

Educational Background and Workplace Context: Shaping Iranian EFL Teachers' Attitudes Towards Online Teaching

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Abstract: In the constantly evolving field of education, this comprehensive study delves into the attitudes of Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers towards online teaching, with a particular focus on the influence of their educational levels and workplace settings. The research, which involved 160 diverse EFL teachers, meticulously examines the multifaceted dimensions of this pivotal issue. At the heart of this inquiry lies the questionnaire 'Teachers' Attitude Towards Online Teaching' (TAtOT), which Kianinezhad (2023) fastidiously tailored and validated for application among Iranian EFL teachers. The study followed a quantitative research design, and one-way between-groups ANOVA, and Post hoc tests were employed for the data analysis. The study uncovers compelling findings, demonstrating a direct correlation between educators' educational backgrounds and their attitudes towards online teaching. Notably, teachers with advanced degrees exhibit markedly more favorable attitudes, underscoring the importance of higher education in shaping educators' readiness for online teaching. Furthermore, the research unveils significant distinctions in attitudes based on educators' workplace contexts. Educators in schools manifest more positive attitudes, while those in institutes and universities also express favorable perspectives. These findings hold significant implications for educational institutions, policymakers, and educators themselves. Finally, they emphasize the necessity for tailored professional development programs, supportive policy frameworks, and proactive engagement by educators in continuously enhancing their digital competencies. Since the digital transformation of education continues to shape the learning landscape, this research offers invaluable insights to guide the effective integration of technology and online teaching methods, ensuring a brighter and more inclusive future for language education in the digital age.

Keywords: Educational Background, Workplace Context, Iranian EFL Teachers, Attitudes, Online Teaching

1. Introduction

Education plays a fundamental role in personal growth; it commences in early childhood and evolves throughout one's life. Recent years have witnessed significant technological advancements that have had a profound impact on various aspects of our daily lives, as evidenced by studies (e.g., Sungur & Ateş, 2023; Jovanova-Mitkovska, 2010; Lateef & Alaba, 2013; Wells et al., 2008; Taghizadeh & Basirat, 2022).

In this ever-changing landscape, the internet's pervasive influence has led to a profound digital transformation in global education, and scholars have recognized this transformation

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(Anderson & Tracey, 2001; Haythornthwaite & Wellman, 2002). Noteworthy, technology has emerged as a powerful tool for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching, and numerous researchers have highlighted this fact (e.g., Haque et al., 2023; Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015; Raja & Nagasubramani, 2018; Raja & Priya, 2021; Bolaños-García-Escribano et al., 2021; Ross, 2020; Martinez 2018; Çebi & Reisoğlu, 2020; Chapelle, 2001; Daramola et al., 2015; Gündüz, 2005; Hijazi & AlNatour, 2021; Nugroho & Mutiaraningrum, 2020; Mheidly et al., 2020; Gunter & Reeves, 2017).

In today's world, where digital natives, especially millennials, are deeply immersed in technology, educators have a golden opportunity to leverage the benefits of enhancing their digital competencies. Over the past decade, online education, championed by Philip et al. (2009), has made significant strides in higher education. However, a divide persists within the teaching community regarding online instruction. Some view it as a solution to accessibility challenges, while others argue that technology can never entirely replace a teacher. Many educators see traditional teaching methods as inadequate in the modern era, as indicated by (Salmon, 2012), and advocate for the integration of technology to enhance student performance (Draude & Brace, 1999; Costley, 2014; Kianinezhad, 2023).

In this regard, the importance of technology, along with digital literacy, has become of paramount importance in today's educational landscape. Consequently, blended learning and online education have assumed pivotal roles in higher education since the early 21st century (Singh & Thurman, 2019). However, in 2019, the world faced a global challenge as the pandemic unfolded (Trivedi et al., 2018). The severity of the pandemic forced educational institutions to rapidly transition to online or synchronous learning, leaving educators with limited time to develop comprehensive plans for instructional delivery, assessment, technical infrastructure, and support (Sahoo, 2020).

