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A Structural Equation Modeling Approach to Examine EFL Teachers' Online Knowledge Sharing, Teaching Commitment, and Self-Efficacy

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ABSTRACT

Although teacher-related factors have been regarded as significant elements in shaping the educational system, there is a scarcity of research regarding the relationship between teachers' online knowledge sharing, commitment, and teachers' self-efficacy. In this study, a quantitative correlational methodology and structural equation modeling were employed to address the research hypotheses. To achieve this, 113 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers were selected through convenience sampling. Three questionnaires—namely, online knowledge sharing behavior, teaching commitment, and teachers' self-efficacy—were utilized to collect the data. The findings showed that knowledge sharing had a significant effect on teachers' commitment. Additionally, knowledge sharing had a significant effect on self-efficacy, which acted as a mediating variable. Furthermore, self-efficacy affected teachers' teaching commitment. Self-efficacy as a mediating variable strengthens the effect of knowledge sharing on teaching commitment. Overall, the findings supported the proposed hypothetical model of the variables. These results carry significance both theoretically and practically and provide valuable insights.

1. Introduction

Teachers hold a crucial role in the educational setting, so it is important to ensure that the quality and skills of teachers receive sufficient attention for the success of any educational system (Jadhav et al., 2024; Scheopner, 2010). Therefore, it is essential to take into account the requirements, issues, and psychological aspects of teachers in order to enhance the efficiency of any educational system (Fathi & Rostami, 2018). Consequently, teachers play a crucial role in the success of educational systems, which is one of the reasons for the emphasis on improving the efficacy of the educational system by addressing the needs, concerns, and psychological aspects of teachers. These factors significantly contribute to enhancing achievements within the classroom setting and fostering a productive teaching and learning environment. Some of these aspects are self-efficacy, teaching commitment, and online knowledge sharing.

Self-efficacy, one of the critical traits of teachers, refers to a person's beliefs or judgments about their abilities to perform tasks and responsibilities (Zhao & Qin, 2021). Self-efficacy, rooted in social cognitive theory, refers to individuals' confidence in their ability to effectively organize and carry out the necessary actions to achieve specific objectives. (Bandura, 2006). Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his ability to act. It is considered a vital factor in predicting students' performance (Guo et al., 2010). Self-efficacy seems to play a crucial role in predicting learners' performance in educational contexts (Bandura, 1997, cited in Ross & Bruce, 2007; Carmichael & Taylor, 2005).

Another important characteristic of teachers is their commitment. Teacher commitment could be a significant factor impacting the process of teaching and learning, and it has been explored from different theoretical perspectives (Reyes, 1990; Rozenholtz, 1989). As stated by Sarikaya and Erdogan (2016), commitment becomes evident when teachers feel a strong sense of responsibility and voluntarily take on additional duties and tasks in their work to achieve positive outcomes. According to the literature (e.g.,Malik et al., 2010), dedicated employees who are effectively committed willingly continue their work with strong devotion, and commitment ensures that employees maintain their membership within the organization.

Another important variable discussed in the present study is teachers' knowledge sharing. The process of knowledge sharing involves the transfer of both implicit and explicit knowledge among individuals, leading to the generation of new knowledge (Lin, 2007). Liu et al. (2020) define knowledge sharing as a knowledge-focused activity that not only enhances organizational improvement but also helps in retaining knowledge in the long term. It is important to note that knowledge sharing is not a one-way flow; rather, it involves reciprocal interactions between groups or individuals. Additionally, knowledge sharing plays a vital role in boosting an organization's competitive advantage through the application of knowledge, innovation, and so on (Hansen & Avital, 2005). The success of knowledge sharing hinges on the level and quality of interaction between teachers and learners, as well as their willingness and ability to utilize knowledge (Lee, 2018).

Furthermore, research on the impact of teachers' knowledge sharing on commitment is scarce. Demirel and Goc (2013) sought the impact of organizational commitment on employees' knowledge sharing. Based on the results, organizational commitment and especially emotional commitment have a positive effect on the exchange of information. Wziątek-Staśko and Michalik (2024) who reviewed the literature on the relationship between organizational commitment and knowledge sharing found a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational commitment in the following three components: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Regarding the possible relationship between teachers' knowledge sharing and self-efficacy, some studies have explored the correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and knowledge sharing (Baezat, et.al. 2017; Parhamnia, et. al., 2022; Runhaar & Sanders, 2016; Salari & Aminbeidokhti, 2022). As the results revealed, there is a significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and knowledge sharing. As to the effect of self-efficacy on teaching commitment various studies have explored this relationship (Mokhtar et al., 2021; Rusu, 2013). The findings revealed a significant and positive direct relationship between self-efficacy, organizational commitment, and teaching quality.

Considering the unique role of teachers in the classroom, enhancing the quality of their performance is crucial (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Wang & Noe, 2010) in their profession. In this regard, to the researchers' knowledge, EFL teachers' online knowledge sharing, teaching commitment, and self-efficacy have not been dealt with simultaneously, especially in the Iranian EFL contexts. Furthermore, no study has explored the mediating role of self-efficacy in relation to teaching commitment and knowledge-sharing behavior among teachers. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate the mediating role of self-efficacy in relation to knowledge sharing and teaching commitment among EFL teachers in Iran.

