also described using emotional regulation strategies such as deep breathing, asking for help, or reflecting on prior success. These coping strategies helped the students re-engage after moments of frustration or anxiety.

Basic Needs of SDT and Appraisals of CVT

According to Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000; 2020), learners thrive when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met. These needs were clearly evident in students' accounts. Autonomy surfaced when students described choosing reading

partners, using personal strategies, or adapting student's reading aloud. Competence appeared in narratives about reading complete sentences independently, recognizing previously learned words, or using their skills outside of class. Relatedness was evident in reported shared laughter, in helping peers decode texts, and in feeling emotionally safe during group reading tasks.

These basic needs were not only motivational, they were emotional anchors. Students expressed greater enjoyment and willingness to engage when they felt autonomous, competent, and relatedness (or connection) to their peers and teachers. CVT (builds on this by identifying perceived control and perceived value as central to shaping achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2006). Students felt in control when they could choose what to read and how to read it. Students valued the reading task when they found it humorous, saw the social potential, or used reading outside of class. The high level of control and value led to positive feelings such as joy, hope, and pride. Conversely, when students felt powerless in their reading approach or the content itself, they often mentioned feelings of boredom. They also discussed boredom in cases where they saw little value in a task, as one student noted: when reading a book they found too easy and childish.

Significantly, students' relationships with peers and teachers often increased the perceived value of reading. Sharing experiences and engaging in playful activities turned reading into something more than just an academic exercise; they became emotionally meaningful events, reinforcing both CVT and SDT constructs. This interplay fills a critical gap in SLA research by showing how motivation and emotion might co-emerge within classroom contexts, particularly at the middle school level, where emotional growth is heightened (Eccles & Roeser, 2009).

Emotional Regulation Across SDT and CVT

The data also demonstrates how students may actively regulate their emotions during reading. Within SDT, emotion regulation occurs through integrative emotion regulation (fulfills basic needs, supports flourishing, and integrates into self-perception) or controlled emotion regulation (lack of autonomy, diminishes, pressure-driven). Students described persevering through moments of anxiety or confusion by recalling prior success, pausing to breathe, or reframing mistakes as learning opportunities. For example, one student stated that "I just remind myself, like my teacher says, that I am just starting and I am not supposed to get it all perfect yet." These findings exemplify integrated emotion regulation; they illustrate the fostering of flourishing, support of the basic needs, and integration into the self. Conversely, one student mentioned that when they feel negative about reading in Spanish, they remind themselves that it is for high school credit. The student wants to leave space in their high school schedule for baseball. Regulating emotions through external factors that lack intrinsic value, as seen in the example, is an instance of controlled emotion regulation.

CVT, in contrast, offers a temporal view, distinguishing between prospective (anticipated outcomes) and retrospective (reflections on past success/failure) emotional experiences. For instance, some students reported feeling hopeful before starting a reading task and proud afterward when they felt successful. On the other hand, one student mentioned that he had initially thought Spanish class would be useless and, looking back, found all the novels in the class boring. These emotion feedback loops might sustain motivation over time, even when short-term difficulties arise. The emotion feedback loops can also contribute to strained motivation over time.

The integration of these frameworks provides a more comprehensive understanding of how emotion regulation functions in the language classroom. Rather than passively reacting to reading tasks, students in this study actively employed personal, social, and instructional strategies to manage their emotional experiences. This strategic engagement suggests that emotion regulation is a key mechanism by which motivation becomes behaviorally actionable. These findings align with Benita (2020), who emphasized that integrative emotion regulation, where learners make sense of their emotional experiences rather than suppressing them, positively contributes to engagement and volitional functioning. Similarly, Shao, Pekrun, and Nicholson (2022) found that achievement emotions might mediate the relationship between emotion regulation and language performance, reinforcing the idea that emotional control is a central driver of language learning outcomes. By examining how students drew on autonomy, relatedness, and competence to navigate emotional challenges, this study extends research grounded in self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020). It illustrates that emotion regulation is not only intrapersonal but also socially mediated in the context of middle school world language classrooms.

Findings through the Lens of Positive Psychology

Positive Psychology provides a unifying, student-centered framework for understanding the reciprocal relationship between motivation and emotion in world language reading. Unlike models that focus primarily on reducing negative affect, Positive Psychology centers joy, hope, pride, resilience, and emotional safety as essential supports to cognitive and emotional development in learning environments (MacIntyre et al., 2019). In this study, these constructs emerged from students' descriptions of their reading experiences in middle school Spanish class, where they frequently reported that positive emotions were central to comprehension and

persistence. As one student explained, “It feels really good when you understand something without help. It makes me want to keep trying.” This sentiment captures the foundational claim of Fredrickson’s (2001) broaden-and-build theory that positive emotions expand students’ cognitive and social resources and build long-term academic engagement.

