

# The Impact of Organizational Support on University Foreign Language Teachers' Intercultural Teaching Competency: The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy

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## ABSTRACT

Based on Organizational Support Theory and Social Cognitive Theory, this study aimed to construct a mediating model of organizational support and self-efficacy on intercultural teaching competency (ITC). It explored the mechanism through which organizational support affects foreign language teachers' ITC and examined the mediating role of self-efficacy in this process. The study employed a questionnaire survey method, with 136 foreign language teachers from a private foreign language university in Guangxi as the research subjects, and utilized SmartPLS 4.0 to conduct PLS-SEM structural equation modeling analysis. The results of the study found that: 1) organizational support has a significant positive effect on ITC; 2) organizational support has a significant positive effect on self-efficacy; 3) self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on ITC; and 4) self-efficacy partially mediates the relationship between organizational support and ITC, accounting for 35.5% of the total effect. The findings suggest that strong organizational support not only directly promotes the development of teachers' ITC but also further enhances their teaching competency by boosting their self-efficacy. These findings imply that university administrators should strengthen organizational support (e.g., providing intercultural training resources, establishing collaborative research mechanisms, and improving incentive policies) and enhance teachers' self-efficacy to effectively promote foreign language teachers' intercultural teaching competency.

**Keywords:** Organizational Support, Self-Efficacy, ITC, Foreign Language Teachers

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## Introduction

Against the backdrop of accelerating economic globalization and the internationalization of education, intercultural communication has become increasingly frequent. Consequently, cultivating graduates with an international outlook, global competence, and intercultural awareness has become a central objective of higher education reform as well as a key direction for the development of foreign language education (OECD, 2023). As the primary implementers of foreign language education, foreign language teachers are expected not only to possess strong language teaching expertise but also to develop

intercultural teaching competency (ITC) that enables them to guide students in understanding, comparing, and critically reflecting on different cultures (Martorana et al., 2021). Given its pivotal role in promoting students' intercultural communicative competence, understanding how teachers develop ITC has become an important concern in both foreign language education research and teacher professional development.

Existing research has primarily examined the development of ITC from an individual perspective, focusing on teachers' intercultural beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, reflective practices, and teaching experiences, thereby emphasizing the role of individual psychological and cognitive characteristics in competency development (Martorana et al., 2021; Yaprak & Özmen, 2025). Although these studies have provided valuable insights into the individual-level mechanisms underlying teachers' ITC, they have paid relatively limited attention to the organizational contexts in which teachers work. In reality, teachers' instructional practices are embedded within specific school environments shaped by institutional arrangements, resource allocation, professional development opportunities, and organizational support (Romijn et al., 2021). Previous studies have demonstrated that sustained professional development support, intercultural training, overseas learning experiences, and reflective practice facilitate teachers' integration of intercultural perspectives into classroom instruction and contribute significantly to the development of their intercultural teaching competency (Huang et al., 2023; Yaprak & Özmen, 2025). Conversely, insufficient institutional support may constrain teachers' engagement in intercultural professional learning and instructional practice, thereby impeding the development of their ITC.

Organizational support is widely recognized as an important contextual factor influencing teachers' professional development. It refers to teachers' perception that their school values their contributions and cares about their professional development and well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Previous studies suggest that organizational support, through resource provision, leadership, management practices, and professional development opportunities, enhances teachers' work engagement, organizational commitment, and professional growth (Cha & Carrier, 2016; Eisenberger et al., 2020). Sustained organizational support also encourages teachers' participation in professional learning and instructional innovation, thereby improving their teaching competence (Sancar et al., 2021). However, relatively few studies have examined how organizational support contributes to the development of foreign language teachers' ITC, particularly through teachers' internal psychological mechanisms.

Self-efficacy, a core construct of Social Cognitive Theory, refers to individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to successfully perform specific tasks (Bandura, 1997). Research has consistently shown that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in teachers' professional learning and instructional practice (Zee & Koomen, 2016). In intercultural teaching contexts, teachers must address cultural diversity, integrate intercultural content, and facilitate intercultural classroom interactions. Teachers with higher self-efficacy are more likely to persist in challenging teaching situations, engage in instructional innovation, and continuously improve their teaching practice, thereby promoting the development of their ITC (Song et al., 2018). In contrast, lower self-efficacy may limit teachers' willingness to implement intercultural teaching and constrain the development of their ITC.

