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Original Article

Developing and Validating an English Language Teacher Commitment Questionnaire (ELTCQ) in Iran High Schools

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Abstract

The notion of teacher commitment has grabbed much attention in the mainstream, and L2 teacher education as teaching has become more complex by recent sociocultural changes in educational practices. Consequently, several instruments have been developed to operationalize the construct. The instruments developed so far have addressed the construct generically. To be sure, this line of inquiry is still untouched in the ELT profession. The present exploratory mixed methods study attempted to develop a questionnaire to measure English language teachers' commitment. In doing so, an initial 61-item questionnaire was developed conducting a comprehensive literature review and using interviews with domain experts and English language teachers. Then the trial instrument was administered to a sample of 352 teachers for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), reducing the instrument to 32 items. The subsequent Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) obtained from another sample of 577 individuals substantiated a seven-factor model as a robust and valid tool for measuring English language teacher commitment. The seven-factor model of teacher commitment included cognitive language teaching ability, language classroom environment, job satisfaction, opportunities for professional development, language teaching planning and support, language teaching self-image and beliefs, and language teaching exhaustion. ELTCQ can be used for measuring English teachers' commitment. Researchers, administrators, and teacher trainers can use the questionnaire to improve the quality of in-service courses and examine teacher qualities for future professional predictions. Keywords: Confirmatory Factor Analysis, English Language Teacher Commitment Instrument, English Language Teacher Commitment Model, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Teacher Commitment



1. Introduction

Teachers contribute to the success of any educational system, as qualified teachers undeniably influence school effectiveness and student outcome (Dong & Xu, 2022; Imran et al., 2016). Moreover, a review of previous literature reveals that teacher commitment has associations with student achievement (Park, 2005), dedication to student learning (Mart, 2013), instructional leadership, and collective teacher efficacy (Thien et al., 2021). Accordingly, organizations must maintain qualified teachers to ensure greater productivity and long-term organizational performance (Hanaysha, 2016).

Teaching is a complex activity influenced by teacher quality, a critical predictor of teaching performance (Fathi & Savadi Rostami, 2018). Pedagogy, curriculum, and governing educational regulations constantly change due to their complex nature, creating numerous challenges for teachers. Furthermore, the increasing demand for knowledge and skills in managing students with varied backgrounds, capabilities, and degrees of motivation, has caused enormous obstacles for teachers in educational settings. Thus, teachers need to exert considerable effort and involvement in promoting high-quality instruction to maximize student achievement (Thien & Abd Razak, 2014). Any educational system should pay adequate attention to teachers' worries, demands, and requirements to sustain their competent teachers and strengthen them professionally. Abundant research has focused on teacher-related variables such as teacher burnout, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and collective efficacy to focus more on teachers' psychological factors (Asadi & Bozorgian, 2022; Fathi & Savadi Rostami, 2018; Mokhtar et al., 2021).

As one of the primary teacher variables, commitment is "a psychological bond or identification of the individual with an object that takes on special meaning and importance" (Chan et al., 2008, p. 598). It is also concerned with the amount of psychological attachment teachers have to their jobs as educators and is influenced by several factors, such as working conditions, leadership, teacher autonomy, collaboration, feedback, learning opportunities, resources, and involvement in decision-making (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Lu, 2021). Teachers' commitment to their jobs, schools, students, and professions directly reflects how much time and effort they invest in advancing high-quality instruction. Dedicated instructors may share strong ties to their school, pupils, or topic areas. As several researchers argue (Donuk & Bindak, 2022; Imran et al., 2016; McInerney et al., 2015), teacher commitment correlates with teacher satisfaction, teacher retention, and school effectiveness. Highly

committed teachers may seem to have a solid attachment to the organization and exhibit a profound inclination to perform more efficiently. Conversely, teachers with low levels of commitment might have a weak bond with the organization and experience frustration in the learning environment (Thien & Abd Razak, 2014).

Teachers with high levels of commitment exert considerable effort to achieve school goals. Commitment to teaching enables them to enrich their knowledge and learning environments. As observing teachers' classrooms and evaluating their performance is unfair and does reflect their actual performance, voluntary commitment is of great significance. Interestingly, in Iran, the teaching profession has little to offer teachers. Therefore, they are pushed by frustration and dissatisfaction, increasing their propensity to leave teaching. Thus, the organization's responsibility is to identify the factors that strengthen teacher commitment and maintain its competent teachers.

The concept of teacher attrition is closely associated with teacher commitment, which refers to a strong desire to leave the profession. The literature supports that attrition significantly impacts children's learning and can harm student achievement. Moreover, it increases the costs of re-hiring and re-training teachers (Imran et al., 2016; McInerney et al., 2015). Thus, the organization's responsibility is to identify the turnover intention (i.e., a conscious effort to leave the organization) and endeavor to curb the attrition rate. These underlying assumptions provided the primary motives for conducting this study.