The current study suggests that moments of joy, pride, and hope occurred when students successfully understood a passage, laughed with a peer, or helped another student with a complex sentence. These experiences seemed to lead to persistence, enhanced vocabulary recall, and positive emotional engagement with reading tasks. The pattern supports Fredrickson’s broaden-and-build theory in three ways:

- Broaden: Students reported increased creativity and openness (e.g., "I make up voices when I read aloud because it's fun") and a greater ability to consider different perspectives (e.g., understanding jokes or sarcasm in the text).
- Build: Positive experiences enabled students to develop psychological resources, such as confidence and optimism, and foster social connections through peer collaboration and shared laughter.
- Undoing Effect: Students who began the year feeling nervous about reading out loud described overcoming that fear through positive experiences and supportive environments. These positive moments appeared to counteract initial anxiety and promote resilience.

Quantitative data strengthened this interpretation. While intrinsic motivation was not a statistically significant predictor of reading comprehension, it did positively (though non significantly) correlate with self-regulation and positive emotions. Students with higher levels of positive emotions tended to report higher self-regulation. These behaviors are consistent with the

findings of Lo et al. (2025), which connect self-regulation and resilience to psychological well-being in second language learners. Further, Shahrokhi and Dehaghani (2025) demonstrated that L2 grit is correlated with motivation and a willingness to communicate. Even in the absence of statistical significance, these positive trends suggest meaningful relationships between motivation, emotion, and reading comprehension that merit further investigation with larger samples.

Several students described feeling anxious or disengaged at the start of the school year. Still, they noted that these feelings diminished as they experienced success and formed peer connections. For example, one student said that at first she was nervous to read aloud, but now knows that she can do it and no one will tease her. This transition reflects what Fredrickson (2001) calls the undoing effect of positive emotions. Fredrickson claims that positive emotional experiences help people recover from negative ones, return to an emotional baseline, and then re-engage with learning.

Importantly, Positive Psychology views emotional development as socially situated. Emotional experiences in this study were not isolated to individual feelings. Instructional choices, peer dynamics, and teacher support all played a role in shaping emotions. Students frequently attributed their positive feelings to classroom environments that emphasized care, curiosity, cooperation, and challenge, the four core emotions of Porter and Donaldson's (2025) emerging framework of Emotionally Motivated Pedagogy. For instance, several students described how teachers made reading "less scary" by offering praise and encouragement. Said experiences enhanced positive emotions and encouraged autonomy, competence, and relatedness, linking Positive Psychology to the foundations of SDT and CVT.

Thus, Positive Psychology not only complements but also helps integrate SDT and CVT into a cohesive, classroom-relevant framework. Emotional regulation in SDT (defined as aligning emotions with personal values and goals) parallels the CVT concepts of perceived control and retrospective evaluation. Students in this study perceived being most successful when they believed their efforts could lead to success (perceived control), valued the learning task (perceived value), and felt socially supported (relatedness). When these conditions were present, positive emotions fueled motivation and, in turn, deeper engagement with texts. The broaden-and-build theory clarifies how these emotions might accumulate into resources that support language learning.

In sum, this study contributes to a growing and exciting body of research that supports an emotionally and motivationally positive model of world language education. Although the quantitative relationships between motivation and reading performance were not statistically significant, the qualitative data suggest that fostering positive emotions may be a powerful pathway to improved outcomes. By integrating Positive Psychology with SDT, CVT, and emerging theories such as Emotionally Motivated Pedagogy, educators and researchers can better understand how to create classrooms that empower learners to succeed in second-language literacy. The following section outlines the implications of these findings for educators and researchers.

Implications

This section outlines the implications of the study's findings for both practitioners and researchers. The study's mixed-methods design emphasizes student-centered implications by highlighting their voices and experiences in both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Also important to note, my epistemological approach for this research was rooted in

constructivism and pragmatism, two complementary perspectives that shape how knowledge is gained (actively rather than passively) and applied (with practical, “real-world” implications). The approaches are evident in the suggestions I provide in this section, which primarily focus on practical, deliberate implications.

Implications for Practitioners

The primary audience of this study is educators. Implications for educators (including classroom teachers, instructional coaches, curriculum developers, and school administrators) originate from what students shared about their reading experiences. These findings propose actionable steps to support the emotional and motivational parts of reading in middle school world language classrooms. The students' insights offer educators tangible opportunities to align instructional design with students' developmental needs, preferences, and affective experiences.

Administration and Instructional Design

To implement the following recommendations effectively, world language teachers must feel supported by their schools and districts. Research emphasizes the importance of teacher autonomy, such as choosing materials and adapting instruction, and the emotional and professional support needed to sustain motivation. These factors are closely tied to resilience, particularly in world language contexts where teachers may be professionally isolated. Davis and Borden (2024) suggest that early career teachers draw on administrative and peer support, and professional agency to navigate the challenges of their first years, accentuating resilience as a dynamic, socially mediated process. Borden and Davis (2025) also assert that teacher retention depends on environments that foster autonomy and agency. This aligns with Mason and Poyatos Matas (2016), who identify meaningful professional relationships and social capital as critical to retaining world language teachers.

