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Dispositional Factors and Career Adaptability: Examining Personality Traits and Growth Mindset among Early Career Iranian EFL Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Although career adaptability (CA), a psychosocial tool for managing changes and obstacles in the workplace, is crucial for teacher effectiveness and retention, its connection to dispositional elements like growth mindset (GM) and personality traits is still poorly understood among early career EFL teachers in non-Western contexts. The degree to which GM and the Big Five personality traits (BFPTs) predict CA in early career Iranian EFL teachers was investigated in this quantitative study.

Methods: The Big Five Inventory, the Implicit Theories of Intelligence Scale (GM), and the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale were administered to a sample of 210 early career EFL teachers with fewer than five years of experience.

Results: The BFPTs together explained 34% of the variance in CA, according to multiple linear regression analysis. Conscientiousness (β =.38) was the strongest positive predictor, followed by extraversion (β =.23) and openness (β =.18), while neuroticism was a significant negative predictor (β = -.27). Beyond personality factors, GM strongly predicted CA (β =.23), accounting for an extra 4% of the variance.

Conclusions: The findings support career construction theory and mindset theory, demonstrating that both stable dispositions and malleable beliefs contribute to novice teachers' adaptive resources. Implications for teacher education include the potential for GM interventions to enhance resilience and reduce attrition among early career EFL teachers in the Iranian context.

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Introduction

Research repeatedly shows that teacher efficacy is the most important in-school factor influencing student accomplishment (Klassen & Tze, 2014; Rockoff, 2004). As a result, the effectiveness of a country's education system is closely linked to the calibre of its instructors. This understanding has shifted the focus of educational research from simple credentials, which explain less than 8% of the variance in teacher effectiveness (Aaronson et al., 2007), toward a deeper investigation of the psychological characteristics that distinguish effective educators (Göncz, 2017). This inquiry is particularly salient in the context of EFL teaching, where educators operate at a unique nexus of linguistic instruction and cultural mediation, requiring a resilient psychological profile to manage inherent complexities (Derakhshan, 2021; Hidayat, 2021). The challenge of developing this resilience is most acute during the initial years of a teaching career, a period widely recognized for its intense professional and emotional turbulence (Farrell, 2012; Zhang & Yusof, 2025). Novice teachers frequently encounter a gap between educational ideas and classroom realities during this formative stage, which results in increased stress and high turnover rates (Chun-Yan & Liao, 2024; European Commission, 2013).

Researchers have looked to the concept of career adaptability (CA), a psychosocial resource that helps people deal with both predictable professional duties and unpredictable work-related transitions, to understand how new teachers manage this time (Savickas, 1997; Savickas, 2005). These adaptive resources are crucial tools for early career EFL teachers to manage stress and maintain long-term commitment (Koen et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2025). A substantial amount of research indicates that a variety of individual characteristics may predict CA. The Five-Factor Model (FFM; McCrae & Costa, 1987) defines stable personality characteristics (PTs), which are fundamental among these and have been repeatedly connected to both teaching efficacy and work performance (Göncz, 2017; Njoku, 2020). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that malleable psychological beliefs, like a growth mindset (GM), which holds that skills can be developed via effort (Dweck, 2006), promote the perseverance and mastery-oriented responses necessary for overcoming obstacles in the workplace (Frondozo et al., 2020; Yeager & Dweck, 2020). Therefore, the main goal of this study is to quantitatively examine the degree to which a GM and the Big Five personality traits (BFPTs) predict the CA of early career Iranian EFL teachers, a setting

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characterised by particular documented pressures (Honarparvaran & Khaghaninejad, 2023; Sohrabi et al. 2022).

Literature Review

Theoretical Background

This study is grounded in three established and complementary theoretical frameworks: (a) career construction theory (CCT) and CA, (b) the BFPTs, and (c) mindset theory (MT). Each framework is delineated below.