Furthermore, evaluating educators' readiness for online teaching and their perceptions becomes crucial. In higher education, educators' attitudes have a significant impact on their preparedness for online instruction, as highlighted by research (Buhl-Wiggers et al., 2023; Martin et al., 2019; Paudel, 2021). The successful integration of information and communication technology (ICT) into the classroom depends on educators' cognitive patterns, beliefs, and attitudes toward ICT, which have been extensively explored in studies (e.g., Sang et al., 2010; Inayati & Emaliana, 2017; Abel et al., 2022; Taghizadeh & Basirat, 2022).

Likewise, the success of any online course is influenced by factors such as the learning environment, assignments, and students' attitudes toward ICT, as evidenced by research by Wasserman and Migdal (2019). To ensure equitable access to quality education for all, it is imperative to examine the various factors affecting educators' acceptance of online teaching, a topic extensively covered in the literature (Hung, 2016; Kebritchi et al., 2017). Thus, the performance of online teaching largely depends on educators' attitudes toward online education, as indicated by studies (e.g., Wasserman & Migdal, 2019; Enayati et al., 2012).

Additionally, the attitudes of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers toward online teaching and learning have garnered significant attention in recent years as the field adapts to the evolving landscape of language education, as explored in research (Rakıcıoğlu-Söylemez et al., 2019; Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019; Ng et al., 2023). Given the rapid advancement of technology and the global shift toward online education, understanding EFL teachers' perspectives, beliefs, and experiences in online language instruction is essential for

the effective implementation and continuous improvement of online teaching methodologies.

Recent research has also highlighted the significant role of online platforms in promoting learner autonomy and self-directed learning among EFL students. These studies delve deeply into how online resources and platforms empower students to take control of their language learning journey, providing access to authentic materials, encouraging independent practice, and facilitating collaboration with peers from diverse linguistic backgrounds (e.g., Stickler et al., 2021; Yosintha & Yunianti, 2021). These findings offer valuable insights into how EFL teachers can effectively use online learning environments to cultivate learner autonomy and foster a sense of agency in their students.

Besides, Kianinezhad (2023) emphasizes the benefits of online language education, highlighting flexibility, accessibility, and innovative teaching methods. The importance of online communication tools, collaborative learning, and formative assessment in facilitating language instruction and cultural understanding is underscored (Kianinezhad, 2023).

Attitude, as a complex psychological construct, serves as a foundational framework for understanding a wide range of phenomena. It encompasses the ability to perceive and evaluate experiences, thoughts, emotions, and subsequent behaviors (Schwarz, 2007). Attitudes also encompass individuals' unique perspectives and personal interpretations of significance (Krosnick & Petty, 1995). In the realm of technology adoption and transformation, attitude plays a pivotal role (Krishnakumar & Rajesh, 2011; Comas-Quinn, 2011).

Various factors, including knowledge, willingness to learn (Papp, 1998), comfort level (Nair & Das, 2012), beliefs, and the external environment, collectively shape an educator's attitude toward online education. Additionally, cultural norms, values, and societal conditions have demonstrated their influence on an individual's mindset (Gardner et al., 1993). Educators with positive attitudes are often more adept at adapting to new technologies, as confirmed by numerous studies (Uzunboylu, 2007; Gregory et al., 2015; Najimi et al., 2013; Lichtman, 1979). Despite numerous studies reporting favorable attitudes among educators toward e-learning (e.g., Suri & Sharma, 2017; Akaslan & Law, 2011; Khukalenko et al., 2022), it is essential to recognize that the actual integration of technology in the classroom remains relatively infrequent.

With these objectives in mind, the primary focus of this research is to explore the impact of workplace settings and educational levels on teachers' attitudes toward online teaching. For the purpose of the present study, the following research questions were posed:

1. Is there any significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward online teaching regarding their education level?
2. Is there any significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward online teaching regarding their workplace?