Given the unique demands of WL instruction, particularly for teachers who are often the only WL educator at their site, targeted professional support is critical. Instructional coaches and curriculum coordinators with foundational knowledge of second-language acquisition and the emotional/ motivational components of learning can provide meaningful guidance. Research highlights that coaching interventions not only improve instructional decision-making but also foster emotional resilience and teacher efficacy, particularly when they emphasize motivation, engagement, and reflective practice (Chaika, 2023; Barcelos & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018). These leaders are especially effective when they create collaborative spaces that reduce teacher isolation and support emotional well-being, which ultimately benefits student learning (King & Ng, 2018; Shao et al., 2020). Rather than applying a one-size-fits-all model from core content areas, instructional leadership in world language education should be responsive to the linguistic, cultural, and affective dimensions of both teaching and learning.

It is essential to recognize that sustainable instructional change cannot be achieved by simply telling teachers what to do. Instead, teachers need to work within supportive environments to enact the practices suggested in this dissertation. While this study focuses primarily on students' emotional and motivational experiences, it also points to broader systems that influence them, including the conditions under which teachers teach. Understanding this context is essential for understanding the implications that follow, as effective implementation depends not only on strong ideas but on the capacity and support for teachers to bring those ideas to life.

Classroom Teachers

The findings from this study offer several clear implications for classroom teachers, particularly those working in middle school world language settings. However, these

implications could potentially apply to any content area in middle school. Students' discussions suggested the importance of instructional decisions that support autonomy, competence, and relatedness and foster positive experiences while reading . The students' comments pointed to specific practices that made reading more enjoyable, less anxiety-inducing, and more meaningful, emphasizing that teachers may play a central role in shaping the climate of reading in the classroom. The following recommendations put these insights into actionable strategies, highlighting ways educators can leverage materials, humor, play, collaboration, and strategy instruction to cultivate positive emotions, strengthen motivation, and deepen comprehension.

Materials and Resources

Students' responses exemplified the importance of having access to a diverse collection of reading materials. Rather than being restricted to repeating the same texts year after year, teachers can adapt selections to their students' evolving needs. Students expressed preferences not only for specific genres (e.g., mystery, culture-based texts), but also for reading formats (e.g., individual, peer, or class reading) and tone (e.g., humorous vs. serious). Research shows that when students are given choices about what and how they read, they exhibit greater emotional investment and sustained engagement, particularly in language-learning settings where anxiety can otherwise hinder participation (Moradi & Ghabanchi, 2025). Moreover, reading self-selected texts has been linked to reduced cognitive load and improved vocabulary retention (Moussaoui, 2025). Therefore, site- and district-level policies should promote flexibility and personalization in selecting world language materials, while also providing the necessary support to obtain and implement these resources. This approach empowers educators to build collections that are both pedagogically sound and responsive to students' interests and affective needs.

Integrate Humor

Humor emerged as a powerful instructional tool in this study. Students reported feeling proud and connected when they could understand jokes in Spanish texts, and laughter during shared reading fostered a sense of community and positive emotions. These findings align with current research suggesting that humor can reduce world language anxiety and improve student engagement (Qamar et al., 2025). As a result, teachers should be encouraged to incorporate humorous texts and activities into their lesson plans. Additionally, forming relationships with students is crucial for gaining insight into their sense of humor, which aligns with the practice of forming a classroom discourse community (Glisan & Donato, 2017). This student-centered approach enables a culturally and developmentally responsive integration of humor in teaching. Potential ways that students identified for incorporating humor were:

- Texts related to their interests that included jokes or funny plots.
- Allowing the students to make appropriate jokes about the book.
- Making memes in the target language about story.
- Drawing pictures of events from the story and looking at each other's illustrations.
- Direct humor at content, not at language mistakes.

Utilize Play-Based Learning

Students named and remembered play-based learning activities happily, and reported that they improved their vocabulary recall and enjoyment. In other words, play strategies promote positive emotion and relatedness while also supporting vocabulary retention and reading fluency. Findings from this study suggest that playful activities promote pride, engagement, and a deeper connection to reading material. Teachers are encouraged to implement structured play in world

language classrooms, not simply as a reward or break, but as a core instructional strategy. Some play-based reading tasks that the students mentioned are:

- Readers' theater involves students playing characters from the text and acting out a scene in the target language.
- In the running dictation activity, students memorize sentences from a story and then relay them in the target language to their partner, who is at a different place.
- Virtual competition games, including online platforms such as Gimkit and Blooket.
- Using play-doh to sculpt characters or events in the text.

Plan for Peer Work and Collaboration

Peer collaboration supported autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Students reported that reading with a partner made them feel more confident, helped reduce anxiety, and gave them a sense of community. Students mentioned that they enjoyed receiving and providing help to their peers. This study suggests that peer reading tasks reduce boredom, enhance engagement, and support deeper comprehension. Given the centrality of relatedness in SDT, structured opportunities for collaborative reading should be prioritized in instructional planning. Two specific peer reading tasks mentioned by the students are:

- Ping-pong reading involves students taking turns reading and translating texts.
- Cloze reading involves students having a text with blanks and deciding which word should fill each one.