2. Review of the Related Literature

2.1. Teachers' Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is defined as a knowledge-centered activity and a significant mans of enhancing organizational effectiveness while reducing knowledge loss (Lin, 2007). It fosters reciprocal interaction among groups or individuals. Furthermore, knowledge sharing plays a vital role in enabling individuals to contribute to knowledge application, innovation, and finally, the competitive advantage of their organization (Swift & Hwang, 2013). The concept of knowledge sharing is closely related to both 'knowledge distribution' and 'knowledge acquisition'. These two concepts play a role in organizational learning (Swift & Hwang, 2013). When an individual willingly shares knowledge, it facilitates the spread of information, and this sharing can lead to the acquisition of knowledge by other individuals within the organization. The act of sharing knowledge among individuals contributes to individual learning (Farahian & Ebadi, 2023), subsequently contributing to organizational learning (Ipe, 2003).

Effective knowledge sharing enhances the organization's survival (Narteh, 2008). Consequently, the growing popularity and success of online networks appear to offer a pathway to achieve this objective, although the nature of interaction in online courses, as perceived by both teachers and students, has received limited attention (Blaine, 2019). Nowadays, numerous technologies are employed to support the creation, organization, accessibility, and utilization of intellectual assets (Nassuora, 2011) and information technology has gained a significant role in facilitating knowledge sharing (Davenport & Prusak, 1998), and the expansion of knowledge management is connected to information technology. The primary challenge, however, is achieving effective knowledge sharing in online social networking communities (Charband & Jafari Navimipour, 2016). In the context of English language institutes as organizational settings, where knowledge stands as the key ingredient and the EFL teachers constitute the staff, efficient knowledge management can aid in acquiring and retaining a competitive advantage. To minimize knowledge loss, this knowledge must be actively shared (Nassuora, 2011).

2.2. Teachers' Self-efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy, a significant measure for understanding and predicting human behavior and outcomes, has garnered considerable attention. Bandura (2000), the pioneer of the self-efficacy concept, described it as the confidence in one's ability to effectively organize and execute the necessary actions to attain specific objectives. (Bandura, 2000). Within his social cognitive theory, he considered self-efficacy as a mechanism for behavioral change and self-regulation. Teacher efficacy, as defined by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998), refers to teachers' belief in their ability to organize and execute the necessary actions to successfully fulfill a specific teaching tasks within a given context. Bandura (2000) considers self-efficacy as a significant factor that impacts performance behavior. The belief in one's self-efficacy serves as an effective element, motivating individuals to strategize and accomplish their goals (cited in Karabiyik & Korumaz, 2014, p. 826). According to Karabiyik and Korumaz (2014), self-efficacy is "individual perception that directs activities to develop implementation in education " (p. 827). Bandura (2000) also considers self-efficacy as a crucial factor influencing performance behavior, with the belief in one's abilities driving motivation and fostering goal attainment (cited in Karabiyik & Korumaz, 2014, p. 826). Similarly, Karabiyik and Korumaz (2014) characterize self-efficacy as an " individual perception that guides activities towards successful implementation in education " (p. 827).

While the creation and implementation of educational policies driven by national and global demands may influence the broader social and institutional environments in which teachers operate, it is the individual

interpretations and understanding of the effectiveness of their inclusive teaching practices that empower teachers to take ownership and play a crucial role in implementing inclusive education (Jordan et al., 2009). Understanding teachers' self-efficacy and the factors that influence it can offer valuable insights in this regard (Bandura, 2012).

Teachers with a heightened sense of efficacy display more enthusiasm and commitment toward their teaching responsibilities (Hicks, 2012). Teachers' belief in their efficacy is a vital element in creating successful classrooms and is strongly linked to instructional quality and student achievement (Guo, et al., 2012). Consequently, it stands as one of the extensively researched aspects of the classroom environment. Teacher self-efficacy has been demonstrated to have a positive impact on teachers' beliefs about their teaching and their behaviors, which in turn can significantly influence student outcomes (Cho & Shim, 2013; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

2.3. Teaching Commitment

Commitment can be defined as a state in which an individual accepts a decision or request and devotes significant effort to successfully implement it. However, the definition of commitment can differ based on the context in which it is considered. Commitment entails a psychological condition wherein an individual strongly identifies with the objectives in which they actively participate (Leithwood et al., 1994). As for teachers, commitment represents the emotional bond they demonstrate toward their work. Teacher commitment is widely recognized as one of the most crucial factors contributing to effective teaching. Hence, teachers displaying a high level of commitment can significantly impact the learning and achievement of their students. Committed teachers feel a strong affiliation with the school they work for and invest their time and energy in promoting its success. This dedication is linked to the creation of an effective learning environment. According to Tsui and Cheng (1999), teacher commitment serves as an internal force that motivates teachers to demonstrate enhanced job performance.

Based on Oberholster and Taylor V (1999), the success of any organization depends mainly on the degree of commitment of the personnel. The researcher further notes that teachers with a low degree of commitment are less loyal to the organization, perceive themselves as outsiders, do only what is necessary, and appear more interested in personal success than in the success of the organization as a whole. In contrast, teachers with a high level of commitment see themselves as an integral part of the organization, to do their best to perform their duties better and to work for the organization as if it were theirs. Committed, professional, thoughtful, and analytical teachers in the educational system have a greater ability to overcome the barriers to teaching in the classroom. (Haftkhavania et al., 2012).