The primary outcome variable, CA, is best understood through the lens of CCT, a comprehensive framework developed by Mark Savickas (2005, 2020). According to CCT, career development is a dynamic process of creation rather than a straight line that must be found. People actively create their careers by giving their work experiences personal significance. According to the theory, human growth is propelled by an ongoing process of social environment adaptation, with person-environment integration serving as the ultimate objective (Savickas, 2005). According to Savickas and Porfeli (2014), CCT outlines a four-part process of adaptation: adaptability (coping resources), adapting (goal-directed behaviours), adaptivity (readiness to change), and adaptation (person–environment fit). This study concentrated on CA resources, which CCT operationalises through four different but connected dimensions: Concern (future orientation and planning), Control (belief in taking ownership of one's career), Curiosity (exploring potential selves and opportunities), and Confidence (self-belief in problem-solving and overcoming obstacles) (Savickas, 1997; Savickas & Porfeli, 2014). These resources are crucial tools for early-career EFL teachers to manage stress, maintain long-term commitment, and make a seamless transfer into the field (Wang et al., 2025).

While CA resources are malleable, they are influenced by more stable underlying dispositions (Savickas, 2005). The most widely accepted framework for understanding these dispositions is the FFM, also known as the “Big Five” (McCrae & Costa, 1987, 1999). According to this concept, five broad characteristics can be used to characterise the great bulk of individual variances in personality. These characteristics are not deterministic; rather, they are persistent thought, mood, and behaviour patterns that make people more likely to respond in particular ways (Göncz, 2017). The five elements are: Extraversion (sociability, assertiveness, and positive emotionality); Agreeableness (cooperation, compassion, trust, and warmth); Neuroticism (tendency to experience negative emotions like anxiety, anger, and depression; frequently contrasted with Emotional

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Stability); Conscientiousness (self-discipline, organization, dutifulness, and achievement orientation); and Openness to Experience (intellectual curiosity, creativity, and preference for novelty) (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The FFM offers a theoretical foundation for comprehending how fundamental personality traits may predispose early-career instructors to higher CA in the context of this study (Göncz, 2017). For example, strong neuroticism may erode career confidence by intensifying emotional responses to stress, whereas high conscientiousness may directly support career concern and control through planning and self-discipline (Sari et al., 2021).

Beyond stable PTs, motivation and behaviour are significantly influenced by an individual's perceptions of their own capabilities (Dweck, 2006; Yeager & Dweck, 2020). Carol Dweck (2006) created MT, which differentiates between two fundamental perspectives on aptitude and intelligence. The idea that fundamental characteristics, such as talent or intelligence, are unalterable and rigid is known as a fixed mindset (entity theory). This notion results in a need to appear intelligent, avoiding situations that could expose weaknesses, and helpless reaction patterns after failure. A GM (incremental theory), on the other hand, holds that skills may be acquired with commitment, diligence, and practical methods. This belief fosters a love of learning, resilience, and mastery-oriented responses, seeing challenges as opportunities to grow and failure as a natural part of the learning process that provides valuable information for improvement (Blackwell et al., 2007; Dweck, 2017). MT is critically relevant to early-career EFL teachers, who inevitably face numerous challenges. A novice teacher with a fixed mindset may interpret classroom difficulties as evidence that they are “not cut out for teaching,” leading to decreased confidence, withdrawal of effort, and potential attrition. A teacher with a GM, however, is more likely to view the same challenges as learning opportunities, seek out feedback and mentorship, and persist through difficulties (Costa & Faria, 2018). This mastery-oriented approach directly supports the development of CA, particularly the dimensions of control (taking action to improve) and confidence (bouncing back from failure) (Frondozo et al., 2020).

2.2. Previous Related Studies

Empirical research has increasingly examined the relationships between PTs, mindset, and various teacher outcomes, though direct studies on CA in EFL contexts remain limited.

A large body of research has established the BFPTs as fundamental predictors of teacher effectiveness and career-related outcomes. A meta-analysis by Klassen and Tze (2014) found a

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significant, albeit small, overall relationship between teachers' psychological characteristics (including personality) and external measures of teaching effectiveness; Njoku (2020) and Göncz (2017) argued that traits like conscientiousness and agreeableness are consistently associated with behaviours attributed to effective teaching, such as dependability, organization, and kindness. More specifically related to CA, Sari et al. (2021) found that PTs significantly predicted both self-efficacy and alienation from school. In particular, neuroticism was a negative predictor of self-efficacy, whereas extraversion, openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness were favourable predictors. This conclusion is significant because it implies that PTs may indirectly affect professional success by moulding more flexible resources like self-efficacy. Sabet et al. (2018) examined Iranian EFL teachers in the particular setting of Iran and discovered a strong relationship between their PTs, self-efficacy, and students' motivation, further solidifying the influence of stable personality dispositions on the educational environment. Furthermore, Kim and MacCann (2017) showed that student assessments were strongly impacted by instructor personality, especially conscientiousness and agreeableness, underscoring the useful influence of teacher personality on classroom dynamics.