Teach Reading, Emotional, and Motivational Strategies

Students in the study consistently mentioned using reading and emotional regulation strategies when they felt stuck, frustrated, or anxious. While reading strategies might have been taught in L1 settings, not all students transfer them to world language contexts, and there is no

guarantee they will use them in their L1. World Language teachers are recommended to explicitly teach and scaffold reading strategies, ensuring that all learners have access to tools that foster autonomy and competence in L2 reading (Ruziyevna, 2025). Strategies included by the students in their interviews are:

- using word walls
- identifying cognates
- scanning for context clues
- skimming the text before a full read
- taking deep breaths
- affirmations
- choosing what book to read

Reinforce the Importance of Reading In and Out of the Classroom

Students described how reading helped them improve in other domains of world language learning. One mentioned that reading improved their vocabulary for speaking, and another said they could better visualize words when listening. Such experiences foster a high sense of value and perceived control over learning, which is a core principle of CVT. Teachers are encouraged to reinforce the idea that reading is foundational to all other skills and to help students see its relevance beyond the classroom.

Moreover, these findings might have broader relevance. Several students commented on their L1 reading habits and preferences. Given the well-documented decline in reading enjoyment across subject areas in middle school, the recommendations from this study may also benefit English Language Arts and other content-area instruction (Sacerdoti, 2024). Although English Language Arts, Literature, and Reading courses primarily focus on reading, all

content-area teachers are responsible for developing their students' literacy skills. Therefore, all content-area teachers, especially in middle school, are encouraged to use humorous texts, incorporate play, use peer-based reading strategies, teach reading strategies, and emphasize the importance of reading in and out of the classroom.

Implications for Research

This study contributes to and contextualizes several areas of research. Later in this chapter, I will state my ideas for future research. Additionally, Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive research synthesis. However, the following section will describe the immediate theoretical implications of this research.

Centralizing Positive Emotions

This study highlights how positive emotions (especially enjoyment, pride, and hope) might support better reading outcomes. While much research has focused on negative affect (e.g., anxiety), this study encourages researchers to explore further how positive emotional states support engagement and comprehension, and to shift their perspective on emotions in world language contexts.

Integrating Emotion and Motivation

This study reinforces the value of studying motivation and emotion as interconnected. Drawing on both SDT and CVT, it illustrates how emotion regulation, autonomy, perceived control, and value interact in meaningful ways. It also contextualizes prior literature by centering students' voices about the research topics. Researchers in education, instruction, and educational psychology are advised to examine further how these theories intersect and complement one another.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

All research includes limitations and delimitations, and this study is no exception. Researching in a public K–12 environment offered the opportunity to observe real-world middle school Spanish classrooms, but it also posed some challenges. Nonetheless, the study's strengths support the relevance and applicability of the results.

Limitations

1) One key limitation of the study is that it was conducted within a single school district. Although students were recruited from three separate middle schools, it is likely that Spanish teachers across the district collaborate regularly and share instructional strategies. This inter-teacher collaboration could have contributed to students' consistently positive emotional responses. Research suggests that teachers in districts with high collaboration tend to use similar strategies and report more positive student experiences (Levine, 2023). In districts with less collaboration or more varied teaching approaches, student responses may differ. Regardless, the consistency in positive experiences remains meaningful and informative.
2) Another limitation was the uneven distribution of participants across schools. One teacher's class made up more than half of the total population because more of their students returned signed assent, consent, and FERPA release forms. Therefore, findings may disproportionately reflect that specific teacher's instruction, classroom climate, and ability to foster positive emotional and motivational experiences. While this introduces potential bias, it also underscores the significance of strong teaching practices and emotionally supportive instruction, which are well-documented influences on student affective outcomes in language classrooms (Xu & Wu, 2025).

3) Procedural issues also limited quantitative data collection. One participating school, whose students made up the majority of the sample, did not administer the motivation scale. As a result, the subset of students with complete data across the motivation, emotion, and reading variables was small (N = 28), significantly limiting statistical power. The absence of these participants may also misrepresent motivational factors, as they completed the emotion survey and reading comprehension assessment. Consequently, these results should be interpreted with caution. However, the inclusion of substantial qualitative data from all sites helped triangulate findings and mitigate the limitations of missing quantitative responses, a practice for strengthening validity in small-sample mixed-methods research (Mahlatsi, 2025).

Delimitations

1) A considerable delimitation of this study is that the researcher is also currently a middle school Spanish teacher. Approaching the research from a classroom teacher's perspective allowed me to consider which questions to ask, how middle schoolers might behave during the study, and the practical implications of the findings. This dual positionality occurs in practitioner research and can enrich the inquiry by grounding it in authentic classroom realities, though it also requires careful reflection to account for subjectivity (Zeichner, 2007).
2) A considerable delimitation of the study is that the researcher did not teach the students. This decision helped eliminate potential bias during interviews and observations, as students may have felt more comfortable sharing their true thoughts and feelings about Spanish reading activities. The researcher's external status enabled more objective data

collection, consistent with findings that outsider status can enhance participant honesty and reduce perceived authority pressure (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

3) Another delimitation was the use of a standardized reading comprehension assessment already in use across the district for Spanish 1 students, including both middle and high school learners. This decision increased ecological validity by embedding the assessment into students' regular classroom practice, aligning with research supporting the integration of authentic tasks in naturalistic settings (Van den Branden, 2006). Additionally, this choice suggests that the study could be replicated in similar secondary-world-language environments, including high schools.