2.4. Technology in EFL Context

Over the past years, there has been a growing emphasis on integrating technology into educational settings. The use of various technological devices like digital cameras, laptops, and computers has significantly impacted the teaching and learning process (Schindler et al., 2017). Shohel et al. (2012) suggest that leveraging technology to enhance education helps overcome training challenges. EFL teachers have been utilizing tools such as CD players, computers, the Internet, software applications, and electronic dictionaries to update their knowledge and create an ideal learning environment for students. This approach enables students to practice language skills, engage in interactive learning, and access information (Nomass, 2013). Moreover, Singhal (1997, p. 2) highlights the development of interactive videos and programs that offer authentic and communicative task-based activities, aligning better with contemporary theories of learning. Digital technologies facilitate both synchronous and asynchronous communication, providing numerous opportunities for aspiring teachers to explore global classroom topics and collaborate with peers and experts (Lock & Redmond, 2020, p.1).

Despite the widespread use of the Internet and technological devices in the lives of people in Iran, the integration of these tools into Iranian EFL classrooms remains limited. Previous research (e.g., Fatemi Jahromi & Salimi, 2013; Li, 2010) has shown that both students and teachers have not extensively utilized technology for language learning. Studies specifically conducted in the Iranian context (e.g., Fatemi Jahromi & Salimi 2011; Hedayati & Marandi 2014) point to two main reasons for the limited adoption of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) technologies in EFL classrooms. The first reason is inadequate infrastructure for implementing CALL, and the

second reason is the lack of proper training in CALL for teachers. Hedayati and Marandi (2014) note that based on the findings, one can reasonably deduce that there is a widespread deficiency in the infrastructure for implementing CALL in Iran, with the major part of the issue attributed to inadequate teacher preparation.

2.5. Teachers' Knowledge Sharing and Commitment

There is a scarcity of research regarding the relationship between teachers' knowledge sharing and commitment. The only study in this regard is that of Demirel and Goc (2013). The researchers aimed to seek the impact of organizational commitment of on the employees' knowledge sharing. As they reported, organizational commitment and especially emotional commitment have a positive effect on the exchange of information. In addition, Kosar et al (2020) explored the intervening role of work culture and organizational commitment on the willingness of knowledge sharing of university faculty members. Based on the findings the participants' willingness for knowledge sharing was influenced by work culture and organizational commitment. Costa and Monteiro (2012) investigated the connection between organizational commitment and knowledge sharing, using Meyer and Allen's Three Component Model (TCM). The study categorized knowledge sharing into three subscales: affective, continuance, and normative. The researchers discovered that affective commitment has a positive influence on knowledge sharing behavior, while there is no significant correlation between normative and continuance commitment and knowledge sharing. Wziątek-Staśko and Michalik (2024) sought the relationship between organizational commitment and knowledge sharing in teachers' community. The findings reveled a positive relationship between organizational commitment —specifically in the three components of affective, continuance, and normative commitment—and teachers' knowledge sharing.

2.6. Teachers' Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and knowledge sharing (Baezat, et.al. 2017; Parhamnia, et. al., 2022; Runhaar & Sanders, 2016; Salari & Aminbeidokhti, 2022). The results of these studies revealed a significant correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and knowledge sharing. For example, Salari and Aminbeidokhti (2022) aimed to examine the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and knowledge management, and professional development in teachers. The findings of this research indicated a positive and significant correlation between teachers' self-efficacy, knowledge management, and professional development. Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that increased self-efficacy and knowledge management among teachers leads to enhanced professional development for them as well. Lin et al. (2009) conducted a study to explore the factors that impact knowledge sharing, such as knowledge self-efficacy, the enjoyment of assisting others, collective cognitive responsibility, individual outcome expectations, and identification-based trust. They also investigated how these factors can be integrated into online platforms for knowledge sharing or knowledge management within teacher communities to promote effective knowledge exchange. The study revealed that knowledge self-efficacy and the joy of helping others strongly influenced knowledge contributors' use of electronic knowledge databases. Chen et al. (2009) conducted a study to explore the factors affecting knowledge sharing, taking a human behavior perspective. They combined the Theory of Planned Behavior with insights from virtual learning community research and social network ties to create their research framework. This model consisted of eight hypotheses aimed at examining how social network ties, learners' attitudes toward knowledge sharing, their confidence in online knowledge sharing capabilities, and subjective norms regarding knowledge sharing intentions were manifested in real behavior within a virtual learning setting. The research employed a field survey involving college students and Master of Business Administration (MBA) students who were part of virtual learning community courses to confirm the proposed connections. The study revealed that attitudes, subjective norms, web-specific self-efficacy, and social network ties strongly predicted knowledge sharing intentions, significantly impacting knowledge sharing behavior. However, knowledge creation self-efficacy did not have a substantial effect on knowledge sharing intentions.