2. Literature Review

The advent of the concept of commitment can be traced back to Mcpherson et al. (1986). Initially, commitment found its roots in vocational psychology to examine the factors that would increase the quality and quantity of products in industrial and organizational environments. Commitment in industrial psychology refers to a teacher's emotional connection to the teaching profession. In other words, commitment is the mental connection between teachers' beliefs and their teaching so that the whole allegiance is directed toward their teaching (Lu, 2021; Mokhtar et al., 2021). On the other hand, organizational commitment is the employees' effort to achieve their workplace goals and the extent to which people identify their work psychologically (Werang et al., 2015). As Meyer et al. (2002) argue, it includes affective (emotional attachment to the organization), continuance

(the decision to continue or discontinue with the organization), and normative layers (remaining in an organization based on some expected norms). The definitions regarding commitment urge the researchers to conclude that the construct is multidimensional, encompassing students, teaching, school, and profession. Thus, investigating the components is essential due to their significant roles in teachers' performance.

The field of teacher education has encountered different models of teacher commitment. For example, Martinez-Pons's (1990) three-factor model of teacher commitment embraced extrinsically-oriented incentives, intrinsically-oriented incentives, and work conditions factors. In this model, intrinsically-oriented incentives and work conditions could predict the teacher's commitment to their profession, while extrinsically-oriented incentives were not a powerful predictor of commitment. However, the model failed to provide an understanding of the complexity of the construct. Another model by Firestone and Pennell (1993) was an answer to the limitations of Martinez-Pons's in which teacher commitment is affected by the incentive policies issued by the educational system, which would define teachers' working conditions. In contrast to Martinez-Pons, Firestone and Pennell assumed that teachers' working conditions lie on a continuum, ranging from very aversive to very fulfilling.

Several factors affect the incentive policies on teacher work conditions, including work characteristics, job characteristics, and organizational interactions. Reviewing the model clarifies that reasonable payment, the chance for personal growth, and organizational interactions resulting from the structure of the school or institution in which the teacher is teaching can influence commitment. Other influential factors are supportive colleagues, a non-threatening teaching environment, and access to supplementary teaching materials. However, work characteristics constantly interact with teachers' psychological states, such as self-efficacy, identity, cognitive potential, and content knowledge of the subject matter. According to Firestone and Pennell (1993), psychological states are affected by working conditions. Thus, like Martinez-Pons (1990), Firestone and Pennell (1993) distinguished between teacher-external factors (work characteristics) and teacher-internal factors (psychological state) as influential components in teacher commitment. However, unlike Martinez-Pons, Firestone and Pennell's model gave internal and external factors the same credibility.

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Fresko et al.'s (1997) model with two crucial factors of job satisfaction and professional self-image is another example that enriched the teacher commitment domain. The effects of other variables, such as teaching experience, students' grade level, professional advancement, gender, cognitive ability, and teaching ability potential, are indirectly mediated by job satisfaction and professional self-image and directly affect teacher commitment. Additionally, the relationship between job satisfaction and professional self-image is unilateral. Professional self-image would determine the extent to which the teacher feels satisfied with their teaching profession but not vice versa. In Fresko et al.'s (1997) model, the cognitive ability and teaching ability potential are concerned with the cognitive, instructional, and social faculties of teachers to handle the process of teaching, which would affect their decision to be a committed teacher in the long run. However, neither Firestone and Pennell (1993) nor Fresko et al. (1997) deconstructed the concept of teacher commitment into its building components; rather, they investigated the relationship between a set of variables on teacher commitment.

On par with these models, researchers and practitioners have developed valid and reliable instruments for measuring teachers' levels of commitment to teaching (e.g., Park, 2005; Rasudin & Shohaimi, 2017; Thien & Abd Razak, 2014). Although instruments developed so far have been widely used in educational research and practice, literature verifies that they have addressed the construct generically, not specifically. Another problem with the instruments mentioned so far was reliance on theories of commitment derived from organizational psychology and management, which may not apply to education-related professions. Additionally, some of these instruments were developed based on the developers' perceptions of commitment, as they did not consider employees' perceptions of commitment. Besides, they did not bother to conduct rigorous statistical analyses to provide psychometric properties for their instruments.

Despite extensive research devoted to teacher commitment, there is a paucity of research in applied linguistics (and even in mainstream education). Previous studies have not reported whether language teacher commitment would affect the second language (L2) learner achievement or efficiency of instruction. This absence of evidence is primarily due to teacher commitment not grabbing enough consideration throughout its formulation. What commitment involves and what components it entails are yet unknown issues. In other words, the construct has not been well-defined in its operational terms to allow for its

quantification, mainly due to the absence of a context-specific instrument for measuring teacher commitment. Additionally, prior research has primarily focused on the Western context and thus may not be applicable to the Iranian context.

Encouraged by these motives, the current study is a step toward (re-) conceptualizing the construct of L2 teacher commitment by examining its underlying components unique to L2 teaching. Two objectives of this study were to create an applied linguistics model of teacher commitment and to develop an instrument that would enable the quantification of the construct.

Thus, the researchers formulated the following research questions to develop such a measure that would add new understanding to the global concern of the teacher commitment crisis and promise insights into teacher retention strategies.

1. What factors contribute to English language teacher commitment in the context of language teaching in Iranian high schools?