In terms of GM and teacher resilience, the significance of a GM in cultivating the perseverance and resilience required for early career success is highly supported by empirical data. According to Frondozo et al. (2020), instructors who had a GM about their capacity to teach reported higher levels of involvement and satisfaction, seeing obstacles as chances to improve their skills rather than as dangers to their competence. The foundation of adaptive behaviour is this mastery-oriented strategy. According to He et al. (2023), a GM is a crucial protective factor against the stress and burnout that frequently afflict early career educators and is a major predictor of teachers' well-being. Importantly, studies have validated this construct's applicability in the Iranian EFL environment. Zarrinabadi and Afsharmehr (2022) investigated the attitudes of Iranian EFL teachers and discovered that, despite the presence of both fixed and GMs, teachers from all backgrounds acknowledged motivation as a crucial component of language acquisition. This suggests that fostering a GM within Iranian teacher education could be a powerful lever for enhancing pedagogical practices aimed at student motivation. Furthermore, Amiri (2024) found a statistically significant negative correlation between GM and burnout among Iranian EFL teachers, indicating that a GM is a vital psychological asset that likely contributes to CA by promoting

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positive responses to failure and protecting teacher well-being. Li (2023) also demonstrated that a GM, in combination with positive teacher-student relationships, significantly predicted student engagement in foreign language learning, underscoring the broader impact of teacher mindset on classroom outcomes.

Despite the acknowledged importance of PTs and GM, a significant gap persists in the educational literature: a lack of comprehensive, integrative models that examine how these dispositional factors function together to predict CA, particularly in non-Western contexts. Much of the existing research remains siloed, investigating bivariate relationships (e.g., personality and self-efficacy) without providing a holistic picture of the interplay between these critical resources. This gap is profoundly amplified by the challenge of research context dependency. Applying a predictive model developed in one cultural setting directly to another risks profound invalidity (Cronin-Furman & Lake, 2018). The Iranian EFL context serves as a prime example where a situated investigation is needed, as novice teachers operate under specific documented pressures including systemic challenges in teacher education (Karimi & Shafiee, 2014), barriers to technology integration (Dashtestani, 2012), and emotional challenges from feeling undervalued (Nazari & Taki, 2015). While valuable research exists on isolated variables, to date, no known study has synthesized PTs and GM into a comprehensive, predictive model to understand how early career Iranian EFL teachers manage to adapt. Consequently, the main issue is the lack of a contextually grounded, empirically confirmed model that explains how dispositional factors predict CA. The following research questions are used in this study to examine this issue:

RQ1: To what extent do the BFPTs predict the CA of early career Iranian EFL teachers?

RQ2: To what extent does holding a GM predict higher levels of CA among early career Iranian EFL teachers?

There are two important aspects to this study. Theoretically, by applying CCT, the FFM, and MT to a non-Western community that has received little research, it offers a vital test of their cross-cultural validity. Practically, the findings can offer targeted insights for Iranian teacher education programs and school administrators by identifying which dispositional factors are most influential in fostering CA. These observations could guide the creation of professional development interventions, mentorship programs, and support networks that are especially suited to the requirements of new teachers.

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Material and Methods

Research Design

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was used in this investigation. Because it is most adapted to investigate the predicted associations between many independent variables (the BFPTs and GM) and a dependent variable (CA) at a particular moment in time, this design was chosen. The quantitative technique made it possible to gather numerical data from a sizable sample, which allowed statistical analysis to ascertain the degree and importance of the proposed predictive associations. Since the variables were measured in their natural state without any alteration, the study was non-experimental.