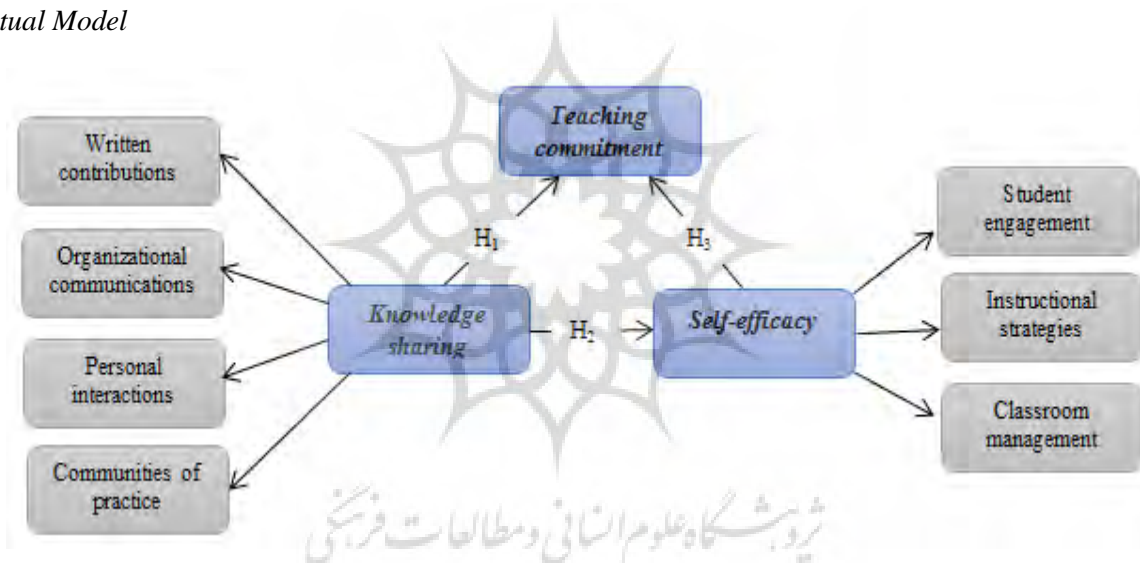## 2.7. Teachers' Self-Efficacy and Teaching Commitment

Numerous studies have explored the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and commitment. For instance, Mokhtar et al. (2021) conducted research to examine the mediating role of teachers' self-efficacy in the relationship

between job satisfaction and commitment among primary school teachers. The study revealed that self-efficacy played a significant mediating role in connecting teachers' commitment and job satisfaction. Additionally, both teachers' commitment and self-efficacy directly influenced the job satisfaction of primary school teachers. The presence of self-efficacy was associated with heightened levels of commitment and job satisfaction within the educational context in Malaysia. Similarly, Rusu (2013) explored the connection between self-efficacy and organizational commitment among faculty members, specifically focusing on their teaching quality. The findings revealed a significant and positive direct relationship between self-efficacy, organizational commitment, and teaching quality. Of the different dimensions of organizational commitment studied, emotional commitment and continuous commitment emerged as strong predictors of teaching quality.

The literature has extensively explored the association between knowledge sharing, self-efficacy, and teaching commitment; however, none of these studies have specifically looked into how self-efficacy might act as a mediator between knowledge sharing and teaching commitment. To bridge this gap in the literature, the present study examines the effects of knowledge sharing on teaching commitment and the influence of EFL teachers' self-efficacy on their teaching commitment, considering the potential mediating role of self-efficacy (Figure 1). As such, we formulated the following hypotheses:

Figure 1

Conceptual Model

Research hypotheses:

H1: EFL teachers' knowledge sharing has a significant and positive impact on their teaching commitment.

H2: EFL teachers' knowledge sharing has a significant and positive impact on their self-efficacy.

H3: EFL teachers' self-efficacy has a significant and positive impact on their teaching commitment.

H4. EFL teachers' self-efficacy mediates the relationship between their knowledge sharing and teaching commitment.

3. Method

3.1. Study Design and Setting

For this study, a quantitative and correlational methodology was adopted to address the research hypotheses. The data was collected using two questionnaires to gather quantitative data, and thereafter, descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted on the data.

3.2. Participants and Sampling

A total of 113 EFL teachers voluntarily participated in the present study. They were selected from fifteen language schools located in different provinces in Iran. All 113 teachers had English majors, which included fields such as English literature, TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), linguistics, and translation studies. All participants had three consecutive terms of experience in teaching EFL through online courses after the outbreak of COVID-19, and due to the university lockdown, they had been exclusively teaching online. The language schools provided the Learning Management System (LMS) as the platform for synchronous education. This web-based software was extensively used in the majority of Iranian language schools for various purposes, such as communicating with students, assigning didactic tasks, providing materials, conducting assessments, and facilitating student interactions.

3.3. Tolls/Instruments

Three questionnaires were used in the present study: Knowledge Sharing Behavior Scale, Commitment to teaching questionnaire, and Teachers' Sense of Self-efficacy scale.

3.3.1. Knowledge Sharing Behavior Scale

The knowledge sharing behavior Scale (Ramayah, et al., 2014) was used to measure the knowledge sharing behavior of the EFL teachers by assessing four dimensions of knowledge sharing behavior: written contributions, organizational communications, personal interactions, and communities of practice. However, modifications were made to the scale to align it with the context of online courses. The scale with 28-items uses a 7-point scale ranging from 1(never) to 7(always). The 28-item measure employs a 7-point scale, 1(never) to 7(always).