2. Literature Review

The existing body of literature consistently underscores the advantages of online learning. For example, Erfani and Ghapanchi (2019) highlight students' positive attitudes towards online learning. However, these benefits coexist with various challenges, emphasizing the pressing need for teacher preparedness and robust technological support systems. In this

context, Mahmoodi Shahrebabaki (2014) proposes a comprehensive approach to bolster e-learning, i.e., involving government financial support, improvements in internet infrastructure, and the exploration of alternative education platforms. Moreover, Shahrebabaki (2014) stresses the significance of raising public awareness and instilling student responsibility to establish e-learning as a viable alternative to traditional classroom education, i.e., an approach that calls for a multifaceted strategy. Yaghoubi et al. (2008) shed light on critical factors influencing students' inclination toward e-learning, emphasizing self-perceived e-learning abilities, computer proficiency, and an understanding of the limitations of the traditional education system, i.e., factors crucial for successful adoption of online learning. Further emphasizing the role of educators, studies by Heirati and Alashti (2015), Raygan and Moradkhani (2020), Xodabande (2017), and Kianinezhad (2023) underscore the vital role of teacher attitudes and innovative tools in the successful implementation of technology-enhanced learning experiences. These studies underscore the pivotal role of educators in shaping students' perceptions and overall learning outcomes.

Overcoming obstacles in technology integration, as identified by Hedayati and Marandi (2014), Aslan and Zhu (2016), and Fathi and Ebadi (2020), requires the establishment of robust support mechanisms for educators. These mechanisms encompass resources, training, and technical assistance, thus highlighting the need for comprehensive support structures in educational settings.

Regarding educator and student attitudes towards technology integration, the success of technology in virtual learning heavily relies on educators' attitudes, which are influenced by their beliefs, technological proficiency, and perceived utility (Gill & Dalgarno, 2008). Conversely, students exhibit varying attitudes, often favoring traditional classrooms while recognizing the advantages of online modalities. For instance, Erarslan and Zehir Topkaya (2017) emphasize the importance of traditional classrooms, whereas Wright (2017) acknowledges the benefits of online modalities.

Additionally, technology has transformed language learning. Tools like Skype enhance linguistic proficiency and enrich social interactions (Correa, 2014). User acceptance of technology is shaped by social influence and facilitating conditions. For example, peer endorsements and accessible support infrastructures play pivotal roles in determining user acceptance (Mei et al., 2013).

The effectiveness of online courses is contingent on teacher preparedness. Some educators readily embrace technology, while others approach it with caution. For example, Canals and Al-Rawashdeh (2018) and Gönen (2019) provide contrasting attitudes among educators. Furthermore, students' attitudes towards e-learning, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, reveal a balance between traditional preferences and recognition of online learning's convenience and accessibility. As illustrated by Erarslan and Zehir Topkaya (2017) and Wright (2017), students appreciate the convenience of online learning while valuing traditional methods.

In the realm of student engagement and learning outcomes, diverse attitudes towards online tools underscore the need for tailored solutions that align with individual student preferences. For instance, Manegre and Sabiri (2020) and Srichanyachon (2014) emphasize the importance of catering to individual student preferences. Similarly, challenges and opportunities in online learning vary among students. Some express reservations about the online learning experience, as indicated by Adnan and Anwar (2020) and Lengkanawati et al. (2020). Therefore, the experience and proficiency of instructors in online teaching emerge as pivotal determinants of the efficacy of online education, as emphasized by Lengkanawati et al. (2020).

Additionally, teacher preparedness for technology integration is crucial for successful implementation, highlighting the necessity for comprehensive support structures and robust training initiatives within teacher education program (Kessler, 2006).

Moreover, factors shaping teachers' attitudes towards technology encompass computer anxiety, affinity for technology, and perceptions of ease of use. This underscores the indispensable role of ongoing training and support mechanisms, as highlighted by Yildirim (2000) and Teo et al. (2008).

Lastly, age has been identified as a significant factor influencing teachers' attitudes towards computers and e-learning. Older teachers exhibit more positive attitudes attributed to their extensive technology experience, as evidenced by Suri and Sharma (2017).