2. To what extent can the newly developed English Language Teacher Commitment Questionnaire (ELTCQ) specify the components of English language teacher commitment in Iranian high schools?

3. Methodology

3.1. Design and Context of the Study

This study employed exploratory mixed methods design that helps control the internal validity of research interpretations by using reliable and valid instruments while providing the chance to study the research topic more deeply by establishing triangulation of the study. Nine hundred twenty-nine Iranian high school teachers participated in this study. As this study aimed to be nationwide and enjoyed a mixed methods design, the participants were sampled using purposive (qualitative data) and stratified (quantitative data) sampling methods to ensure data representativeness and generalizability. The criterion for categorizing English language teachers into different strata was the socioeconomic status of the cities from which the data were collected. Socioeconomic status was chosen as the indicator for classifying the population of teachers since the status of the community profoundly influences teacher variables (e.g., identity, commitment, job satisfaction, etc.). One merit of

a nationwide study is that it would diminish the intervening effects of demographic variables on the study because the participants can be chosen from both genders (male and female), different socioeconomic statuses, mother tongues, school climates, and geographical areas.

3.2. Participants

Participants were 929 English language teachers in Iranian high schools from different cities who took part in the data collection process in two phases. During the piloting phase, 100 respondents (64 females and 36 males) answered the questionnaire. Three hundred fifty-two (196 females, 156 males) high school teachers filled out the questionnaire for the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) phase. Five hundred seventy-seven high school teachers participated in the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) phase (358 females, 219 males). The participants' ages ranged from 25 to 45, and their teaching experiences varied from one year to more than 25 years. Five hundred twenty-three had B.A., three hundred thirty-eight M.A., and the rest were Ph.D. holders.

Table 1.

No. of Students	929
Gender	554 Females & 375 Males
Age Range	25-35: 431
	35-45: 498
Degree	B.A.: 523
	M.A.: 338
	PhD: 68
Years of Experience	1-10 years: 198
	10-20 years: 345
	20-30 years: 386

Participants' Demographic Information

3.3. Instruments

3.3.1. English Language Teacher Commitment Questionnaire (First Draft)

This study employed a first draft of the ELTC questionnaire to measure EFL teacher commitment to teaching. The items in the ELTCQ-first draft were constructed based on some sources, including; a) existing questionnaires on teacher commitment, b) patterns emerging from semi-structured interviews, and c) suggestions made by experts in language teacher education. The early instrument consisted of 61 items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). EFA was carried out using principal axis factoring, and CFA was performed via the LISREL software. The scale demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability and validity. Its reliability using Cronbach's alpha was obtained (α = .91), well above the minimum level of .70 (Dörnyei, 2010).

3.3.2. Semi-structured Interviews

Based on an in-depth literature review, eleven questions relevant to the purpose of the study were developed. A panel of experts (five university professors) read the first draft of the interview questions to ensure the comprehensiveness and clarity of the items and verify their content validity. Their comments led to slight revisions. All experts agreed on nine questions to be essential (Appendix A), and two items were removed from the instrument. To calculate the Content Validity Ratio (CVR), the researchers used the following formula by Lawshe (1975) (n_e indicating the number of experts selecting essential questions and N number of experts):

$$CVR = \frac{ne-N}{\frac{N}{2}}$$

In the next stage, the researchers used Ayre and Scally's (2014) critical values for Lawshe's (1975) content value ratio. Table 2 indicates the values of CVR for the remaining interview questions:

Table 2.

Questions	Number of Essentials	Observed Value	Critical Value
1	5	1	.31
2	5	1	.31
3	5	1	.31
4	5	1	.31
5	5	1	.31
6	5	1	.31
7	5	1	.31
8	5	1	.31
9	5	1	.31

Values of CVR for Interview Items

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two groups of experienced high school teachers in two sessions. They were selected based on their immense teaching experience and willingness to participate in the interview. The first session was held with inservice language teachers (n=5), and the second session was conducted with language teaching experts (n=5). The researcher supervised and managed both sessions based on the general principles suggested for conducting semi-structured interviews. The interviews lasted from 30 to 45 min in length, and the language of the interview was English. The interviews were all taped, recorded, and transcribed for final content analysis. The purpose of conducting interviews was two-fold. First, they aimed to triangulate the findings obtained in the literature review concerning factors contributing to or hindering language teacher commitment in high schools in Iran. Second, the interviews helped the researchers delve more profoundly into the reasons Iranian English language teachers might feel attached to