The first dimension of the scale, written contributions, includes activities in the form of written documentation like publishing articles that benefits other academics, and society. The second dimension, organizational communications, involves knowledge through formal social interactions such as faculty meetings. Personal interactions capture knowledge sharing through informal social interactions. An example is academics' chatting over the phone, or online. The written contributions dimension, which is the first on the scale, includes activities such as publishing articles that benefit both society and academia. Organizational communications, the second component, deals with knowledge gained through formal social contacts like faculty meetings. Personal interactions assesses knowledge sharing through informal social interactions. Academics conversing on the phone or online is one example.

3.3.2. Commitment to Teaching Questionnaire

Teaching commitment was assessed through a four-item scale that was validated by Ware and Kitsantas (2007). Participants were asked to rate their responses on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). For example, one item is: 'I am generally satisfied with being a teacher at this school.

3.3.3. Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale

In this study, the third scale utilized was the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), originally created by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). This questionnaire is available in two versions: a concise form comprising 12 items and an extensive form with 24 items. Both versions use a 9-point Likert-type scale, where respondents select from options such as "nothing," "very little," "some influence," "quite a bit," and "a great deal." The TSES evaluates self-efficacy across three key dimensions: instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management. For this research, the extensive form of the TSES was utilized, demonstrating a high reliability with a coefficient of

0.94. Additionally, the developers validated both forms of the instrument by examining their correlation with other established measures of teacher efficacy.

3.4. Data Analysis

We used descriptive statistics (e.g., frequency and percentage) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze the data. First, principal components factor analysis was used to find the structural relationships between the scales. Furthermore, to evaluate the fit of the specified model for the data, R^2, SRMR, and NFI values were calculated. The analysis of the collected data was performed using SPSS 27 and Smart-PLS software.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic characteristics of the participants based on gender, age, educational degree, educational qualifications, and experience are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Demographic Data

Variable	Frequencies	Percentages
Gender		
Male	42	27.8
Female	71	72.2
Age		
20-30	54	47.8
31-40	38	33.6
40 <	21	18.6
Degree education		
BA	60	53.1
MA	45	39.8
PhD	8	7.1
experience		
1-5	27	23.9
6-10	44	38.9
11-15	23	20.4
16-20	12	10.6
20 <	7	6.2

According to Table 1, the number of respondents to the questionnaire included 42 women (27.8%) and 71 men (72.2%). Regarding the age of the respondents, 54 people (47.8%) were between 20 and 30 years old, 38 people (33.6%) were between 31 and 40 years old, and 21 people (18.6%) were over 40 years old. In terms of educational degrees, 60 participants (53.1%) held a BA, 45 participants (39.8%) held an MA, and 8 participants (7.1%) held a Ph.D. Finally, regarding experience, 27 participants (23.9%) had between 1 and 5 years of experience, 44 participants (38.9%) had between 6 and 10 years, 12 participants (10.6%) had between 16 and 20 years, and 7 participants (6.2%) had more than 20 years of teaching experience.

4.2. Construct Reliability and Validity

Considering that the measurement model of the research variables is of a reflective type, as the first step, we checked the reliability and validity of the scales. To evaluate the validity and reliability, partial least squares (PLS) analysis was employed. As such, to examine the construct validity exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and average variance extracted (AVE) were employed. The result are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Constructs	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
Online knowledge sharing	Written contributions	WC1	.913	0.901	0.939	0.926	0.716
		WC2	.876				
		WC3	.735				
		WC4	.750				
		WC5	.936				
	Organizational communications	OC1	.823	0.915	0.937	0.936	0.745
		OC2	.895				
		OC3	.876				
		OC4	.840				
		OC5	.880				
	Personal interactions	PI1	.888	0.907	0.940	0.925	0.677
		PI2	.608				
		PI3	.879				
		PI4	.797				
		PI5	.824				
		PI6	.903				
	Communities of practice	CP1	.869	0.881	0.908	0.910	0.718
		CP2	.861				
		CP3	.723				
		CP4	.924				
Teachers' sense of self-efficacy	Self-efficacy beliefs for student engagement	SE1	.904	0.904	0.935	0.933	0.777
		SE2	.886				
		SE3	.938				
		S44	.789				
	Self-efficacy beliefs for instructional strategies	IS1	.962	0.979	0.979	0.984	0.940
		IS2	.970				
		IS3	.972				
		IS4	.973				
	Self-efficacy beliefs for classroom management	CM1	.937	0.956	0.960	0.968	0.885
		CM2	.962				
		CN3	.969				
		CM4	.891				
Teaching commitment		TC1	.877	0.922	0.926	0.945	0.871
		TC2	.945				
		TC3	.879				
		TC4	.900				

To determine the correlation matrix between items and factors and classify each item in each factor, we utilized the Varimax rotated, as shown in Table 2. The Table presents the correlation matrix derived from rotation that had an eigenvalue greater than (1), with a correlation value varying between -1 and +1 between items and factors.

Furthermore, as Table 2 illustrates, AVE indicates the degree of correlation between a structure and its indicators; the better the fit, the more this correlation is greater than 0.5. AVE is greater than 0 point 5 in the current study. Composite reliability as well as Cronbach's alpha were employed. Convergent validity is established when composite reliability (CR) exceeds 0.7. CR additionally needs to exceed AVE. All convergent validity conditions apply in this situation. Cronbach's alpha coefficient results revealed that three variables have reliability levels above 0 point07, which is considered acceptable.