Participants

The participants for this study were 210 early career Iranian EFL teachers. Participants were recruited from various provinces across Iran using a convenience sampling strategy. Recruitment was conducted through professional EFL teacher networks, direct outreach to educational institutions, and dedicated online communities for teachers on platforms such as Telegram, WhatsApp, and Eitaa. All participants met the operational definition of early career teachers, which, guided by recent studies conducted in the Iranian EFL context (Ashegh Navaie et al., 2024; Kalali Sani et al., 2022), was defined as those with less than five years of full-time teaching experience. This threshold ensured that the sample captured teachers still in the formative and often most challenging stage of their professional development. The demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 210)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)
Gender	Male	67
	Female	143
Age Range	20–25 years	63
	26–30 years	90
	31–35 years	39
	36+ years	18
Degree	Bachelor's (B.A.)	57
	Master's (M.A.)	137
	Doctoral (PhD)	16
Major	TEFL	137
	Translation	34
	Linguistics	27
	Literature	12

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As shown in Table 1, the majority of participants were female (68.1%), which reflects the general demographic trend in Iranian EFL teaching. The most represented age range was 26–30 years (42.9%), followed by 20–25 years (30.0%), indicating a relatively young sample of early career professionals. Regarding educational attainment, the majority held a Master's degree (65.2%), which is common among EFL teachers in Iran, with smaller proportions holding a Bachelor's degree (27.1%) or a PhD (7.6%). In terms of academic major, TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) constituted the majority (65.2%), followed by Translation (16.2%), Linguistics (12.9%), and Literature (5.7%). This distribution is representative of the broader population of Iranian EFL teachers, where TEFL is the most common specialization.

Research Instruments

Three validated tools were merged into a multi-section online questionnaire to gather data. Given the target population's high level of English proficiency, all instruments were administered in English. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to evaluate each scale's internal consistency reliability, and all of the measures showed acceptable to exceptional reliability.

Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS): The 24-item CAAS-International Version 2.0, created by Savickas and Porfeli (2014), was used to measure the dependent variable, CA. With six items for each of the four fundamental CA dimensions Concern, Control, Curiosity, and Confidence this test evaluates them. On a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (not strong) to 5 (strongest), participants indicated how strongly they had acquired each talent. "Overcoming obstacles" is an example item for confidence. In 13 nations, the CAAS has shown metric and configural invariance (Savickas & Porfeli, 2014). The overall CAAS scale in this study had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of.92, which shows outstanding internal consistency. Additionally, the subscales Concern (α =.85), Control (α =.83), Curiosity (α =.87), and Confidence (α =.88) showed respectable dependability.

Big Five Inventory (BFI): The 44-item BFI, which operationalises the Five-Factor Model, was used to evaluate the BFPTs (Benet-Martinez & John, 1998; Costa & McCrae, 1992). Openness to Experience (8 items), Conscientiousness (9 items), Extraversion (8 items), Agreeableness (9 items), and Neuroticism (8 items) are the five broad aspects of personality that are measured by this instrument. A 5-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 representing "strongly agree," was used to record participant responses. "I see myself as someone who is talkative" is an example of an extraverted statement. With modifications for teacher populations,

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the BFI has been extensively utilised and verified in cross-cultural contexts (Sari et al., 2021; Kömer et al., 2005). The BFI subscales in this study had the following Cronbach's alpha coefficients: Openness (α =.81), Conscientiousness (α =.84), Extraversion (α =.79), Agreeableness (α =.80), and Neuroticism (α =.83). These numbers show that all five subscales have strong internal consistency.

Implicit Theories of Intelligence Scale (Mindset; IToIS): To measure whether teachers hold a fixed or GM, this study used the 8-item IToIS, developed from the foundational work of Carol Dweck (2006). The scale measures a single continuum from an entity theory (fixed mindset) to an incremental theory (GM). A 6-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 6 representing "strongly agree," was used to record participant responses. "You can always substantially change how intelligent you are" is an example of a GM. Decades of study have solidified the validity and reliability of the scale (Blackwell et al., 2007; Yeager & Dweck, 2020). The 8-item scale's Cronbach's alpha coefficient in this study was.88, suggesting outstanding internal consistency. Higher overall scores indicated a stronger GM since items expressing a fixed mindset were reverse-coded.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedure was conducted over a period of eight weeks after receiving formal ethical clearance from the relevant institutional review board. A single, comprehensive online questionnaire was created by amalgamating the three validated scales (CAAS, BFI, and IToIS) into a single instrument, hereafter referred to as the early career EFL teacher's dispositional and adaptability inventory. The questionnaire was hosted on a secure online survey platform. Given the high English proficiency of the target population (EFL teachers), the inventory was administered in its original English format rather than being translated into Persian. To ensure its contextual clarity and appropriateness, the questionnaire was first piloted with a small group of five Iranian EFL teachers, and minor adjustments were made to item wording based on their feedback.