To conclude this section, while this study faced limitations in terms of sample diversity and data completeness, the robust qualitative findings and authentic classroom setting provide a valuable contribution to research on adolescent world language learning. Future research could address the identified limitations by expanding to multiple districts and striving for complete participation in all survey components.

Future Research

Following the discussion of the study's limitations and delimitations, this section presents several avenues for future research. While the current study offers essential insights into middle school students' reading motivation and emotional experiences in the world language classroom, further inquiry is necessary to extend these findings and address unanswered questions. Future research can build upon these results by expanding contextual diversity, increasing sample sizes, continuing to integrate mixed-method and qualitative approaches, and using the measurement tools in other contexts.

Instructionally Diverse Districts

One area for further investigation involves replicating this study in a larger or more diverse district. The current study's Spanish teachers were highly collaborative, often using similar instructional methods and materials. This cohesion could have contributed to the prevalence of positive emotions reported by students. Future research could investigate world language classrooms in districts where teachers have more autonomy, employ diverse curricula, or have limited opportunities for peer collaboration. Such contexts may produce a broader range of student emotional and motivational responses, offering a deeper understanding of instructional impacts.

Larger Sample Sizes

Although this study did not find statistically significant relationships between types of motivation and reading comprehension scores, observed trends suggested a potential link between intrinsic motivation and improved reading outcomes. A larger, more representative sample would allow for more robust inferential analysis and help validate or challenge these patterns. Future studies could collect complete datasets from all participants across all relevant measures to improve statistical power and generalizability. Completing the datasets could be accomplished by giving a more extended period of time to complete the study (eg, over an entire semester or academic year)

Mixed Methods and Quantitative Research

This study highlights the strength of mixed-methods research in middle school and world language settings. The combination of quantitative data with qualitative interviews provided a sweeping picture of student experiences. It clarified the emotional and motivational elements of reading, which are not easily captured by surveys alone. Future research should explore how emotions and motivation manifest in daily classroom practices through mixed-method and

qualitative designs. These research methods could uncover meaningful patterns and generate additional practical insights for educators.

Measurement Tools

The application of the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire for Foreign Language Learning (AEQ-FL) and SDT-based motivation scales in this study was a novel contribution to the field. However, the use of these tools in the middle school world language reading context is still limited. Further research should review the reliability and validity of these tools across diverse age groups, language levels, and instructional contexts. Additional studies may help determine the appropriateness of these instruments for broader educational use.

Heritage or Native Spanish Speakers

Future research should also examine how reading emotions and motivation unfold for heritage or native speakers of Spanish in school-based Spanish classes. Because these students often bring rich linguistic and cultural resources, their emotional and motivational experiences with reading may differ substantially from those of L2 learners, particularly in terms of identity affirmation, prior literacy experiences, and the relevance or challenge level of classroom texts. Investigating how heritage speakers experience emotions in relation to reading, and how those emotions relate to motivation and comprehension, could offer suggestions for supports that better align with their linguistic profiles and educational goals.

Overall, future research can extend this study's findings by addressing its limitations and expanding its scope. Emphasizing the emotional and motivational dimensions of learning, particularly in the world language context, can deepen our understanding of how best to support adolescent learners. Future research could enhance our understanding of reading in middle

school world language classes and in other content areas. The next and final section of this chapter and the dissertation summarizes the key findings and contributions of the study.

Conclusion

The relationship between reading motivation, emotions, and comprehension among novice-level middle school Spanish students remains an under-researched area, despite its growing importance in both adolescent literacy and world language education. This study used a mixed-methods approach to investigate how students perceive, experience, and regulate emotions while reading in a second language. By combining emotion and motivation survey data, reading assessments, and student interviews, the study captured both measurable patterns and lived experiences that characterize L2 reading among middle school learners. The inclusion of student voice was central to this research, helping to identify instructional conditions that promote not just comprehension, but also joy, safety, and meaningful engagement.

Findings from this study highlight the relevance of established theoretical frameworks such as Self-Determination Theory and Control-Value Theory of achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun et al., 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2020). Students who felt more autonomous, competent, and connected in their reading environments tended to report greater emotional regulation and motivation, echoing SDT's claim that these psychological needs are foundational for internal motivation. Likewise, the ways students valued reading tasks and perceived their control over them aligned with CVT's predictions of the emergence of positive emotions such as enjoyment, hope, and pride. These emotions were not merely byproducts of learning but appeared to support comprehension and persistence.

Beyond SDT and CVT, the study also highlighted the usefulness of integrating Positive Psychology frameworks. Positive emotional experiences, particularly enjoyment and laughter,

surfaced as critical to how students engaged with texts. This finding echoes research by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016), who emphasize that enjoyment can serve as a powerful catalyst for L2 learning, particularly when students are emotionally safe and socially supported. Similarly, Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory supports the idea that positive emotions expand cognitive resources and promote resilience, both of which are valuable in language learning contexts.