4.3. Discriminant Validity

The main objective of the discriminant validity assessment is to verify that a reflective construct exhibits the most robust connections with its respective indicators within the PLS path model (Hair et al., 2022). To evaluate the discriminant validity of research constructs with reflective indices, Fornell Larcker (1981) was used. Accordingly, the average explained variance should be greater than the squared correlations between the construct and other constructs of the model. This condition is met in the present study. Therefore, through an examination of the measurement model outcomes, we can infer that the data are suitable for structural equation estimation. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Fomell–Larcker Criterion

|	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Communities of practice	0.848									
2. Organizational communications	-0.190	0.863								
3. Personal interactions	0.026	0.025	0.823							
4. Self-efficacy beliefs for classroom management	-0.012	0.165	0.029	0.941						
5. Self-efficacy beliefs for instructional strategies	0.013	-0.100	-0.037	0.244	0.969					
6. Self-efficacy beliefs for student engagement	0.168	-0.077	-0.104	-0.068	0.006	0.881				
7. Teachers' sense of self-efficacy	0.121	0.030	0.021	0.625	0.670	0.269	1.000			
8. Teaching commitment	0.006	0.165	-0.057	0.396	0.219	0.028	0.514	0.901		
9. Written contributions	-0.045	-0.021	0.060	-0.042	0.056	0.108	0.128	0.065	0.846	
10. Online knowledge sharing behavior	0.184	0.219	0.256	0.415	0.264	0.101	0.397	0.216	0.242	1.000

4.4. Model Evaluation

We employed a structural equation model to assess the conceptual model of the research, examine the presence or absence of causal relationships between the primary variables, and validate the fit of the observed data with the research's conceptual framework. This was done after establishing the measurement models.

Figure 2

Measurement of the General Model and the Results of the Hypotheses in the Standard Model
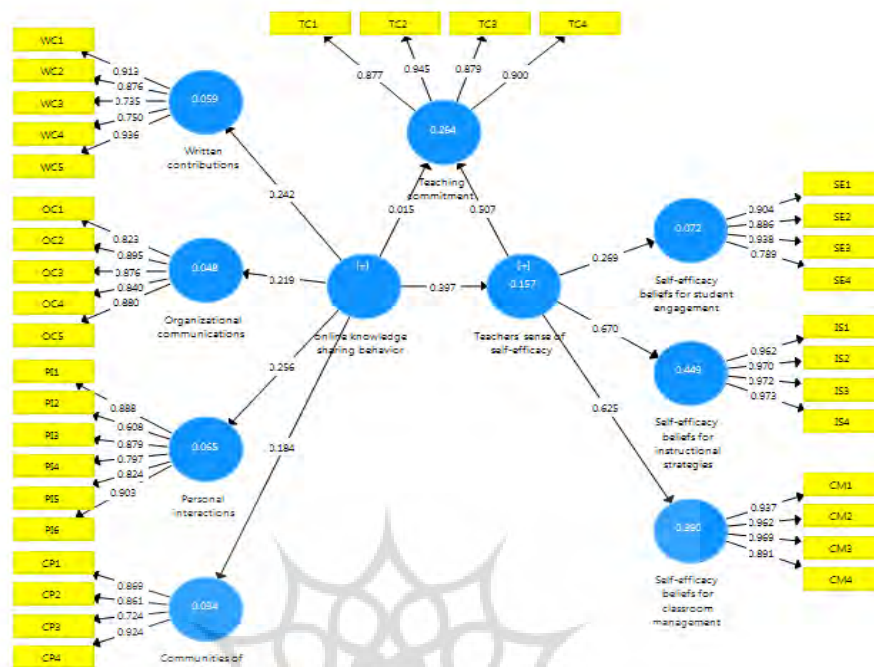
Figure 3

Measurement of the General Model and the Results of Hypotheses (T-Value)
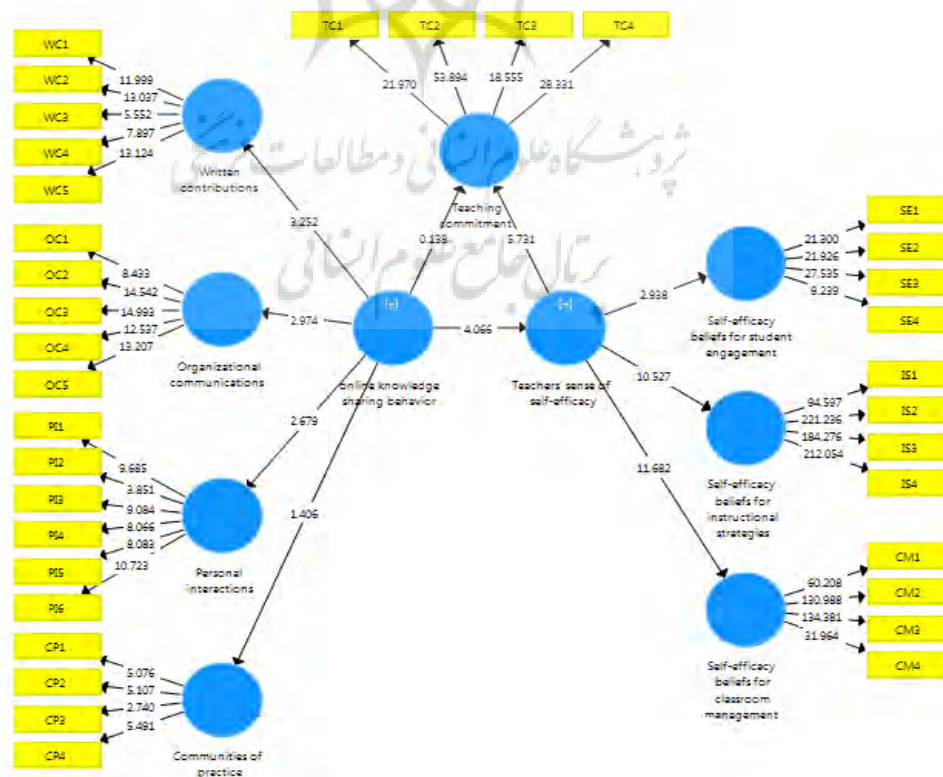
4.5. Model Fit