This study was conducted at a private foreign language university in Guangxi, China. As China's strategic gateway for cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Guangxi plays an important role in international educational exchange, language education, and regional talent

development (Li et al., 2021; Zhu & Yang, 2025). With the deepening of China–ASEAN educational cooperation, foreign language education has become increasingly important for promoting regional communication, intercultural exchange, and international collaboration (Ji, 2015). The selected university is characterized by its strong emphasis on foreign language education, offering programs in major European and ASEAN languages that collectively cover the official languages of all Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) member countries.

Despite these regional advantages, universities in Guangxi continue to face challenges in accessing international exchange opportunities, professional development resources, and institutional support for intercultural education. Previous studies have suggested that sustained professional development and supportive organizational environments are essential for promoting teachers' professional growth (Biasutti et al., 2021; Tualaulelei & Halse, 2024). Moreover, foreign language teachers in Chinese universities continue to encounter challenges such as limited intercultural teaching resources, insufficient professional training, and inadequate classroom support, which may hinder the effective implementation of intercultural teaching (Lu et al., 2026). Against this backdrop, this study incorporates organizational support as a key contextual factor and self-efficacy as the mediating mechanism to examine how organizational support influences the development of foreign language teachers' ITC.

## Research Objectives

1. To examine the effects of organizational support and self-efficacy on ITC.
2. To examine the mediating role of teacher self-efficacy in the relationship between organizational support and ITC.

## Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Based on Organizational Support Theory and Social Cognitive Theory, this study constructs a conceptual framework to examine how organizational support influences foreign language teachers' ITC, with a particular focus on analyzing the mediating role of self-efficacy between organizational support and ITC.

Organizational Support Theory posits that when employees perceive that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, they are more likely to develop a positive work attitude and demonstrate higher levels of competence and engagement in their work (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2020). In higher education settings, support at the institutional or organizational level, including opportunities for professional development, access to teaching resources, administrative assistance, and collaborative teaching environments, can significantly promote teachers' professional growth and enhance their competencies.

At the same time, Social Cognitive Theory suggests that an individual's belief in their own abilities, known as self-efficacy, significantly influences their behavioral choices, level of effort, and persistence in the face of difficulties (Bandura, 1997, 2006). Faculty members with high self-efficacy typically exhibit greater confidence in experimenting with innovative teaching methods, navigating multicultural classroom environments, and effectively addressing the various challenges of intercultural communication.

In the field of foreign language education, ITC is a critical professional skill. It requires teachers not only to possess language teaching competency but also to integrate cultural understanding into the teaching process, thereby guiding students toward effective intercultural communication and understanding. Organizational support provides the necessary institutional environment and resource guarantees for teachers to develop this competency, while self-efficacy serves as a key psychological mechanism that transforms the resources and support provided by the organization into actual improvements in teaching competency.

Therefore, this study posits that organizational support not only directly promotes the development of ITC but also indirectly enhances it by boosting teachers' self-efficacy. The conceptual framework of this study is as follows:

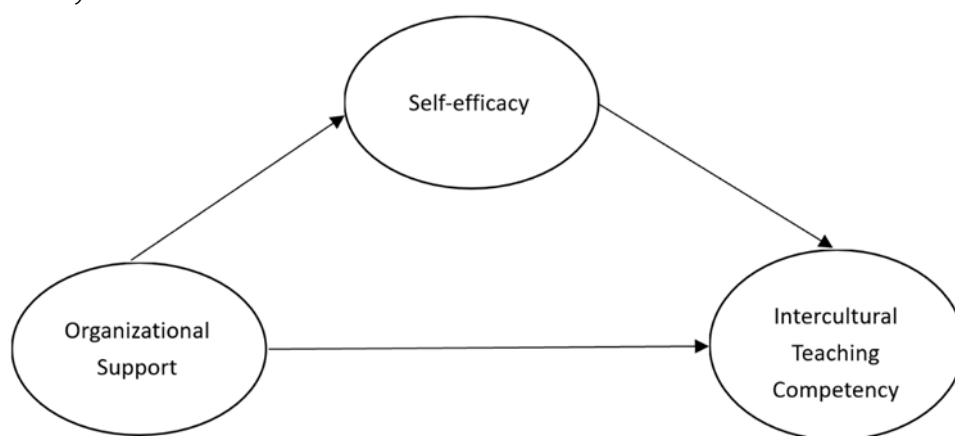


**Figure 1** A Structural Model of Organizational Support, Self-Efficacy and ITC

Based on the preceding discussion and conceptual framework, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Organizational support has a significant positive effect on foreign language teachers' ITC.