their profession by examining aspects that may go unnoticed during the quantitative phases of the study.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Due to the lack of quantitative studies on commitment, little has been done to conceptualize and operationalize the construct of language teacher commitment. This study took Firestone and Pennell's model (1993) as an overarching framework that laid the foundation for developing a new model. The tentative model differs from theirs in two main aspects. First, previous research was mostly done in Western contexts (Damay & Galand, 2012; Park, 2005), which may not be generalizable to other pedagogical contexts due to the multifaceted nature of the construct and its high sensitivity to context. Second, the present study researchers tried to incorporate high school teachers' insights on commitment issues offered by more recent conceptualizations, achieved from interviews conducted with domain experts and language teachers familiar with the theoretical underpinnings of the construct. The researchers started meticulously investigating the related literature to establish a conceptual framework for the model. Then, they conducted semi-structured interviews with ten high school teachers in two groups (n=5) to determine their opinions regarding commitment to teaching (see Appendix A for the interview questions). These high school teachers (three males and seven females) were selected due to their immense experience in language teaching (more than 25 years). They were also asked to sign a form of consent to take part in the semi-structured interviews. The interviews held in two sessions and were contentanalyzed based on the procedures guided by grounded theory (G.T.) (Berg, 2004). The literature review and interview data led the researchers to identify seven components of the tentative English Language Teacher Commitment Model (ELTCM). In the next stage, a panel of experts reviewed and verified the components' representativeness, appropriateness, and comprehensiveness. This stage left the researchers with seven factors:

1. Cognitive teaching language ability refers to the teacher's language knowledge and capabilities in managing the classes efficiently. It also indicates how confident and competent teachers handle unpredictable and challenging classroom situations, ultimately enhancing their commitment to teaching (Borg, 2003).

2. Language teaching environment, which is related to the context in which teachers work and teach. It also deals with the extent schools provide teachers with good working conditions by limiting stress and allowing greater autonomy which helps teachers enhance their commitment to the work and the workplace.

3. Job satisfaction, which defines the extent teachers feel satisfied with their jobs. Teachers who experience internal satisfaction exhibit feelings of competence, self-determination, and self-fulfillment. Contrarily, for externally satisfied teachers, sources of extrinsic satisfaction come from income, prestige, and power, independent of the individual accomplishing the job.

4. Opportunities for professional development, which embraces the opportunities for teachers to develop their teaching abilities to their potential. It also points out how demonstrators, school boards, and state policy provide them with the most innovative approaches to teaching to promote their professional skills and, consequently, professionalize their teaching (Firestone & Pennell, 1993).

5. Language teaching planning and support defines to what extent teachers participate in the organization's decision-making processes. It deals with how much their voices are heard, respected, and reflected in language teaching policies by the organization and how much administrative support they receive.

6. Language teaching self-image and beliefs component reflects how teachers rate themselves based on pedagogical and interpersonal abilities, which are integral to effective teaching performance. It also refers to the extent teachers believe in their capabilities to provide instructional strategies to diverse backgrounds with special needs.

7. Language teaching exhaustion component portrays a lack of emotional attachment and involvement with the teaching profession. Teachers experience high levels of exhaustion, exhibit fewer emotional reactions to events in the learning environment, and try to detach themselves from the students, which finally leads to their withdrawal from the profession (Nagar, 2012).

After the literature review and focus-group discussions, the researchers developed a theoretical model and a questionnaire on language teacher commitment. An initial pool of 132 statements based on domain specification, self-initiation, existing questionnaires,

patterns emerging from focus group discussions, and expert opinions was generated and grouped according to their commonalities on a six-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Slightly Agree, Slightly Disagree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree). Multi-task scales were utilized to develop more than one item for each component due to possible eliminations of single items over various phases of the questionnaire development. The researchers were also careful not to make double-barreled questions, that is, asking two or more questions in a single item. To establish the content validity of the items, the researchers asked a cadre of applied linguists to examine items' readability, representativeness, accuracy, and relevance, which resulted in the reduction of items to 73.

Then, another panel of experts judged the items' content validity, appropriateness, relevance, readability, and clarity. They commented on whether the English Language Teacher Commitment (ELTC) construct had been well-presented in the developed questionnaire. Twelve items were discarded due to ambiguity, irrelevance, and redundancy, reducing the list to 61. Following a standard step-by-step procedure for instrument development (Dörnyei, 2010), the 61 items were arranged in a standard questionnaire format (see Appendix B for the tentative instrument). A Persian version of the questionnaire was also prepared to collect data from low-proficiency respondents. Backward translation was applied to ensure parallelism.

The questionnaire was piloted with 100 high school language teachers. Its reliability using Cronbach's alpha was obtained (α = .91). First, 352 language teachers completed the initial draft of the ELTCQ. Face-to-face and online methods via emails were used for instrument distribution. The researchers utilized the factor loading index to build a theoretical model of English language teacher commitment and evaluate its effectiveness. The factor loading index helped determine whether an item deserved to be kept in the questionnaire; then, EFA via the Principal Axis Factoring was performed. Upon initial inspection, 37 filled-out questionnaires were discarded due to incompleteness, resulting in 315 questionnaires for model validation. Then a revised draft of the ELTCQ was administered to an independent sample of 577 language teachers. The collected data were submitted to CFA to examine whether the theoretical model explored in the EFA could be generalized to a larger, more normally distributed population of Iranian high school English teachers. Also, several CFA indices were employed to examine the psychometric properties of the final version of the ELTCQ.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