While not all quantitative findings reached statistical significance, positive correlations emerged between intrinsic motivation, positive emotions, and self-regulation. These trends are supported by previous work demonstrating that self-regulation and emotional well-being are associated with motivation and academic success among second language learners (Lo et al., 2021; Lamb et al., 2021). The current study builds on that work by suggesting that motivation becomes actionable through emotional regulation, especially when students use both personal and social strategies to navigate challenges. This was especially evident in student interviews, where learners described moments of self-awareness, humor, peer support, and strategic emotional management during reading tasks.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the fields of educational psychology and world language instruction by showing that emotions are not peripheral to learning. Instead, they are central to how students process, engage with, and make meaning from texts. Emotionally supportive classrooms where students feel seen, supported, and empowered can foster deeper learning. For middle school learners, especially those new to a world language, this kind of environment may be the key to developing long-term motivation and sustained interest in reading. The findings also offer practical implications. Instructional strategies such as play-based learning, humor, and peer tasks emerged as salient themes. These strategies made reading more

enjoyable and also helped students develop emotional and academic resilience. As world language educators continue to face pressures around assessment and performance, these findings serve as a reminder of the power of emotion to shape educational outcomes and student well-being.

While the current study offers essential insights into middle school students' reading motivation and emotional experiences in the world language classroom, further inquiry is necessary to extend these findings and address unanswered questions. Future research can build upon these results by expanding contextual diversity across geographic regions, school settings, and linguistic backgrounds to better understand how these factors influence motivation and emotion in L2 reading. Larger, more representative sample sizes would also allow stronger statistical generalizations. Continued use of mixed-methods and qualitative designs will be crucial for capturing both measurable patterns and the personal perspectives that shape students' reading experiences. Finally, researchers might test the measurement tools used in this study (including surveys and interview protocols) in other world language contexts to assess their validity and adaptability beyond reading in middle school Spanish classrooms.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interpretive Reading:

7 (100%) 6 (98%) Novice High	5 (95%) 4 (90%) Novice Mid	3（85%） 2（80%） Novice Low	1 (75%) Progressing	0 (50%) Not Measurable
Students can understand the main idea and infer the meaning of cognates related to familiar topics.	Students can understand some of the main ideas and recognize words, phrases, and characters with the help of visuals.	Students can recognize partial ideas and a limited number of words, phrases and characters.	Students can recognize limited ideas, and a few words, and phrases.	

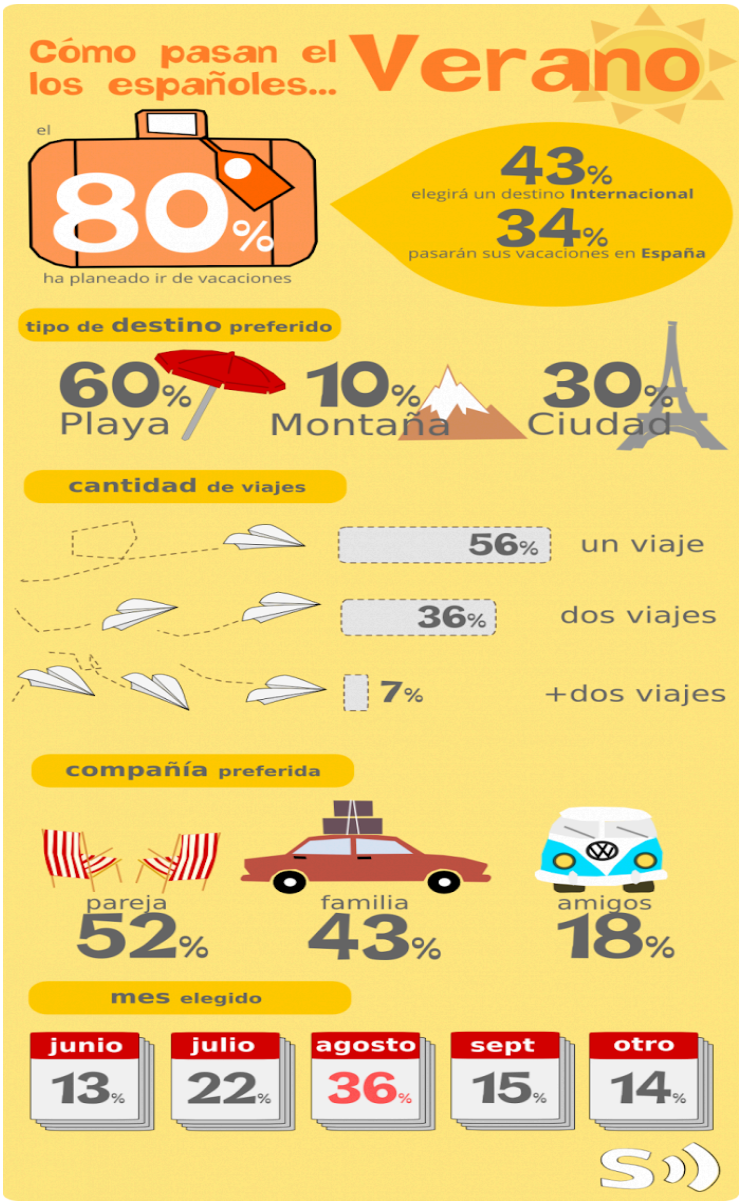
I. Look at the schedule below and answer the questions that follow.