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants and Context

In this comprehensive study, a total of 160 Iranian EFL teachers actively participated. This diverse group included 58 males and 102 females, showcasing significant variation across various crucial dimensions. Notably, these dimensions encompassed not only gender but also educational attainment, spanning from Associate of Arts to Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. degrees. Furthermore, the study considered the diverse workplace settings of the participants, which included schools, institutes, universities, and other contexts. The research also took into account the participants' extensive teaching experience, the length of their tenure in the field of English Language Teaching, and a wide age demographic. More importantly, it should be highlighted that all study participants were native Persian speakers and held Iranian citizenship. Hence, the research rigorously adhered to stringent ethical standards to ensure the utmost confidentiality and anonymity for all individuals contributing to the study.

3.2. Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study, titled 'Teachers' Attitude Towards Online Teaching,' was originally developed in English by Sangwan et al. (2021). It has been meticulously adapted and validated for Iranian EFL teachers by Kianinezhad (2023) using Rasch model analysis (Rasch, 1960, 1980). The validation process yielded highly favorable results. The questionnaire is structured into two main sections. The first section, Socio-demographic Information, collects comprehensive participant details, including gender, educational background, workplace, teaching experience, and age. This thorough data collection provides valuable insights into the participants' backgrounds and the contextual factors influencing their attitudes toward online teaching. The second section, the Attitude Assessment, requires participants to rate each of the 24 items on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (indicating 'strongly disagree') to 5 (indicating 'strongly agree'). This rating scale is instrumental in uncovering instructors' perceptions and attitudes regarding online teaching, offering significant insights into their perspectives on this mode of education.

Besides, the translation process was carried out with meticulous attention to ensure linguistic and cultural appropriateness. Next, the questionnaire underwent a thorough customization for Iranian EFL teacher participants, involving a rigorous process of both forward and backward translation. Additionally, then, experts in the fields of educational technology and educational psychology were consulted to rigorously establish the questionnaire's content validity. Of utmost importance, the questionnaire displayed robust reliability, underlined by a high level of internal consistency, as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .94. Likewise, the Rasch separation reliability was found to be .92, further cementing the questionnaire's credibility in assessing attitudes toward online teaching.

3.3. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS software (version 21). This study followed a quantitative research design to examine how workplace settings and educational levels influence teachers' attitudes toward online teaching. In the initial stage of the study, the investigation focused on potential variations in the attitudes of Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers toward online teaching, i.e., based on their diverse educational backgrounds. The study considered educators with different levels of education, i.e., associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and Ph.D. qualifications. The methodology involved quantitative methods, specifically employing a one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) to conduct a comprehensive statistical assessment of potential differences among these educational groups. The primary goal of the ANOVA was to evaluate how varying levels of education might influence teachers' attitudes. Subsequently, a post hoc test was administered to pinpoint specific distinctions among the educational groups, i.e., providing valuable insights into nuanced variations in attitudes toward online teaching.

In the subsequent stage of the study, attention turned to investigating potential differences in the attitudes of Iranian EFL teachers toward online teaching based on their respective workplace settings, i.e., various environments such as schools, institutes, universities, or other contexts. The methodology continued to utilize quantitative methods, employing a one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) to conduct a robust statistical analysis of the data. The primary objective of this ANOVA was to assess how different workplace settings might impact teachers' attitudes, i.e. their perceptions and preferences. Additionally, a post hoc test was applied to identify specific pairwise differences between workplace settings, i.e., offering deeper insights into the distinctions in attitudes among teachers in these varied professional contexts.

4. Results

During the data analysis phase of this study, the collected data was subjected to meticulous examination utilizing SPSS Statistics software (version 21). To begin, an assessment of the normality of the data distributions was performed by calculating skewness and kurtosis values, along with their respective standard errors (SE). Subsequent to this initial evaluation, a review of the descriptive statistics for the variables was undertaken. Following this, the data underwent a comprehensive analysis, utilizing a one-way between-groups ANOVA, and a Post hoc analysis was also conducted. Finally, these statistical procedures provided valuable insights into potential differences among the educational groups and workplace settings, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing attitudes toward online teaching among Iranian EFL teachers.

The assessment of the test distributions' normality in this study involved calculating skewness and kurtosis values, alongside their respective standard errors (SE); that is, skewness measures the extent to which a distribution deviates from symmetry around the mean, while kurtosis indicates the degree of "peakedness" or "flatness" in the distribution. Ideally, skewness and kurtosis values of zero represent a perfectly normal distribution. However, values falling within the range of ± 1 are considered "very good," and those within ± 2 are generally acceptable (West et al., 1995; George & Mallery, 2010; Ryu, 2011).