As mentioned, this study employed a factor analytic framework to analyze data at EFA and CFA stages (Osborne & Banjanovic, 2016). The researchers conducted exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses in two separate stages to explore the instrument's construct validity. The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using the principal axis factoring method with varimax rotation and Kaiser Normalization was carried out to detect the latent variables of the construct. Before this analysis and as a step against multicollinearity, the determinant was calculated to be higher than 0.00001. Several statistical analyses, including the Kaiser criterion, eigenvalues, and Parallel Analysis, were employed to find the appropriate number of factors to retain. EFA also indicated positive correlations among seven factors; the maximum correlation was between F4 and F5 (r = 1.000). EFA yielded a seven-factor model of ELTCQ. Then, to test the hypothesized model, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the dataset (577 questionnaires) using LISREL 8.8. The results indicated that the factor loadings of all 32 items were higher than .3, all significant at .001, showing significant contributions to their related components. The chi-square over the degree of freedom; (490.37/457=1.07) was lower than 3. The Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA) of .013 was lower than .05. Skewness and kurtosis values were beyond ± 2 . Field (2018) reported that skewness and kurtosis values within the range of ± 2 indicate satisfactory normality. Therefore, the CFA confirmed EFA results, denoting that the final version of the instrument enjoys a high construct validity for what it is intended to measure.

4. Results

Table 3.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling	g Adequacy.	.885
	Approx. Chi-Square	4257.984
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	496
	Sig.	.000
Maximum Correlation Between Items	.530	

1 D

An essential measure is examining sample adequacy and the strength of interconnections among the questionnaire variables (Field, 2018). Concerning sample adequacy, the most accepted view among researchers is the more significant, the better criterion met in this study since 352 participants took part in the EFA phase, with five to six respondents for each item. Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin's (KMO) measure of sample adequacy indicated that the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was .885, above the minimum level of .60 (Field, 2018). Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at p<.05, supporting the factorability of the data (Table 3). In the first attempt, when several principal axis factoring analyses followed by varimax rotation were employed (eigenvalues greater than 1), 11 factors were extracted, accounting for 44.09 % of the total variance, showing that the Kaiser criterion overestimated the actual number of the underlying factors.

Table 4.

	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared			Rotation Sums of Squared					
	111	Initial Ligenvalues			Loadings			Loadings			
Facto	Total	% of	Cumulati	Total	% of	Cumulati	Total	% of	Cumulati		
r	Total	Variance	ve %	Total	Variance	ve %	Total	Variance	ve %		
1	7.869	24.591	24.591	7.320	22.876	22.876	2.405	7.516	7.516		
2	1.888	5.901	30.492	1.368	4.274	27.149	2.180	6.811	14.327		
3	1.784	5.575	36.067	1.247	3.896	31.046	2.077	6.489	20.817		
4	1.741	5.442	41.509	1.194	3.730	34.776	2.026	6.331	27.147		
5	1.673	5.227	46.737	1.136	3.550	38.326	1.927	6.022	33.169		
6	1.614	5.045	51.781	1.044	3.263	41.589	1.871	5.847	39.016		
7	1.569	4.904	56.685	1.003	3.135	44.724	1.827	5.708	44.724		

Total Variance Explained; ELTCQ After Removing Defective Items

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Table 4 represents the results for the total variance and eigenvalues. The seven-factor model accounted for 44.72 percent of the total variance. Domain experts further scrutinized the yielded factor structure; this analysis indicated that all obtained factors were identifiable. The labels that were assigned to the factors based on the commonalities among items included: Cognitive Language Teaching Ability (Factor 1 with nine items accounting for 7.516 % of the total variance), Language Classroom Environment (Factor 2 with nine items explaining 6.811% of the total variance) Job Satisfaction (Factor 3 with nine items accounting for 6.489 % of the total variance), Opportunities for professional development (Factor 4 with eight items explaining for 6,331 % of the total variance), Language teaching planning and support (Factor 5 with nine items accounting for 6.022 % of the total variance), Language teaching self-image and beliefs (Factor 6 with eight items explaining for 5.847 % of the total variance), and Language teaching exhaustion (Factor 7 with nine items accounting for 5.708 % of the total variance).

Table 5.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.759	5
.773	5
.790	5
.822	5
.761	4
.763	4
.784	4
.901	32
	.759 .773 .790 .822 .761 .763 .784

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Statistics of ELTCQ

Table 5 illustrates that Cronbach's alpha reliability indices estimated for the seven components and the ELTC questionnaire were .759, .773, .790, .822, .761, .763, and .784,

respectively. The overall ELTCQ enjoyed a reliability of .901, well above the minimum level of .70 (Dörnyei, 2010).

Table 6.