H2: Organizational support has a significant positive effect on foreign language teachers' self-efficacy.

H3: Self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on foreign language teachers' ITC.

H4: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between organizational support and foreign language teachers' ITC.

## Research Methodology

### 1. Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all undergraduate foreign language faculty members at a private foreign language university in Guangxi, and a census approach was employed to survey the entire population. Electronic questionnaires were distributed via the Wenjuanxing platform, yielding 136 valid responses, with the sample reasonably representative in terms of gender, age, and educational background. Regarding research ethics, the study adhered to ethical research guidelines, and ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee of Payap University, Thailand, prior to data collection. All participants were informed of the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation,

and the confidentiality of their responses, and provided informed consent before completing the questionnaire.

The sample's basic characteristics are summarized as follows. In terms of gender, 100 participants were female (73.53%) and 36 were male (26.47%). The largest age groups were 31–35 (27.94%) and 36–40 (27.21%), followed by 41–55 (17.65%), 20–30 (16.91%), and 55 years and above (10.29%). Regarding educational background, the majority of participants held a master's degree (83.82%), while those with a bachelor's or doctoral degree each accounted for 8.09%.

Overall, the sample is reasonably representative in terms of gender, age, and educational background, and can to some extent reflect the basic characteristics of the school's foreign language teachers. The specific distribution of the sample is shown in Table 1.

**Table1** Demographic Characteristics of Participants

| Items           | Options            | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Gender          | Male               | 36        | 26.47          |
|                 | Female             | 100       | 73.53          |
| Age             | 20-30 years        | 23        | 16.91          |
|                 | 31-35 years        | 38        | 27.94          |
|                 | 36-40 years        | 37        | 27.21          |
|                 | 41-55 years        | 24        | 17.65          |
|                 | 55 years and above | 14        | 10.29          |
| Education Level | Bachelor's degree  | 11        | 8.09           |
|                 | Master's degree    | 114       | 83.82          |
|                 | Doctoral degree    | 11        | 8.09           |
| Total           |                    | 136       | 100            |

## 2. Research Instruments

The ITC Scale used in this study was adapted from Shi and Fan (2016) and includes five dimensions: intercultural teaching beliefs, intercultural teaching knowledge, intercultural teaching design, intercultural teaching practice, and intercultural teaching reflection, with a total of 25 items. A five-point Likert Scale was employed, with higher scores indicating higher levels of teachers' ITC. The Organizational Support Scale is based on Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) organizational support theory and incorporates McMillin's (1997) two-dimensional perspective of emotional support and instrumental support, adapted to the context of intercultural teaching in higher education. Instrumental support was further divided into institutional support and resource support, forming a three-dimensional scale with 7 items in total (institutional support: 2 items; resource support: 3 items; emotional support: 2 items), using a five-point Likert Scale. The Self-Efficacy Scale was adapted from Schwarzer's (1995) General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES), with items revised to fit the teaching context of university foreign language instructors. The final scale contains 5 items, also rated on a five-point Likert Scale, with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-efficacy. Prior to the formal survey, a pilot test was conducted with foreign language teachers from other universities in Guangxi (55 questionnaires distributed, 50 valid responses collected). Cronbach's  $\alpha$

coefficients for all scales exceeded 0.70, indicating good internal consistency, and several items were revised based on teacher feedback to improve clarity and accuracy.

### 3. Data Analysis

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) integrates both factor analysis and path analysis to address complex, multi-causal relationships, revealing causal pathways between variables (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). Building on this, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is particularly well-suited for research involving small sample sizes or data distributions that do not adhere to the assumption of normality. It can efficiently handle complex model structures and is increasingly popular in social sciences research (Hair et al., 2021). For this study, the PLS-SEM method was employed for data analysis. First, the measurement model was tested to assess the validity and reliability of the research instruments. Second, the structural model was evaluated to examine the conceptual model of factors influencing foreign language teachers' ITC.