The survey link was distributed through a multi-pronged strategy. Invitations were sent via professional EFL teacher networks on Telegram and WhatsApp, posted on dedicated online communities for Iranian English teachers (e.g., "Iranian EFL Teachers" groups), and shared through direct emails to language institutes and university departments. A comprehensive

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information document explaining the goal of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, the confidentiality of their responses, and their ability to withdraw at any time without penalty was first displayed to potential participants upon clicking the link. Before participants could begin the questionnaire, respondents had to click a "I agree to participate" button to give their informed consent. A small honorarium (a gift card for an online book retailer) was given to survey respondents in order to promote participation. To increase the response rate, two non-intrusive reminder messages were delivered to the online groups during the data collection period. Strict precautions were taken to ensure participant anonymity; IP addresses were not logged and no identifying information was gathered.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0 was used to analyse the quantitative data. The analysis was conducted in a series of consecutive steps. For all demographic variables as well as the primary study variables (PTs, GM, and CA), descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages) were first calculated. Second, as previously mentioned, each scale's internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Third, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between each of the BFPTs, GM, and the overall CA score were computed in order to investigate the bivariate correlations between the variables. Fourth, a typical multiple linear regression analysis was carried out to answer the two study objectives. CA (total CAAS score) was the dependent variable. The BFPTs (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) and GM (total score) were the independent variables (predictors). The assumptions of linearity, independence of errors (Durbin-Watson test), homoscedasticity, normality of residuals, and multicollinearity (Variance Inflation Factor, VIF) were examined and found to be satisfied prior to doing the regression analysis. The alpha threshold for statistical significance was established at $p<.05$, and all statistical tests were two-tailed.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

The distributional properties of all continuous variables (the BFPTs, GM, and CA) were examined, and the assumptions necessary for parametric statistical tests—normality, linearity,

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homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity—were tested before tackling the primary research questions. Three complementary techniques were used to evaluate each variable's data distribution's normalcy. Since the Shapiro-Wilk test is suitable for samples this size (N = 210), it was used first. Second, skewness and kurtosis values were computed; significant non-normality was deemed to be indicated by absolute values greater than 2.0 (George & Mallery, 2010). Third, each variable's histograms and normal Q-Q plots were visually examined. The descriptive statistics for each study variable, such as means, standard deviations, skewness, kurtosis, and Shapiro-Wilk test findings, are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Normality Indicators for Study Variables (N = 210)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	Shapiro-Wilk W	Shapiro-Wilk p
CA	3.68	0.71	-0.32	0.15	0.992	0.214
Openness	3.54	0.72	-0.18	-0.08	0.994	0.361
Conscientiousness	4.02	0.65	-0.41	0.22	0.989	0.087
Extraversion	3.61	0.74	-0.24	0.05	0.993	0.302
Agreeableness	3.89	0.68	-0.35	0.10	0.991	0.178
Neuroticism	3.12	0.79	0.28	-0.12	0.995	0.452
GM	4.75	0.88	-0.45	0.33	0.987	0.065

Note: *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation

GM used a 6-point scale, PTs used a 5-point scale, and CA used a 5-point scale. Kurtosis and skewness are shown as unprocessed values. Shapiro-Wilk W values fall between 0 and 1, with values near 1 denoting normalcy. The data do not significantly deviate from a normal distribution when the Shapiro-Wilk p-value is non-significant (p >.05).

Participants scored best on GM (M = 4.75 on a 6-point scale) and Conscientiousness (M = 4.02 on a 5-point scale), according to Table 1, while Neuroticism had the lowest mean (M = 3.12). Kurtosis varied from -0.12 to 0.33 and skewness ranged from -0.45 to 0.28, both within the permissible ±2 range. Shapiro-Wilk tests were non-significant (p >.05) for every variable, indicating univariate normality. Additionally, assumption testing for regression revealed linearity (no curvilinear patterns in residual plots), homoscedasticity (equal spread of residuals), independence of errors (Durbin-Watson = 1.92), and no multicollinearity (all VIFs < 2.0, tolerances > 0.5). Collectively, these preliminary analyses confirmed that all parametric assumptions were satisfied, justifying the use of Pearson correlations and multiple linear regression.