Rotate Factor Matrix; ELTCQ After Removing Defective Items

	Exploratory factor analysis							
Component	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	
Item	Cognitive Language Teaching Ability	Language Classroom Environment	Job Satisfaction	Opportunities for Professional Development	Language Teaching Planning and Support	Language Teaching Self- image and Beliefs	Language Teaching Exhaustion	
PDev1	.681							
Pdev2	.655							
Pdev8	.636							
Pdev3	.611							
Pdev6	.611							
Job9		.654						
Job7		.639						
Job1		.584						
Job8		.577						
Job5		.540						
Env4			.607					
Env8			.600					

Env5	.582			
Env9	.545			
Env3	.531			
Cog9		590		
Cog3		588		
Cog7		583		
Cog6		573		
Cog8	.4	498		
Exh4		.656		
Exh5		.640		
Exh1		.622		
Exh9		.618		
Image6			.687	
Image3			.672	
Image2			.617	
Image8			.526	
Plan3				.649
Plan4				.643
Plan1				.620
Plan8				.541

As Table 6 indicates, of the initial 61 items, 29 items (1, 2, 10, 11, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, 28, 30, 33, 34, 37, 39, 41, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51,52, 53, 57, 58, 59, 60, and 61) with factor loadings smaller than the minimum recommended (0.30) were discarded. Table 6 shows that

the factor loadings of the remaining 32 items ranged from 0.526 to 0. 687. These results verify the construct validity of the final version of the questionnaire.

Component	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	1.000						
2	.304	1.000					
3	.302	.318	1.000				
4	.275	.267	.289	1.000			
5	.295	.285	.288	.213	1.000		
6	.287	.256	.269	.222	.246	1.000	
7	.315	.331	.323	.242	.280	.267	1.000

Table 7.

Component Correlation Matrix of ELTC

Table 7 shows the positive correlations among the seven factors significant at .001>.30. The minimum correlation was between factors 2 and 7, and the maximum was between factors 4 and 5.

Based on EFA analyses, a seven-factor model was extracted, which had to be validated for measuring language teacher commitment. CFA was conducted on data using a general linear model. After all steps, the researchers obtained 32 items tapping the seven components of language teacher commitment. As Figure 2 shows, CFA corroborated the seven-factor model in which all the loading between indicators and latent factors and covariance among the factors were significant (p<.001).

Figure 1.

Standardized Regression Weights of Overall ELTC



Table 8.

Fit Indices	Labels	Statistic	df	P-Value	Criterion	Conclusion
	X ²	490.37	457	.135	>.05	Bad Fit
	X ² Ratio	1.07			<=3	Good Fit
Absolute	SRMR	.041			<=.10	Good Fit
	RMSEA	.013			$.05 \text{ to } .08^*$	Good Fit
	PCLOSE	1			=>.50	Good Fit
	GFI	.99			=>.95	Good Fit
	RFI	.97			=>.95	Good Fit
	CFI	1			=>.95	Good Fit
Incremental	NFI	.97			=>.95	Good Fit
	IFI	1			=>.95	Good Fit
CN		450.84			=>200	Sampling Adequacy

Model Fit Indices of ELTCM

Table 8 illustrates the fit of the ELTCQ overall model. The non-significant chi-square value of 490.337 (p=.135) indicated the model's fit. The other fit indices also proved the model. The ratio of chi-square over the degree of freedom; (490.37/457=1.07) was lower than 3. The Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA) of .013 was lower than .05. These results supported the absolute fit of the model. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) of .99 and the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) of .041, and the Probability of Close Fit (PCLOSE) (1>.50) also supported the model's fit.

Other indices, such as the Relative Fit Index (RFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Normed Fit Index (NFI), were higher than their critical

^{*}Schumacker& Lomax (2016)

values, indicating a desirable level of fitness. Thus, all the indices were acceptable, and the model seemed to fit.

5. Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to develop an instrument for measuring Iranian high school English teachers' commitment. To this end, the construct validity of a proposed seven-factor model was examined using a model construction methodology that included exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. Research question one explored the components of Iranian high school English teachers' commitment leading the researchers to verify five factors: cognitive language teaching ability, language classroom environment, job satisfaction, opportunities for professional development, language teaching planning and support, language teaching self-image and beliefs, and language teaching exhaustion. The initial model was administered to 352 language teachers. EFA and CFA model evaluations were used for validation. EFA confirmed the components of the hypothesized model, and CFA (tested on a sample of 577 language teachers) provided statistical evidence for the seven-component model.

The affirmative answer to research question two verified the model as the first valid and reliable instrument for examining Iranian EFL teachers' commitment. Calculating model-fit estimates indicated its psychometric properties. Several findings can be derived from the present study. First, in line with previous research (Batugal & Tindowen, 2019; Mokhtar et al., 2021; Nagar, 2012), this study revealed job satisfaction and commitment are positively correlated, meaning that job satisfaction is an essential predictor of a person's decision to leave or continue the teaching profession. Teachers with high levels of job satisfaction show greater levels of organizational commitment. As Mokhtar et al. (2021) showed, job satisfaction and positive feelings toward the teaching profession could increase job involvement.

Second, this study indicated that language teaching exhaustion negatively affects teaching commitment. This finding supports previous studies on the effects of language teaching exhaustion on teaching commitment (Khani & Mirzaee, 2015; Nagar, 2012). Nagar found that teachers with high levels of emotional exhaustion show lower levels of job satisfaction, negatively influencing their commitment to the teaching profession. Similarly,

other consistent studies (Asadi & Bozorgian, 2022; Donuk & Bindak, 2022) confirmed that teachers with higher levels of burnout were inclined to report lower levels of commitment.