## Research Results

### 1. To examine the effects of organizational support and self-efficacy on ITC

To address Research Objective 1, this study first examines the relationships among organizational support, self-efficacy, and foreign language teachers' ITC (H1–H3).

#### 1.1 Measurement Model

Following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2021), reliability and validity tests were conducted on the measurement model within the PLS-SEM framework. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values for each construct exceeded 0.70, the composite reliability (CR) was above 0.70, and the average variance extracted (AVE) was greater than 0.50, indicating good internal consistency and convergent validity. The standardized external loadings for each item were all greater than 0.60 and statistically significant, confirming the scale's measurement quality. Additionally, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios were all below 0.85, suggesting good discriminant validity among the constructs.

The results of the measurement model evaluation showed that the outer loadings for each item ranged from 0.763 to 0.915, all exceeding the 0.70 threshold required for a reflective measurement model (Hair et al., 2021). The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values for each construct ranged from 0.922 to 0.925, and the composite reliability (CR) ranged from 0.940 to 0.942, both of which surpass the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating excellent internal consistency reliability. Furthermore, the average variance extracted (AVE) for each variable ranged from 0.690 to 0.767, all well above the 0.50 standard. Collectively, these results demonstrate strong convergent validity and composite reliability, as summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2** Reliability and Convergent Validity of Measurement Model

| Construct                               | Items | Cronbach's alpha | Composite Reliability (CR) | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Organizational Support (OS)             | 7     | 0.925            | 0.940                      | 0.690                            |
| Self-efficacy (SE)                      | 5     | 0.922            | 0.941                      | 0.762                            |
| Intercultural Teaching Competency (ITC) | 25    | 0.923            | 0.942                      | 0.767                            |

The Heterotrait – Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) method was used to assess the discriminant validity of the measurement model. Following the recommendations of Henseler et al. (2015) and Hair et al. (2021), an HTMT value below 0.85 indicates good discriminant validity among the variables. The results of the analysis reveal that the HTMT values between all pairs of variables are below the stringent threshold of 0.85. Specifically, the HTMT values for ITC and SE, ITC and OS, and SE and OS are 0.577, 0.588, and 0.607, respectively. These results suggest that there is good discriminant validity among the constructs. The detailed results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3** Discriminant Validity Test (HTMT)

| Construct | ITC   | SE    | OS |
|-----------|-------|-------|----|
| ITC       | —     |       |    |
| SE        | 0.577 | —     |    |
| OS        | 0.588 | 0.607 | —  |

### 1.2 Structural Model

Having established the reliability and validity of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesized relationships among the constructs. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is used as an indicator of overall model fit, measuring the average difference between the observed covariance matrix and the model's predicted covariance matrix. According to Henseler et al. (2016), a model fit is considered acceptable when the SRMR value is less than 0.08, and a value below 0.06 indicates an ideal fit. In this study, the SRMR value was 0.061, which is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, suggesting that the overall model fit is acceptable.

Additionally, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) was used as a supplementary fit measure. Bentler (1990) suggests that an NFI value of 0.90 or higher generally indicates a good fit. However, in PLS-SEM analyses, NFI values are often slightly lower due to differences in model estimation methods (Henseler et al., 2016). In this study, the NFI value was 0.853, which exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.80, indicating that the overall model fit is within an acceptable range.

According to Hair et al. (2021),  $R^2$  reflects the extent to which a model explains the variance in the dependent variable, with  $R^2$  values of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 indicating weak, moderate, and strong explanatory power, respectively. The test results show that the  $R^2$  value for ITC in this model is 0.380, and the  $R^2$  value for self-efficacy is 0.320. Based on the evaluation criteria proposed by relevant scholars, these  $R^2$  values fall within the moderate explanatory range, suggesting that the latent variables in this model exhibit relatively stable explanatory power.

Furthermore, the  $Q^2_{\text{predict}}$  values were computed using the  $PLS_{\text{predict}}$  method to assess the model's predictive validity. The results indicate that the  $Q^2_{\text{predict}}$  value for cross-cultural teaching competence is 0.280, and for self-efficacy, it is 0.304. Both values are significantly greater than 0 and exceed the moderate prediction threshold of 0.15 (Hair et al., 2021). This suggests that the model demonstrates good predictive validity. Based on the combined results of  $R^2$  and  $Q^2$ , it can be concluded that organizational support exerts a stable structural influence on ITC through self-efficacy.