1. What time does the restaurant open in the afternoons?
    a. 9:30
    b. 2:00
    c. 4:00
    d. 7:30
2. What day is the restaurant closed?
    a. Monday
    b. Wednesday
    c. Friday

d. Sunday

II. Look at the infographic below and answer the questions that follow.



1. What is the **main** topic of the infographic?
    a. How Spaniards spend their summer.
    b. How Spaniards like to vacation.
    c. How Spaniards organize their finances.
    d. How Spaniards travel.

2. What percentage of Spaniards prefer to travel to the city?
    a. 60%
    b. 30%
    c. 10%

3. Who do Spaniards prefer to vacation with most?
    a. With a partner.
    b. With family.
    c. With friends.

4. Which month do Spaniards prefer to take their vacation?
    a. June
    b. July
    c. August

III. Read the caption for the Instagram post and choose the best answer:



1. What is the best translation for the caption underneath the photo?

a. Drinking coffee with you is fun.
b. Talking with you is the most important part of my day.
c. Talking and laughing with you is my favorite time of day.
d. Discussing our favorite clothing is the least important part of my day.

Appendix B

Achievement Emotions Questionnaire- World Language Reading

This questionnaire refers to emotions/feelings you may experience when reading in Spanish.. Before answering the questions, please recall some reading situations you experienced in Spanish Class.

Before reading

The following questions pertain to feelings you may experience **BEFORE** reading in Spanish Class.. Please indicate how you feel, typically, before you begin to read.

	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree					**Strongly agree**

1. Before reading in Spanish, I look forward to reading.

2. I get so nervous before reading in Spanish that I don't even want to begin reading.

3. Before reading in Spanish, I feel confident that I will be able to master the material.

4. Before reading in Spanish, I get so upset over the amount of material.

5. Before reading in Spanish, I start to feel queasy.

6. Before reading in Spanish, when I look at the books, I get anxious.

7. Because I'm bored before reading in Spanish, I have no desire to read.

8. Before reading in Spanish, I have an optimistic view toward reading.

9. Before reading in Spanish, I feel ashamed about my procrastination.

10. Before reading in Spanish, I get angry when I have to read.

11. Before reading in Spanish, my lack of confidence makes me exhausted before I even start.

12. Before reading in Spanish, I'm annoyed that I have to read so much.

13. Before reading in Spanish, I would rather put off this boring work till tomorrow.

14. Before reading in Spanish, I feel optimistic that I will make good progress at reading.

15. Before reading in Spanish, I feel hopeless when I think about reading.

During Reading

The following questions pertain to feelings you may experience **DURING** reading for this course. Please indicate how you feel, typically, during studying.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree **Strongly agree**