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Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

The means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlation coefficients for each study variable are shown in Table 2. As can be shown, among early career Iranian EFL teachers, the mean score for CA (M = 3.68, SD = 0.71) shows a comparatively moderate to high level of self-perceived adaptable resources. Conscientiousness (M = 4.02, SD = 0.65) and Agreeableness (M = 3.89, SD = 0.68) had the highest means among the PTs. On the 6-point scale, GM also displayed a comparatively high mean (M = 4.75, SD = 0.88), indicating that the participants gravitated toward a growth rather than a fixed mindset. Four of the BFPTs were positively and substantially linked with CA, according to the correlation matrix: conscientiousness (r =.52, p <.01), extraversion (r =.41, p <.01), openness (r =.38, p <.01), and agreeableness (r =.35, p <.01). Conversely, there was a strong negative connection (r = -.44, p <.01) between neuroticism and CA. Additionally, there was a moderate to strong positive connection between GM and CA (r =.48, p <.01). The proposed predictive functions of PTs and GM are initially supported by these bivariate connections.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlations for Study Variables (N = 210)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. CA	3.68	0.71	—						
2. Openness	3.54	0.72	.38**	—					
3. Conscientiousness	4.02	0.65	.52**	.29**	—				
4. Extraversion	3.61	0.74	.41**	.35**	.31**	—			
5. Agreeableness	3.89	0.68	.35**	.27**	.40**	.33**	—		
6. Neuroticism	3.12	0.79	-.44**	-.21**	-.38**	-.30**	-.34**	—	
7. GM	4.75	0.88	.48**	.32**	.29**	.26**	.22**	-.33**	—

** p < .01 (2-tailed).

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for each variable are shown in the table. According to the mean scores, individuals scored lowest on neuroticism (M = 3.12) and highest on conscientiousness (M = 4.02). The direction and strength of linear correlations are shown by the correlation coefficients. Conscientiousness had the highest positive connection with CA (r =.52), followed by GM (r =.48). There was a somewhat negative connection (r = -.44) with neuroticism. At the p <.01 level, all correlations were statistically significant, indicating that there is less than a 1% chance that these relationships happened by accident.

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Addressing Research Question 1

Determining the degree to which the BFPTs predict the CA of early career Iranian EFL teachers was the goal of the first study question. The BFPTs (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) were used as predictor variables and CA as the dependent variable in a standard multiple linear regression study to address this question. The model summary and regression coefficients are shown in Table 3.

The BFPTs together accounted for a large amount of the variance in CA, and the whole model was statistically significant ($F(5, 204) = 22.48$, $p < .001$). With an adjusted *R2* value of.34, the BFPTs explained about 34% of the variation in CA scores.

When the individual predictors were examined, the strongest unique positive predictor of CA was conscientiousness (β =.38, $t = 5.82$, $p < .001$), followed by extraversion (β =.23, $t = 3.45$, $p = .001$) and openness (β =.18, $t = 2.71$, $p = .007$). A positive but non-significant predictor was agreeableness (β =.09, $t = 1.34$, $p = .182$). Higher emotional instability was linked to reduced CA, as evidenced by the substantial negative predictor of neuroticism (β = -.27, $t = -4.12$, $p < .001$).

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Summary for BFPTs Predicting CA

Predictor	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	VIF
(Constant)	1.24	0.28		4.43	< .001	
Openness	0.18	0.07	.18	2.71	.007	1.25
Conscientiousness	0.41	0.07	.38	5.82	< .001	1.38
Extraversion	0.22	0.06	.23	3.45	.001	1.30
Agreeableness	0.09	0.07	.09	1.34	.182	1.32
Neuroticism	-0.24	0.06	-.27	-4.12	< .001	1.28

Note: B = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE* = standard error; β = standardized regression coefficient; VIF = variance inflation factor. Dependent variable: CA (total CAAS score). Model $R^2 = .36$, Adjusted $R^2 = .34$, $F(5, 204) = 22.48$, $p < .001$.

The table 3 shows the unique contribution of each PTs to predicting CA while controlling for the other traits. The unstandardized coefficient (B) indicates the change in CA for each one-unit change in the predictor. For example, a one-point increase in Conscientiousness (on the 5-point scale) is associated with a 0.41-point increase in CA, holding all other variables constant. The standardized coefficient (β) allows comparison across predictors; Conscientiousness (β = .38) has the largest unique effect, followed by Neuroticism (β = -.27) in the negative direction, then Extraversion (β = .23) and Openness (β = .18). The p-values indicate that four of the BFPTs (all except Agreeableness) are statistically significant predictors at the $p < .01$ level. The VIF values are all below 2, indicating no problematic multicollinearity.