**Table 4** Structural Model Fit, Explanatory Power, and Predictive Validity

| A. Model Fit Indices                |           |                                      |                            |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Fit Index                           | Value     | Threshold / Interpretation           |                            |
| SRMR                                | 0.061     | <0.08 (ideal <0.06) — Acceptable fit |                            |
| NFI                                 | 0.853     | ≥0.80 (good ≥0.90) — Acceptable fit  |                            |
| B. Explanatory Power                |           |                                      |                            |
| Construct                           | R²        | Adjusted R²                          | Interpretation             |
| ITC                                 | 0.380     | 0.370                                | Moderate explanatory power |
| SE                                  | 0.320     | 0.315                                | Moderate explanatory power |
| C. Predictive Relevance (Q²predict) |           |                                      |                            |
| Construct                           | Q²predict | Interpretation                       |                            |
| ITC                                 | 0.280     | Good predictive validity (>0.15)     |                            |
| SE                                  | 0.304     | Good predictive validity (>0.15)     |                            |

The Bootstrapping method was used to assess the significance of the structural model paths. The results revealed that organizational support has a significant positive effect on ITC ( $\beta = 0.353$ ,  $t = 5.115$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting Hypothesis H1. Organizational support also has a significant positive effect on self-efficacy ( $\beta = 0.566$ ,  $t = 8.264$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting Hypothesis H2, and this path is the strongest in the model. Additionally, self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on ITC ( $\beta = 0.343$ ,  $t = 4.761$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting Hypothesis H3.

**Table 5** Structural Model Results

| Hypothesis | Path     | $\beta$ | STDEV | t-value | p-value | Result    |
|------------|----------|---------|-------|---------|---------|-----------|
| H1         | OS → ITC | 0.353   | 0.069 | 5.115   | <0.001  | Supported |
| H2         | OS → SE  | 0.566   | 0.069 | 8.264   | <0.001  | Supported |
| H3         | SE → ITC | 0.343   | 0.072 | 4.761   | <0.001  | Supported |

To further assess the strength of the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables, this study evaluated the effect size ( $f^2$ ). According to Cohen (1988),  $f^2$  values greater than 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, moderate, and large effects, respectively. The results show that the effect size of organizational support on self-efficacy is 0.472, which falls within the large effect category. The effect size of organizational support on ITC is 0.136, and the effect size of self-efficacy on ITC is 0.129, both of which fall within the small to moderate effect range. These findings indicate that organizational

support is the strongest predictor of self-efficacy in the model and indirectly influences ITC through self-efficacy.

**Table 6** Effect Size ( $f^2$ )

| Path                 | $f^2$ | Effect Size  |
|----------------------|-------|--------------|
| OS $\rightarrow$ SE  | 0.472 | Large        |
| OS $\rightarrow$ ITC | 0.136 | Medium       |
| SE $\rightarrow$ ITC | 0.129 | Small–Medium |

These findings indicate that organizational support directly enhances ITC and self-efficacy, and self-efficacy also positively affects ITC, thereby addressing Research Objective 1 by confirming the hypothesized relationships among these constructs.

## 2. To examine the mediating role of teacher self-efficacy in the relationship between organizational support and ITC

To address Research Objective 2, the mediating role of self-efficacy between organizational support and ITC was tested (H4) using the Bootstrap method with 5,000 resamples and a 95% confidence interval (Hair et al., 2021). The results show that the indirect effect of organizational support on ITC through self-efficacy is significant ( $\beta = 0.194$ ,  $t = 4.115$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and the 95% confidence interval does not include 0. Since both the direct effect (OS  $\rightarrow$  ITC) and the indirect effect are significant, self-efficacy partially mediates the relationship between organizational support and ITC, with a Variance Accounted For (VAF) value of 35.5%, indicating a moderate level of partial mediation. These findings elucidate the mechanism linking organizational support and teachers' ITC, thus addressing Research Objective 2.