16. While reading in Spanish, I worry whether I'm able to cope with all the reading.

17. While reading in Spanish, I get bored and tired sitting at my desk.

18. While reading in Spanish, I feel confident about my reading.

19. While reading in Spanish, I feel ashamed that I can't absorb the simplest of details.

20. While reading in Spanish, I get so angry I feel like throwing the book out of the window.

21. While reading in Spanish, my hopelessness undermines all my energy.

22. While reading in Spanish, I feel like distracting myself in order to reduce my anxiety.

23. While reading in Spanish, the book bores me so much that I feel depleted.

24. While reading in Spanish, the thought of achieving my reading goals inspires me.

25. While reading in Spanish, I feel ashamed because I am not as adept as others in reading.

26. While reading in Spanish, my irritation makes me restless when I sit at my desk for a long time.

27. While reading in Spanish, I'm proud of my capacity to handle even difficult books.

28. While reading in Spanish, I feel so helpless that I can't give reading my full efforts.

29. While reading in Spanish, I find my mind wandering.

30. While reading in Spanish, I read more than required because I enjoy it so much.

31. While reading in Spanish, I start to feel queasy as time runs out.

32. While reading in Spanish, the material bores me to death.

33. While reading in Spanish, my sense of confidence motivates me.

34. While reading in Spanish, I avoid eye contact when somebody notices how little I understand.

35. While reading in Spanish, it makes me irritated.

36. While reading in Spanish, I wish I could quit because I can't cope with it.

37. While reading in Spanish, it gives me a rush when reading is going well.

38. While reading in Spanish, I get tense and nervous while reading.

39. While reading in Spanish, I spend my time thinking of how time stands still on this boring material.

40. While reading in Spanish, I turn red when I don't know understand the book.

41. While reading in Spanish, I get angry.

42. While reading in Spanish, my heart beats with pride when I understand a difficult part of the book.

43. While reading in Spanish, I'm resigned to the fact that I don't have the capacity to understand the book.

44. While reading in Spanish, I enjoy the challenge of reading in Spanish.

45. While reading in Spanish, the subject scares me since I don't fully understand it.

46. While reading in Spanish, I seem to drift off because it's so boring.

47. While reading in Spanish, I feel ashamed.

48. While reading in Spanish, I get annoyed about having to read.

49. While reading in Spanish, I am very motivated because I want to be proud of my accomplishments,

50. While reading in Spanish, I feel helpless.

51. While reading in Spanish, I enjoy dealing with the book.

52. While reading in Spanish, worry about not understanding the book makes me sweat book bores me.

54. While reading in Spanish, I feel embarrassed about not being able explain the book to others.

55. While reading in Spanish, I swell with pride when I excel at my reading.

56. While reading in Spanish, I get physically excited when my reading is going well.

57. While reading in Spanish, I feel ashamed when I realize that I lack ability.

58. While reading in Spanish, I enjoy reading about new things.

59. While reading in Spanish, I feel dull and monotonous.

60. While reading in Spanish, the material is so boring that I find myself daydreaming.

After Reading

The following questions pertain to feelings you may experience **AFTER** reading in Spanish Class. Please indicate how you feel, typically, after having studied.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree **Strongly agree**

61. After reading in Spanish, I worry whether I have properly understood the book.

62. After reading in Spanish, I avoid discussing it because I have had so much troubles understanding the book.

63. After reading in Spanish, I'm so angry that I get tense.

64. After reading in Spanish, I'm proud of myself.

65. After reading in Spanish, I am so happy about the progress I made that I am motivated to continue reading.

66. After reading in Spanish, it makes me fearful when I can't keep up with the reading.

67. After reading in Spanish, my memory gaps embarrass me.

68. After reading in Spanish, I'm discouraged about the fact that I'll never understand the reading.

69. After reading in Spanish, reflecting on my progress in my reading skills makes me happy.

70. After reading in Spanish, I don't want anybody to know when I haven't been able to understand something.

71. After reading in Spanish, I think I can be proud of my accomplishments at reading.

72. After reading in Spanish, I feel resigned.

73. After reading in Spanish, certain topics are so enjoyable that I am motivated to do extra readings about them.

74. After reading in Spanish, I worry because my abilities are not sufficient for my program of studies.

Control-Value Appraisals

The following questions ask about your beliefs and attitudes about this Spanish class while reading. Write a corresponding number in each blank. There are no right or wrong responses, please just answer honestly.

1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly disagree Strongly agree**

Perceived academic control

1. I have a great deal of control over my academic performance while reading in Spanish.

2. The more effort I put into my preparation, the better I do at reading in Spanish.

3. I lack control over how well I read in Spanish.

4. No matter how hard I work, I can't seem to read well in Spanish.

5. I believe I will receive excellent grades when reading in Spanish

6. I expect to do well at reading in Spanish.

7. I am confident I can do an excellent job at reading in Spanish.

8. I am certain I can master the knowledge being assessed when reading in Spanish.

Task Value

1. In general, I find learning for that reading in Spanish is very interesting.

2. It is very important to me to get good grades about our reading in Spanish.

3. In general, I think reading in Spanish is useful.

4. If I have a poor grade on the reading in Spanish assignments, I will be very disappointed.

5. I like reading books in Spanish.

6. Compared to my other activities, reading in Spanish is useful for me.

7. It is very important to me not to get poor grades on assignments when reading in Spanish.

8. If I have a good grade on my reading in Spanish assingments, I will be very satisfied.

Appendix C

Motivation Scales

The following questions ask about your motivation to read in Spanish Class. Write a corresponding number in each blank. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, just answer as accurately as possible.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree **Strongly agree**

Intrinsic goal orientation

1. In this Spanish class, I prefer books that really challenges me so I can learn new things.

2. In this Spanish class, I prefer course material that arouses my curiosity, even if it is difficult to learn.

3. The most satisfying thing for me in Spanish class is trying to understand the content as thoroughly as possible.

4. When I have the opportunity, I choose books in Spanish that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade.

Extrinsic goal orientation

1. Getting a good grade in this Spansih class is the most satisfying thing for me right now.

2. The most important thing for me right now is improving my grade in this class.

3. If I can, I want to get better grades in this Spanish class than most of the other students.

4. I want to perform well in this Spanish class because it is important to show my ability to my family, friends, or teachers.

Self-regulated learning

1. When studying for this Spanish class, I set my own goals which I want to achieve.

2. When reading difficult books for this Spanish course, I do have some strategies which I

can use.

3. I am good at assessing and controlling the effectiveness of my reading in Spanish.

4. I am good at assessing my ability to master reading in Spanish.

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. What do you enjoy most about the stories or topics you read in Spanish class? What makes them interesting or fun for you?

2. Do you think reading in Spanish is important? How does it help you in class or other parts of your life?

3. Can you tell me about a time you felt really good while reading in Spanish class? What happened, and what made it a positive experience?

4. What do you do when you feel stuck or confused while reading? Who or what helps you work through it?

5. How do you feel about yourself as a Spanish reader? Have your feelings changed about yourself as a Spanish reader since the beginning of the Spanish 1? If so, what helped?

6. What's something you've learned about handling your emotions when reading in Spanish? How do you stay motivated when it feels frustrating?