The most common method for assessing the fit of the structural model involves the R^2 coefficient, which pertains to the endogenous (dependent) latent variables in the model. R^2 serves as a crucial link between the measurement and structural components of structural equation modeling, indicating the influence of an exogenous variable on an endogenous one. R^2 values of 0.19 (weak), 0.33 (medium), and 0.67 (strong) are typically used as criteria. By referring to Table 4, we have computed the R^2 value for the endogenous structures of the research, confirming that the structural model fits well based on these three criterion values.

Table 4

The coefficient of determination criterion (R^2)

	R Square	R Square Adjusted	SRMR	NFI
Knowledge sharing behavior	-	-		
Teachers' sense of self-efficacy	0.157	0.150	0.060	0.773
Teaching commitment	0.264	0.251		

As Table 4 illustrates, the R^2 value indicates that the structural model has good fit and predictability. Also, one of the main indicators of model fit in the software PLS is SRMR criterion. This index is used to assess the adequacy of the model. In this research, this index is equal to 0.060, which is less than 0.08, which indicates a good fit.

Table 5

The Direct and Indirect Effect

Hypotheses	Total indirect effect			Indirect effect (mediator role)		
	β	t-value	p- value	β	t-value	p-value
Online knowledge sharing behavior -> Teaching commitment	0.204	3.487*	P<0.05	0.204	3.487	P<0.05
Online knowledge sharing behavior -> Teachers' sense of self-efficacy	0.397	4.214*	P<0.05	-	-	-
Teachers' sense of self-efficacy -> Teaching commitment	0.514	6.439*	P<0.05	-	-	-
online knowledge sharing behavior -> Teachers' sense of self-efficacy -> Teaching commitment	0.204	3.487	P<0.05	-	-	-

According to Table 5, the results of the bootstrapping analysis indicate that the significance level for the full effect of the research variables is less than 0.05 (p < 0.05). Furthermore, the significance level for the indirect effect of the mediating variable is less than 0.05 (p<005), as a result, hypothesis 4, that is, teachers' sense of self-efficacy can mediate the effect of the online knowledge sharing behavior variable and the teaching commitment was confirmed.

Table 6

Path Coefficients

Hypotheses		Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P-Values	Remark
H1	Online knowledge sharing behavior -> Teaching commitment	0.110	0.138	0.890	Rejection

| H2 | Online knowledge sharing behavior -> Teachers' sense of self-efficacy | 0.098 | 4.066 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H3 | Teachers' sense of self-efficacy -> Teaching commitment | 0.089 | 5.731 | 0.000 | Accepted |

Based on a significant association with a p-value of less than 0.05, Table 6 indicates that the hypothesis reached the minimum threshold of 1.96. Consequently, an alternative hypothesis was established and the null hypothesis was rejected. The study's approach and learning satisfaction were validated by theoretical predictions. H1 was 0.138 at the t-statistics, and the p-value was 0.890, which is greater than 0.05 but less than 1.96. The p-value was 0.000, and the H2 at the t-statistics was 4.066. These values were less than 0.05, which is 1.96. H3 was less than 1.96, which is less than 0.05, at the t-statistics of 5.731 and p-value of 0.000.

5. Discussion

The first research hypothesis addressed the possible significant impact of EFL teachers' knowledge sharing on EFL teachers' commitment. Research on the impact of teachers' knowledge sharing and commitment is limited. The sole study in the field by Demirel and Goc (2013) investigated this connection. Their focus was on exploring how organizational commitment influences employees' knowledge sharing. According to their findings, organizational commitment, particularly emotional commitment, positively influences the sharing of information. The findings of the present study are partially consistent with those of Kosar et al. (2020), who investigated the intervening role of work culture and organizational commitment on the willingness of university faculty members to share knowledge. Based on the findings, the faculty members' work culture and organizational commitment significantly affected their willingness to share knowledge.