## Discussions

Based on the research findings, the results can be discussed as follows:

### 1. The Impact of Organizational Support on ITC

This study found that organizational support significantly enhances foreign language teachers' ITC, which is consistent with previous educational research. Existing studies have shown that organizational support promotes teachers' work engagement, professional commitment, and psychological capital by providing work-related assistance, recognition, and care for teachers' professional well-being (Chen, 2025; Kong et al., 2023). In educational settings, organizational support also facilitates teachers' professional competence by providing teaching resources, professional development opportunities, and a supportive organizational climate (Hu & Hemchua, 2025). For example, technical support and training improve teachers' instructional effectiveness (Zheng et al., 2018), whereas supportive organizational environments encourage instructional innovation and continuous professional learning (Yang & Aumeeboonsuke, 2024). These findings are consistent with Organizational Support Theory, which suggests that supportive organizational environments encourage individuals to reciprocate organizational investment through greater engagement and professional performance. Taken together, the findings indicate that organizational support serves as a critical contextual factor in fostering foreign language teachers' ITC.

It is worth noting that ITC is not solely determined by teachers' individual knowledge and teaching experience but is also shaped by institutional arrangements, resource availability, and school culture. By providing institutional support, sufficient teaching resources, and opportunities for intercultural collaboration, schools can reduce teachers' psychological barriers to implementing innovative teaching practices, thereby facilitating the development of ITC. Given the important role of organizational support, it is necessary to further examine the psychological mechanism through which this influence occurs.

## 2. The Impact of Organizational Support on Self-Efficacy

The findings indicate that organizational support has a significant positive effect on teachers' self-efficacy. According to Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy develops not only through personal experience but also through environmental influences, including mastery experiences, vicarious learning, verbal persuasion, and positive emotional states (Bandura, 1997). This theoretical proposition has been supported by empirical studies demonstrating that supportive school environments—including leadership support, collegial collaboration, and recognition from school administrators—enhance teachers' confidence, professional beliefs, and instructional efficacy (Pressley & Ha, 2022; Jentsch et al., 2023; Jiao et al., 2022). The present findings further confirm that organizational support functions as an important contextual factor in strengthening teachers' self-efficacy. Because self-efficacy influences how teachers interpret and respond to instructional challenges, it may also serve as an important mechanism through which organizational support contributes to teachers' ITC.

## 3. The Impact of Self-Efficacy on ITC and Effect Size Analysis

Teachers' self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on ITC, which is consistent with previous studies identifying self-efficacy as an important psychological factor influencing teachers' instructional behaviors and professional performance (Kang, 2026). Teachers with higher self-efficacy are more willing to undertake challenging instructional tasks, implement innovative teaching strategies, and continuously improve their classroom practice, thereby facilitating the development of ITC (Choge, 2025).

However, the effect size of self-efficacy on ITC ( $f^2 = 0.129$ ) was relatively modest, suggesting that self-efficacy, although important, represents only one of several determinants of ITC. This finding may be explained by the multidimensional nature of ITC, which is simultaneously shaped by psychological factors, organizational conditions, prior intercultural experiences, and student readiness. Consequently, even teachers with high self-efficacy may encounter structural constraints that limit the translation of confidence into intercultural teaching practice (Mae & Ümarik, 2025; Choge, 2025). These findings imply that improving teachers' ITC requires coordinated support from both internal psychological resources and external organizational conditions, providing a basis for understanding the mediating role of self-efficacy.

## 4. The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy

This study further found that self-efficacy partially mediates the relationship between organizational support and foreign language teachers' ITC, suggesting that organizational support promotes teachers' ITC both directly and indirectly through strengthening teachers' self-efficacy. This finding is generally consistent with previous studies. Chen (2025) reported that organizational support and teachers' self-efficacy jointly promote teachers' work engagement and professional development, whereas Coşkun et al. (2022) found that self-efficacy fully mediates the relationship between organizational support and teachers' proactive professional growth. Although the present study focuses specifically on ITC, these

findings consistently indicate that self-efficacy serves as a key psychological mechanism linking organizational support and teacher development.

The present study extends previous research by showing that self-efficacy serves as a key psychological mechanism through which organizational support promotes teachers' ITC. The findings extend Social Cognitive Theory by demonstrating how contextual support is translated into teaching competence through self-efficacy, while also enriching Organizational Support Theory by highlighting the role of teachers' internal cognitive processes.