Another finding is that cognitive and language teaching abilities positively support teachers' commitment, re-echoing Fresko et al. (1997) regarding the impact of cognitive and teaching ability potentials on increasing teachers' commitment. This study also concurs with Borg (2003), who found that teachers' earlier language learning experiences can be linked to their cognitions, which form the foundation of their conceptions of teaching L2 students and are essential to their commitment to teaching.

The current study also revealed that the language classroom environment positively predicts teaching commitment. This finding accords with studies that report a correlation between a positive school climate and lower stress levels, higher efficacy, and job satisfaction (Donuk & Bindak, 2022; Che Ahmad et al., 2017; Manla, 2021). As Fresko et al. (1997) put forth, teachers who are not under constant control feel more committed to the school than their counterparts. Teachers working under controlling principles report lower general well-being and may be more prone to burnout (Manla, 2021). Likewise, Nagar (2012) observed that organizations enable their employees to be more invested in their job and have a sense of ownership of the organization by offering supportive work environments. More specifically, the current study verified Yang et al. (2019), highlighting that the interpersonal environment of the school had a critical role in the development of teaching commitment.

Moreover, the present study revealed a positive correlation between commitment and language teaching self-image and beliefs, which corroborates with Fathi and Savadi Rostami (2018), Mokhtar et al. (2021), and Khani and Mirzaee (2015). The finding indicates that teachers' perceptions and beliefs of their abilities and efficacy in promoting their students' learning achievements could lead to better performance, enhancing their commitment significantly. This result also sheds more light on the significance of teachers' self-image; that is to say, teachers with higher teaching abilities are more committed to teaching, feel more satisfied, and are less prone to burnout (Nagar, 2012).

As this study signified, opportunities for professional development support teaching commitment significantly. Consistent with Fazlali (2022) and Muyiggwa and Pio Kiying (2022), the findings underscore that mentoring and job enrichment enhances employees'

commitment to achieving organizational goals. Research findings also show numerous benefits of training programs, such as better organizational performance, greater employee efficiency, and retention (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013). Fostering learning opportunities can result in teachers' professional development and thus increase their commitment (Park, 2005; Rashtchi, 2021).

Finally, this study indicated that teaching commitment is substantially correlated with planning and support for language teaching. The role of government policies in strengthening the commitment of employees engaged in leading school improvement is decisive in teachers' level of commitment (Werang et al., 2015). As emphasized by Kushman (1992), the significance of state policies suggests that by using decision-making authority in schools, teachers will become more dedicated to particular decisions and the organization. Conversely, teachers will be less committed to school and student development when they feel excluded from decision-making processes. Overall, the current study confirms the crucial role of teaching commitment in the ELT educational system.

6. Conclusion

The newly-developed ELTCQ bears numerous uses and applications for both research and pedagogy. Regarding research, it provides a clear understanding of the underlying factors of commitment and their impact on student outcomes. It offers a valid and reliable ELTCQ unique to the ELT setting, freeing researchers and educators from outsourcing to self-developed or generic scales. The scale can help the researchers to identify more components of language teachers' commitment to teaching in other contexts. Moreover, the relationship between commitment and other teacher-related variables can be probed utilizing the newly-developed scale. Also, the procedures used to develop the teacher commitment instrument could be easily applied to develop multifarious measures of commitment to other entities.

For pedagogy, being aware of various factors influencing language teachers' commitment can help educationists use valuable resources to strengthen teachers' commitment to enriching the teaching and learning environment. It can also direct state policies to formulate commitment policies and strategies that increase commitment and reduce turnover intentions. More comprehensive studies can better operationalize the construct, (re)conceptualize the model, and add more components. Many other potential

predictors of commitment have remained uncovered; thus, this study calls for researchers to delve into the issue.

This study did not include demographic information such as age and experience as variables. Thus, future studies can use these variables as latent variables and discover relations among all these variables to unravel the mysteries of the construct. This study employed factor analysis, which though a powerful tool for developing and validating theoretical models and a measurement instrument (e.g., tests and questionnaires), may leave some aspects of a variable unnoticed. This limitation might occur because factor analysis deals with quantitative data, and thus important information about human behaviors may be missing due to employing quantitative data analysis techniques. Therefore, we tried to relieve this limitation by triangulating factor analysis results with qualitative data collection and analysis (i.e., mixed-methods research).

The multidimensionality of the commitment construct has restricted studies to qualitative approaches; developing an instrument would be a move toward quantitative and mixed methods studies to enable researchers to provide a more vivid picture of English language teacher commitment. The newly-developed ELTCQ will be subject to contextual variations as with other instruments. Therefore, cross-validation of psychometric properties will be appropriate for scale refinement and improvement purposes. As this study is the first to explore the dimensions of language teacher commitment in Iranian high schools, further studies can enhance the validity of ELTCQ.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Are you a committed teacher?

2. What are the characteristics of a committed teacher? How do you define a committed teacher?

3. What components do you think are missing in your teaching as an English teacher?

4. How do you evaluate your teaching ability? (skills and knowledge)

5. Why did you choose to teach?

- 6. What made/might make you stay in teaching?
- 7. Is there any possibility of leaving teaching as your leading career?
- 8. Are you satisfied with the school climate you work in?
- 9. Do you have freedom in choosing materials to teach?