As presented in Table 1, the calculated values for the test comfortably fit within the "very good" range, as defined by West et al. (1995), George and Mallery (2010) and Ryu (2011). Consequently, we can reasonably infer that the test distributions in this study conform to established norms of normality.

Table 1. Test of Normality for the Measure in the Study

	TAtOT
Skewness	.39
SE of Skewness	.19
Kurtosis	-1.04
SE of Kurtosis	.38

Table 2 presents a comprehensive overview of the scale's descriptive statistics. These essential parameters encompass the total number of participants (N), the range of values, variance, standard deviation, mean, as well as the maximum and minimum values.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Scale

	N	Range	Variance	Std. Deviation	Mean	Maximum	Minimum
Scale	160	69.00	457.79	21.39	88.73	130.00	61.00

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to investigate the impact of education level on teachers' attitudes toward online teaching, as measured by the Teachers' Attitudes Toward Online Teaching Questionnaire (TAtOT; Kianinezhad, 2023). The education levels were divided into four groups: Group 1 (Associate Degree), Group 2 (Bachelor's Degree), Group 3 (Master's Degree), and Group 4 (Ph.D.). The results indicated statistically significant differences in teachers' attitudes toward online teaching among the four educational groups ($F(3, 156) = 17.96, p = .00$), suggesting a relationship between educational level and teachers' attitudes toward online teaching. Accordingly, descriptive statistics for each group are provided in Table 3.

Table 3. ANOVA Summary

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18692.565	3	6230.855	17.968	.000
Within Groups	54096.410	156	346.772		
Total	72788.975	159			

Besides, the post hoc test (Table 4) revealed significant differences between the following pairs: Group 1 and Group 4 (mean difference = 19.12, $p = .05$), Group 2 and Group 3 (mean difference = 18.61, $p = .00$), and Group 3 and Group 4 (mean difference = 30.81, $p = .00$).

Table 4. Post Hoc Test Results for Degree Differences

Degree	Degree	Mean Difference(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
AA	BA	6.91883	6.91737	.749	-11.0452	24.8828
	MA	-11.69186	7.17014	.364	-30.3123	6.9286
	PhD	19.12500*	7.36092	.050	.0091	38.2409
BA	AA	-6.91883	6.91737	.749	-24.8828	11.0452
	MA	-18.61069*	3.54514	.000	-27.8172	-9.4042
	PhD	12.20617*	3.91665	.012	2.0349	22.3775
MA	AA	11.69186	7.17014	.364	-6.9286	30.3123
	BA	18.61069*	3.54514	.000	9.4042	27.8172
	PhD	30.81686*	4.34754	.000	19.5266	42.1071
PhD	AA	-19.12500*	7.36092	.050	-38.2409	-.0091
	BA	-12.20617*	3.91665	.012	-22.3775	-2.0349
	MA	-30.81686*	4.34754	.000	-42.1071	-19.5266

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to investigate the impact of workplace settings on teachers' attitudes toward online teaching, as assessed by the Teachers' Attitudes Toward Online Teaching Questionnaire (TAtOT; Kianinezhad, 2023). The analysis revealed a statistically significant differentiation in teachers' attitudes toward online teaching based on their respective workplaces: $F(3, 156) = 21.14, p = .00$. Consequently, a definitive association between the workplace and teachers' attitudes toward online teaching was established (Table 5).

Table 5. ANOVA Summary

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	21039.503	3	7013.168	21.141	.000
Within Groups	51749.472	156	331.727		
Total	72788.975	159			

In addition, the post hoc test (Table 6) identified notable distinctions between the following pairs: other and school (mean difference = 16.63, $p = .006$), school and institute (mean difference = 27.39, $p = .00$), and school and university (mean difference = 20.06, $p = .00$).