#### 5. Limitations

Several limitations of this study should be noted. First, the sample size was relatively small ( $n = 136$ ). For PLS-SEM analyses involving multiple variables and hypotheses, this sample size may be considered insufficient. Although PLS-SEM can accommodate small samples to some extent, the limited sample size may affect the stability of parameter estimates and the generalizability of the findings. Second, the measurement scales were unbalanced in the number of items: the ITC scale included 25 items, whereas the organizational support (OS) scale included only 7 items. This imbalance may affect PLS-SEM results, such as the stability of latent variable loadings and path estimates, and should be considered when interpreting the findings. Third, the study sample was drawn solely from a private foreign language university in Guangxi, and the unique regional context may limit the external validity and generalizability of the results. Finally, only quantitative survey data were used, which restricts a deeper understanding of teachers' intercultural teaching practices and limits the explanatory power for complex educational phenomena.

#### Originality and Body of Knowledge

Building on existing research, this study makes the following significant contributions.

First, previous research on ITC primarily focused on individual-level factors of teachers, with relatively less attention given to organizational-level factors. This study broadens the research perspective by incorporating the organizational support environment layer (including institutional support, resource support, and emotional support) and constructs an integrated theoretical framework of organizational and individual factors, thereby deepening the theoretical explanation of intercultural teaching competency development. This framework provides a new perspective for understanding teachers' ITC, especially in the context of globalization and the ongoing internationalization of higher education, where the importance of organizational factors in enhancing teacher competency is further emphasized.

Second, this study introduces self-efficacy as a mediating variable to explore how organizational support may influence the development of intercultural teaching competency through enhancing teachers' motivation, emotional regulation, and self-reflection. Although self-efficacy has been widely studied in teacher development research, empirical studies specifically examining its mediating role between organizational support and ITC remain limited. Through empirical analysis, this study reveals the pathway through which organizational support enhances teachers' self-efficacy, subsequently improving their ITC, thus complementing and deepening relevant theories.

Third, this study integrates organizational support theory and social cognitive theory to construct a comprehensive analytical framework, theoretically explaining how organizational resources and

individual psychological factors jointly affect the development of teachers' professional competencies. This theoretical integration provides a new research perspective for educational management, teacher professional development, and intercultural education studies, highlighting the crucial role of organizational support systems and teachers' psychological empowerment in enhancing ITC.

In conclusion, by uncovering the relationships between organizational support, self-efficacy, and ITC, this study not only extends theoretical research in the field but also provides important theoretical foundations and practical insights for higher education policy and teacher development practices.