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Addressing Research Question 2

The second research question sought to ascertain the degree to which early career Iranian EFL teachers' greater levels of CA are predicted by having a GM. The regression model that already had the BFPTs was expanded to incorporate GM in order to address this query. This made it possible to investigate GM's distinct prediction ability in comparison to PTs. The enlarged regression model is shown in Table 4. With $F(6, 203) = 22.09$, $p < .001$, the overall model that included all of the BFPTs and GM continued to be statistically significant. Beyond the BFPTs, GM explained an extra 4% of the variance in CA, according to the adjusted R2, which rose from.34 to.38. R2 changed in a way that was statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .04$, F_change = 13.98, $p < .001$). CA was shown to be significantly positively predicted by GM ($\beta = .23$, $t = 3.74$, $p < .001$). This indicates that teachers with a stronger GM reported considerably greater levels of CA even after taking into consideration the effects of all the BFPTs. Conscientiousness continued to be the best predictor ($\beta = .34$) among all predictors in the entire model (PTs plus GM), followed by neuroticism ($\beta = -.23$), GM ($\beta = .23$), extraversion ($\beta = .19$), and openness ($\beta = .14$). The degree of agreeableness did not change.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Summary for the BFPTs and GM Predicting CA

Predictor	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	VIF
(Constant)	0.89	0.30		2.97	.003	
Openness	0.14	0.06	.14	2.13	.034	1.28
Conscientiousness	0.37	0.07	.34	5.21	< .001	1.40
Extraversion	0.18	0.06	.19	2.96	.003	1.33
Agreeableness	0.07	0.07	.07	1.04	.299	1.33
Neuroticism	-0.21	0.06	-.23	-3.57	< .001	1.32
GM	0.19	0.05	.23	3.74	< .001	1.23

Note: Model $R^2 = .40$, Adjusted $R^2 = .38$, $F(6, 203) = 22.09$, $p < .001$.

The table 4 presents the combined predictive model. Compared to Table 3, the addition of GM slightly reduced the beta values of the PTs, indicating that some of the variance previously explained by personality is shared with GM. Notably, GM ($\beta = .23$) has a unique effect size comparable to Extraversion ($\beta = .19$) and larger than Openness ($\beta = .14$). The positive sign of the coefficient (B = 0.19) means that higher GM scores are associated with higher CA. For every one-point increase on the 6-point GM scale, CA increases by 0.19 points on the 5-point scale, when PTs are held constant. The p-value (< .001) confirms this relationship is statistically significant.

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Therefore, the answer to RQ2 is affirmative: GM significantly predicts higher levels of CA among early career Iranian EFL teachers.

Discussion

Discussion Related to Research Question 1

Determining the degree to which the BFPTs predict the CA of early career Iranian EFL teachers was the goal of the first study question. The findings demonstrated that among Iranian EFL teachers in their early careers, the BFPTs strongly predict CA, with neuroticism being the biggest negative predictor and conscientiousness being the strongest positive predictor. Theoretically, these results are consistent with the FFM (McCrae & Costa, 1999) and CCT (Savickas, 2005, 2020). The CA characteristics of Concern (future planning) and Control (taking charge of one's profession) are directly supported by conscientiousness, which is defined by organization, self-control, and accomplishment orientated. According to Savickas and Porfeli (2014), highly conscientious people are more likely to create objectives, plan for changes, and persevere in the face of difficulties all of which are essential components of adaptive professional behaviours. Because extraversion emphasises sociability and assertiveness, it probably fosters confidence (seeking assistance and feedback) and career curiosity (exploring professional options). The exploratory aspect of curiosity and the adaptable problem-solving necessary for adaptation are inherently compatible with openness to experience, which involves intellectual curiosity and creativity. On the other hand, neuroticism the propensity to feel negative emotions like anxiety and self-doubt undermines the Confidence dimension of CA because emotionally unstable people may view obstacles as threats rather than opportunities and question their ability to overcome setbacks in their careers (Göncz, 2017).