Table 6. Post Hoc Test Results for Work Place Comparison

Work Place		Mean Difference(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Other	School	16.63750*	4.98794	.006	3.6841	29.5909
	Institute	-10.75417	5.63831	.229	-25.3965	3.8882
	University	-3.42279	5.52174	.926	-17.7624	10.9168
School	Other	-16.63750*	4.98794	.006	-29.5909	-3.6841
	Institute	-27.39167*	3.89925	.000	-37.5178	-17.2655
	University	-20.06029*	3.72871	.000	-29.7435	-10.3771
Institute	Other	10.75417	5.63831	.229	-3.8882	25.3965
	School	27.39167*	3.89925	.000	17.2655	37.5178
	University	7.33137	4.56227	.378	-4.5166	19.1793
University	Other	3.42279	5.52174	.926	-10.9168	17.7624
	School	20.06029*	3.72871	.000	10.3771	29.7435
	Institute	-7.33137	4.56227	.378	-19.1793	4.5166

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

5. Discussion

In recent years, extensive research has focused on the profound impact of technology on education, emphasizing the pivotal role of education in personal growth and development. This study, exploring the attitudes of Iranian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers towards online teaching, is a timely and essential contribution to our understanding of how technology is reshaping the educational landscape.

The primary aim of this research was to examine how educational levels and workplace settings influence the attitudes of EFL teachers in Iran towards online teaching. A total of 160 Iranian EFL teachers participated in this study, representing a diverse group with varying educational backgrounds, ranging from associate degrees to Ph.D. qualifications. These educators operated in various educational settings, including schools, institutes, universities, and other contexts.

To assess teachers' attitudes towards online teaching, we used a meticulously adapted and validated questionnaire titled 'Teachers' Attitude Towards Online Teaching.' Originally developed in English, this questionnaire was rigorously adapted and validated for Iranian EFL teachers by Kianinezhad (2023) using Rasch model analysis, ensuring its reliability and validity.

The research findings revealed statistically significant variations in teachers' attitudes towards online teaching based on their educational backgrounds. Four distinct groups emerged, representing varying levels of education from associate degrees to Ph.D. qualifications. Educators with advanced degrees, particularly those with master's and Ph.D. qualifications, exhibited markedly more favorable attitudes towards online teaching, highlighting the significance of higher education in shaping educators' perspectives and readiness for online teaching.

Additionally, the research uncovered significant disparities in teachers' attitudes towards online teaching based on their workplace settings. Educators in diverse contexts, including schools, institutes, universities, and other environments, exhibited varying attitudes towards online teaching. Teachers in schools displayed more positive attitudes, while those in institutes and universities also held favorable attitudes, though to a somewhat lesser degree. This emphasizes the influential role of the workplace in molding educators' perceptions of online teaching.

The study's outcomes offer valuable insights into the factors shaping EFL teachers' attitudes towards online teaching. The prevalence of positive attitudes among educators with advanced degrees underscores the necessity of continuous education and professional development in fostering favorable perceptions of online teaching. Furthermore, the influence of workplace context underscores the need for customized strategies and support mechanisms in diverse educational settings. These findings highlight the multidimensional nature of educators' attitudes, emphasizing the role of academic qualifications and workplace contexts in shaping perceptions towards online teaching.

This study accentuates the critical importance of cultivating a culture of continuous professional development and creating conducive work environments that facilitate the seamless integration of online teaching methodologies, ultimately improving the quality and accessibility of language education in the digital age.

In this context, the findings align with and contribute to the existing body of literature on technology in education. Positive attitudes towards online teaching observed among educators with advanced degrees echo the emphasis on teacher attitudes in previous research. Accordingly, studies by Heirati and Alashti (2015), Raygan and Moradkhani (2020), Xodabande (2017), and Kianinezhad (2023) consistently highlight the crucial role of teacher attitudes in the successful implementation of technology-enhanced learning experiences. The study adds a specific focus on the influence of educational levels, demonstrating that educators with higher qualifications exhibit more favorable attitudes.

The impact of workplace settings on teachers' attitudes towards online teaching resonates with the broader literature discussing the role of contextual factors. Studies by Hedayati and Marandi (2014), Aslan and Zhu (2016), and Fathi and Ebadi (2020) underscore the importance of support mechanisms, resources, and training for educators in overcoming obstacles to technology integration. Findings extend this understanding by highlighting the workplace as a significant contextual factor shaping teachers' perceptions, with educators in schools displaying more positive attitudes.