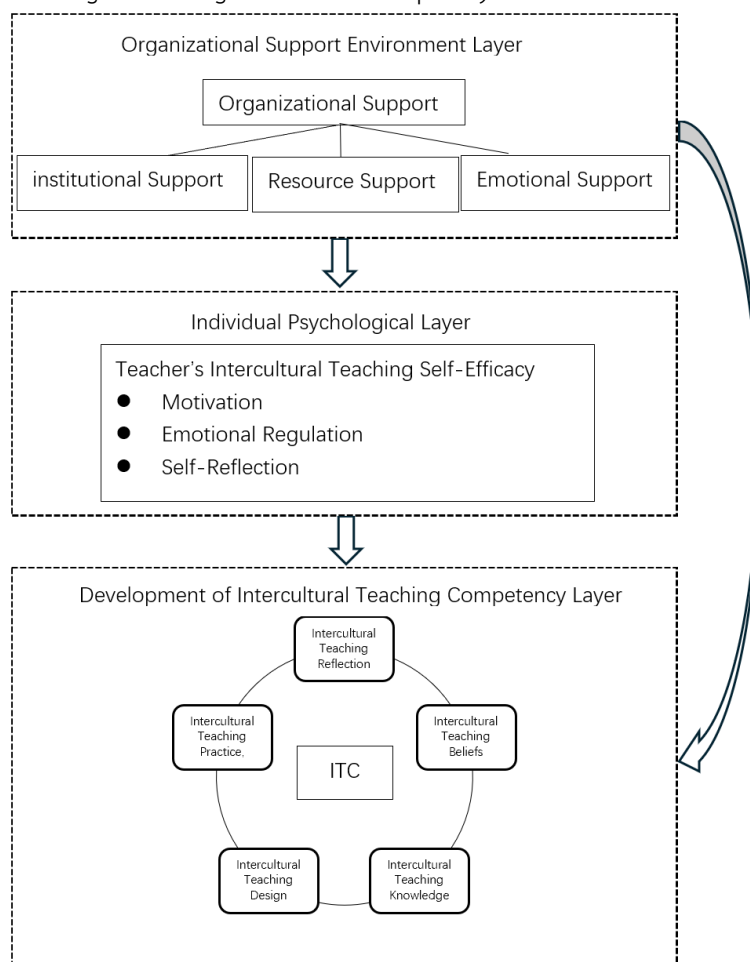


**Figure 2** a mediating model of organizational support and self-efficacy on ITC

## Conclusions

This study provides a deeper understanding of foreign language teachers' intercultural teaching competency (ITC) by examining the interplay between organizational support and individual psychological mechanisms. By constructing a mediating model of organizational support and self-efficacy on ITC, the study highlights the pathways through which organizational and individual factors jointly influence ITC, demonstrating both direct and indirect effects.

The study makes three main contributions to the literature. First, it extends research on ITC by incorporating organizational-level factors, offering a comprehensive framework that integrates organizational context with individual psychological mechanisms. Second, it elucidates the mediating role of self-efficacy between organizational support and ITC, providing empirical evidence for a pathway that has been underexplored. Third, by integrating organizational support theory and social cognitive theory,

the study provides a holistic perspective for understanding the development of teachers' professional competencies, which can guide future research in educational management and intercultural pedagogy.

In sum, the findings enrich theoretical knowledge on ITC and offer a nuanced understanding of the internal mechanisms through which organizational and individual factors jointly shape teachers' ITC, while highlighting the theoretical and practical significance of the proposed mediating model.

## Recommendations

### 1. Recommendations for Policymakers and Institutions

#### 1.1 Strengthening Institutional Support Systems

Universities should establish systematic institutional support mechanisms for intercultural teaching by integrating intercultural competency into teacher evaluation systems, providing stable policy support, and ensuring sufficient resource allocation. This will create a sustainable environment that encourages teachers to actively engage in intercultural teaching practices.

#### 1.2 Developing Structured Professional Training Programs

Higher education institutions are encouraged to design structured and continuous professional development programs focusing on intercultural teaching. These may include specialized training workshops, international academic exchanges, and collaborative teaching initiatives to enhance teachers' intercultural awareness and instructional strategies.

#### 1.3 Fostering Professional Learning Communities

Universities should promote the establishment of teacher learning communities by encouraging collaboration, peer observation, and experience sharing. Such communities can facilitate knowledge exchange and strengthen teachers' confidence in implementing intercultural teaching practices.

### 2. Recommendations for Teachers

#### 2.1 Enhancing Self-Efficacy and Professional Development

Teachers should actively enhance their intercultural teaching self-efficacy through professional development, peer collaboration, and reflective practice. By strengthening motivation, emotional regulation, and self-reflection, teachers can improve their intercultural teaching knowledge, design, practice, beliefs, and reflection, thereby fostering overall ITC development.

#### 2.2 Participating in Professional Learning Communities

Teachers are encouraged to take initiative in forming or joining professional learning communities, collaborating with colleagues to share experiences, exchange knowledge, and discuss challenges in intercultural teaching. Active participation in such communities supports ongoing professional growth and instructional improvement.

### 3. Recommendations for Future Research

**Expanding Sample Scope:** Future studies should include larger and more diverse samples across different regions and institutional types to improve the stability, robustness, and generalizability of PLS-SEM analysis results. A larger sample would provide more reliable estimates of path coefficients and mediating effects.

Refining Measurement Instruments: Future research could optimize the measurement instruments to balance the number of items across constructs, particularly for organizational support and self-efficacy, to enhance construct validity and reduce disproportionate influence of heavily weighted constructs.

Incorporating Additional Variables: Further research could explore other mediating or moderating variables, such as teaching experience, institutional culture, or leadership support, to develop a more comprehensive model.

Adopting Mixed-Methods Approaches: Future studies are encouraged to combine quantitative and qualitative methods, such as interviews and classroom observations, to gain deeper insights into the development of teachers' intercultural teaching competency.

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