The second research hypothesis targeted the impact of EFL teachers' knowledge sharing on their self-efficacy. Based on the findings, knowledge sharing has a significant effect on self-efficacy. Consistent with the results, Safdar et al. (2019) suggest that self-efficacy-related factors—such as knowledge self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy (including technical skills, cognitive applications, and social status), creative self-efficacy, web-based self-efficacy, and occupational self-efficacy—have a strong relationship with knowledge sharing. In tandem with the findings of the present study, Krzyżowska (2022) who investigated the relationship between self-efficacy, trust, and knowledge sharing among information technology staff working remotely reported a strong positive correlation between self–efficacy and knowledge sharing. Partially similar to the findings, Raharso (2022) conducted a study to investigate how self-efficacy and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) influenced the knowledge-sharing behavior of minimarket employees. The findings from the regression analysis indicated that both self-efficacy and OCB had significant individual and combined impacts on predicting knowledge-sharing behavior. This highlights the important roles that self-efficacy and OCB play in shaping knowledge-sharing behavior among minimarket employees. One possible explanation for the findings of the present study is that knowledge sharing among teachers may enhance their beliefs in their abilities to perform daily tasks and achieve desired outcomes. The third research hypothesis dealt with the effect of EFL teachers' self-efficacy on teaching commitment. As the results revealed, EFL teachers' self-efficacy significantly impacts their teaching commitment. This result aligns with the findings of Chesnut and Burley (2015) who found that "increased variability in the self-efficacy scale provides greater explanatory potential for the variation in commitment responses" (p.3). The findings are also partially in line with the literature that suggests teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy have a key role in teachers' success in their profession (Kurt, 2016). In addition, a positive relationship has been found between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and student achievement (Bandura, 2000; Goddard, 2001). Furthermore, it has been shown that an important predictor of teachers' behavior is self-efficacy (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Thus, high levels of self-efficacy may contribute to both effective teaching behaviors and student success. The findings are consistent with the results reported by Kozikoğlu (2016) which elucidated that there is a positive and significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment. This fits well with the findings of Chesnut and Burley (2015) and Fathi et al (2021) who note that teachers with a high sense of efficacy are more committed to teaching.

The last research hypothesis stated that EFL teachers' self-efficacy acts as the mediator between knowledge sharing and teaching commitment. Possibly, this suggests that teachers who engage in knowledge sharing tend to

possess self-confidence, leading to a positive impact on their commitment to teaching. While no prior studies have directly examined the relationship between knowledge sharing, teaching commitment, and self-efficacy, some previous research has supported the positive association between knowledge sharing among EFL teachers and their self-efficacy. (Bilginoglu & Yozgat, 2018; Islam & Khan, 2014; Jung, 2014; Runhaar & Sanders, 2016; Safdar, et. Al., 2019; Wang & Noe, 2010). According to Jung (2014), self-efficacy, as a crucial factor, impacts behavior toward knowledge sharing. The results of a number of studies (e.g., Carmeli et al., 2013; Lin, 2007) highlighted that teachers having higher self-efficacy are found to be more inclined towards sharing knowledge than those with lower self-efficacy. Furthermore, several studies have supported the positive relationship between EFL teachers' teaching commitment and self-efficacy (Chesnut & Burnley, 2015; Murphy, 2013; Shu, 2022). Based on the results of these studies, the degree to which teachers' sense of efficacy predicted commitment to teaching revealed a significant relationship between teaching commitment and self-efficacy. Consequently, the predictor variable (knowledge sharing) exerts both direct and indirect influences on teaching commitment. A potential reason for this result could be that teachers possessing a high level of knowledge sharing are more likely to engage in effective self-efficacy, subsequently impacting teacher commitment positively. In other words, knowledge sharing serves as a predictor of self-efficacy, while self-efficacy acts as a predictor of teacher commitment. Lastly, the obtained fitting indices provide support for the hypothesized relationships.

6. Conclusion

This research investigates a structural model of knowledge sharing, teaching commitment, and self-efficacy. The findings demonstrated that knowledge sharing has a significant effect on self-efficacy. The results also emphasized the prominent mediation role of self-efficacy between knowledge sharing and teaching commitment among EFL teachers.

This study has several implications for educational institutions in Iran and other developing countries that aim to enhance EFL teachers' self-efficacy. The research findings underscore the critical role of knowledge sharing in facilitating self-efficacy among learners, educators, employees, and virtual communities. Consequently, an increase in self-efficacy is likely to boost knowledge sharing, while a decrease in self-efficacy may hinder it. Academic, research, business, and administrative organizations should dedicate significant resources to improving the self-efficacy of their members. By doing so, they can foster a culture of knowledge sharing, ultimately helping them achieve their educational objectives effectively. Another substantial implication for language teachers, curriculum developers, and scholars is that self-efficacy is a fundamental factor in enhancing language teachers' teaching commitment. The results indicate that self-efficacy enhances teaching commitment, while a decrease in self-efficacy leads to a decline in teaching commitment. In addition, this study's implications for decision-makers are yet another possibility. Policymakers and administrators should offer opportunities for enhancing these three factors, which will increase teachers' effectiveness. Finally, evidence suggests that lower institutional commitment is associated with reduced efficiency, increased turnover, absenteeism, and poor performance. In contrast, higher levels of institutional commitment correlate with greater efficiency and a willingness to take on additional responsibilities, leading to increased engagement.

7. Research Limitations

This study, like any other study, has limitations that provide new avenues for future research. First, this study examined the model within the context of Iranian EFL education. Future researchers could replicate this model in other developing countries. Secondly, the sampling method used in this study may affect the results, as the available sample of teachers may not be representative of all EFL teachers in the Iranian context. Therefore, larger and more diverse populations should be considered in future research. Finally, this study assessed self-efficacy as a mediating variable; however, future studies could explore the mediating roles of other variables, such as personality traits.

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