Additionally, the literature review provides a comprehensive backdrop to the study by outlining the multifaceted nature of technology in education. Erfani and Ghapanchi (2019) acknowledge the positive attitudes of students towards online learning, emphasizing the benefits that coexist with challenges. This aligns with the findings, as variations in teacher attitudes are identified, emphasizing the need for continuous professional development.

Mahmoodi Shahreabaki's (2014) comprehensive approach to bolstering e-learning, involving government support and improvements in infrastructure, resonates with the call for customized strategies and support mechanisms in diverse educational settings. In addition, Yaghoubi et al. (2008) shed light on critical factors influencing students' inclination toward e-learning, aligning with the emphasis on factors such as educational levels and workplace settings influencing EFL teachers' attitudes. The studies on technology acceptance by Mei et al. (2013) and Gill and Dalgarno (2008) highlight the importance of social influence and facilitating conditions, aligning with the focus on the workplace as a crucial factor shaping attitudes. The acknowledgment of the impact of peer endorsements and accessible support infrastructures is in line with the discussion on the need for conducive work environments.

Finally, the literature review also supports the emphasis on the significance of teacher preparedness and ongoing training initiatives. Kessler (2006) highlight the importance of teacher education programs, reinforcing the need for comprehensive support structures, which the study indicates as vital for shaping positive attitudes towards online teaching.

In view of this, the research highlights the significance of comprehending and addressing the attitudes of EFL teachers in Iran towards online teaching. As technology continues to reshape the education landscape, considering educators' perceptions and their working context becomes imperative. Thus, by doing so, we can better equip teachers to embrace online teaching and ensure the effective integration of technology in the classroom. This study provides a robust foundation for future research and initiatives aimed at enhancing the digital readiness of educators in the constantly evolving realm of education.

6. Conclusion, Implications, Recommendations

6.1. Conclusion

In summary, this study provides valuable insights into the perspectives of Iranian EFL teachers on online teaching. It illuminates the pivotal role that educational levels and workplace environments play in shaping their attitudes. The findings underscore the significance of advanced education in cultivating positive attitudes towards online teaching, underscoring the need for ongoing professional development initiatives in the education sector. Moreover, the study emphasizes the influential impact of the workplace context on educators' viewpoints, highlighting the importance of tailored support mechanisms to facilitate seamless technology integration. That is, as education evolves in the digital age, prioritizing educators' readiness and receptivity to online teaching becomes essential to ensure the effective utilization of technology for enhanced learning outcomes.

6.2. Implications

The implications of this study are multifaceted and hold great relevance for educational institutions, policy-makers, and educators themselves. Firstly, it underscores the imperative for educational institutions to place a high premium on the development of robust professional development programs, equipping educators with the requisite skills and knowledge to navigate the digital landscape effectively, i.e., addressing the evolving demands of online teaching. Policy-makers can leverage these findings to craft comprehensive strategies that foster an enabling environment for the seamless integration of online teaching methodologies, i.e., implementing policies that support the adoption and sustainability of digital learning. Additionally, educators can use these insights to tailor their approaches, fostering a positive attitude towards online teaching and maximizing the potential of technology to enrich the learning experience, i.e., incorporating innovative and effective online teaching practices into their pedagogical methods.

6.3. Recommendations

Expanding upon the implications of this study, several key recommendations emerge to support the effective implementation of online teaching in the EFL context. Foremost, educational institutions should prioritize the establishment of robust professional development programs tailored to the specific needs of educators at different educational levels. These programs should concentrate on enhancing digital literacy, promoting innovative teaching practices, and nurturing a positive attitude towards technology integration. Furthermore, policy-makers should allocate resources to establish a supportive infrastructure that facilitates the seamless adoption of online teaching, encompassing access to state-of-the-art technological resources and continuous technical support. Lastly, educators should actively engage in continuous learning and collaboration, exploring innovative pedagogical approaches and harnessing online resources to enhance the overall learning experience for EFL students.

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