Appendix B

The Tentative Instrument (EITCQ)

Dear Respondent:

This questionnaire aims to gain knowledge about EFL teachers' commitment to language teaching in Iranian high schools. Your careful answers to the following questions will provide valuable information that hopefully impacts language teaching in Iran. The data will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. There is no right or wrong answer to these questions. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Demographic Information

Gender: Male Female
Age:
Academic Degree: Associate Diploma BA MA PhD
Major: ———
City in which you teach ————
Grades you have taught English (you can choose more than one option)
10th grade 11the grade 12th grade
Years of teaching experience —

Instruction:

Please check the box that best expresses your belief about each item according to the following descriptions:

Strongly Disagree = 1	Disagree = 2	Slightly Disagree = 3
Slightly Agree = 4	Agree = 5	Strongly Agree = 6

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	I have found teaching English to high-school students an easy commitment.						
2	I teach English to my students regardless of whether they learn it well or not.						
3	I feel an internal satisfaction in teaching English that increases my commitment to teaching.						
4.	I have chances for career promotion as a high-school English teacher.						
5	I have the autonomy to select textbooks, content, and topics I teach in my English classes.						
6	I think that being an English teacher is more prestigious than being a teacher of other school subjects.						
7	I am tired of teaching English in high school.						
8	I simply dedicate myself to the assigned goals in my classes.						
9	I believe in my students' abilities, and it is my responsibility to ensure their success.						
10	I have job security as a high-school English teacher.						
11	I consider teaching high-school students as a chance to improve my English language proficiency.						

			1	
12	I am invited to participate in making important educational decisions.			
13	I believe that my identity as a high-school English teacher inspires me in life.			
14	I feel less motivated than when I began teaching English in high school.			
15	I believe in my ability to manage unpredictable events in my classes efficiently.			
16	I am responsible for responding to parents' concerns about their children's English learning.			
17	I am truly satisfied with my current job as an English teacher in high school.			
18	I develop my abilities to my full potential as an English teacher in high school.			
19	I am responsible for implementing effective strategies in my classes to guarantee students' learning.			
20	I have strongly identified myself as a dedicated English teacher.			
21	I would definitely abandon teaching English in high school if I had other career choices.			
22	I try to reduce the effects of bad conditions on my student's English learning.			
23	I prefer to teach English in less crowded classes in high school.			
24	I find my salary not in keeping with my capabilities and qualifications as an English teacher.			
25	I am in constant contact with professionals (researchers, university professors, etc.) In English teaching.			

		•	 	 	
26	I am highly supported by the instructional materials and				
	equipment I need in my English classes.				
28	I consider my job as a commitment with a manageable workload.				
29	I am responsible for motivating uninterested students to learn English.				
30	I cannot afford my needs and living expenses with the money I make as an English teacher.				
31	I have identified specific goals for my development as a high-school English teacher.				
32	I receive high school officials' support regarding my educational decisions in my classes.				
33	Being an English teacher in high school is an important part of my identity.				
34	I often feel exhausted when I get up in the morning and have to go to school.				
35	I teach English to my full potential, even if I receive negative feedback from my students.				
36	I will again choose to be an English teacher even if I gain new opportunities to change my job.				
37	I have opportunities to achieve my professional goals.				
38	I try to use new teaching techniques in my classes in high school.				
39	I am passionately embraced by my colleagues when I seek their advice.				
40	I am highly respected by people when they come to know I am an English teacher.				

	1	1	1	1	I.	1	
41	I sometimes lie awake at night while thinking about						
	tomorrow's work at school.						
42	I can manage classes with different English proficiency						
	levels.						
43	I must ensure that low-achieving and high-achieving						
	students would equally learn English in my classes.						
44	I think the best decision I have ever made was to become						
	an English teacher.						
45	I have abundant opportunities to engage in serious studies						
	in English teaching.						
46	I enjoy the friendly atmosphere between English teachers						
	and teachers of other subjects in my high school.						
47	English teacher in high school has a personal meaning for						
	me.						
48	I would leave teaching if I had another job opportunity						
	with an equal salary.						
40							
49	I am confident enough about my language knowledge and						
	my ability to teach English well to my students.						
50	I find the interference of powerts are arised in the						
50	I find the interference of parents annoying in my job.						
51	I am not satisfied with the sizes of my English classes in						
	high school.						
	5						
52	I have plans for higher education (M.A. and Ph.D.) In						
	English teaching due to my pleasant experience teaching						
	English in high school.						
53	I am responsible for making students understand the						
	necessity of learning English.						
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54	I have found teaching English boring due to its repetitive nature.			
55	I am deeply impressed by my students' attitudes toward English language learning.			
56	I think English classes are more vibrant than other school subjects.			
57	I can go to high-school officials when I need help managing my English classes more effectively.			
58	I could do better if I had not joined the profession of English teaching.			
59	I believe that the other English teachers in high school do not try to block my advancement.			
60	I am relaxed and have peace of mind in my job as a high- school English teacher.			
61	I feel I have become more dedicated to teaching English in high school as the years pass by.			