Empirically, these results are in line with earlier studies. Similar to this pattern, Sari et al. (2021) discovered that extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness all positively predicted teacher self-efficacy, but neuroticism was a negative predictor. Conscientiousness and emotional stability are among the strongest personality correlates of teaching efficiency, according to Klassen and Tze's (2014) meta-analysis. Sabet et al. (2018) found a strong relationship between the PTs of Iranian EFL teachers and their self-efficacy, which is theoretically strongly linked to CA. The non-significant finding for Agreeableness in this study, however, differs from some

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earlier work (e.g., Njoku, 2020; Göncz, 2017) which found Agreeableness to be associated with positive teaching behaviors. This discrepancy may be due to the specific outcome variable (CA vs. general teaching effectiveness) or the early career stage of the participants, where traits directly related to task performance (Conscientiousness) may overshadow relational traits (Agreeableness).

Discussion Related to Research Question 2

The second research question sought to ascertain the degree to which early career Iranian EFL teachers' greater levels of CA are predicted by having a GM. The results demonstrated that GM is a significant positive predictor of CA among early career Iranian EFL teachers, even after controlling for the BFPTs. Theoretically, Dweck's MT (2006, 2017) provides good support for these findings. The mastery-oriented responses necessary for CA are directly fostered by a GM, the conviction that skills can be developed via effort and practical tactics. Early career teachers who believe they can improve are more likely to view classroom challenges (e.g., difficult students, failed lessons) as learning opportunities rather than as indictments of their inherent competence. This belief system promotes persistence (supporting the Control dimension), encourages exploration of new teaching strategies (Curiosity), reduces anxiety about making mistakes (Confidence), and motivates future-oriented planning (Concern) (Yeager & Dweck, 2020). In contrast, a fixed mindset would lead to helpless responses, avoidance of challenges, and withdrawal of effort when difficulties arise, all antithetical to CA (Frondozo et al., 2020).

The current findings are empirically consistent with recent research. According to Frondozo et al. (2020), teachers who had a GM regarding their capacity to teach reported higher levels of involvement and satisfaction, seeing obstacles as chances to improve their skills. He et al. (2023) showed that GM was a strong predictor of teacher well-being, which is an important protective factor against burnout. Zarrinabadi and Afsharmehr (2022) emphasised the importance of attitude for pedagogical practices in the Iranian EFL setting, while Amiri (2024) discovered a substantial negative link between GM and burnout among Iranian EFL teachers. By demonstrating that GM directly predicts CA, a more thorough indicator of professional resilience, and does so independently of steady PTs, the current study expands on these findings. This implies that early career teachers in Iran may benefit from mindset treatments, which have been demonstrated to be successful in educational settings (Blackwell et al., 2007).

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Conclusion

This study investigated the predictive roles of the BFPTs and GM on the CA of early career Iranian EFL teachers. The findings demonstrated that both dispositional factors significantly predict CA, with Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Openness, and GM as positive predictors, and Neuroticism as a negative predictor. GM contributed uniquely beyond personality, underscoring its value as a malleable psychological resource.

Several practical implications emerge for teacher education and professional development in the Iranian context. First, teacher education programs may benefit from including assessments of PTs as part of admission or support processes, identifying candidates who may need additional scaffolding in areas such as emotional regulation (for those high in Neuroticism) or planning skills (for those low in Conscientiousness). Second, and more importantly, the finding that GM predicts CA independently of personality suggests that mindset is a target for intervention. Professional development workshops designed to cultivate a GM, emphasizing that teaching skills can be developed through practice, feedback, and reflection, could enhance novice teachers' resilience, persistence, and adaptive capacity. Third, school administrators and mentoring programs should be aware that early career teachers high in Neuroticism may require additional emotional support and structured guidance to prevent burnout and attrition. Fourth, the study provides a contextually validated model for Iranian EFL teacher development, moving beyond Western-centric assumptions.

But there are a few restrictions to be aware of. First, no causal conclusions can be drawn from the cross-sectional design; the observed associations may be bidirectional or impacted by unmeasured third factors. Second, as all of the data were self-reported, social desirability effects and common method bias may be present. Third, the sample was a convenience sample, and although it represented various provinces, the generalizability to all Iranian EFL teachers may be limited. Fourth, the study focused only on dispositional factors (personality and mindset); other important contextual and motivational variables (e.g., collegiality, self-efficacy, professional commitment) were not included in this analysis. Fifth, the operational definition of early career teachers (less than five years of experience) is broad; future research might examine differences within this period (e.g., first year vs. fourth year).

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A number of potential study directions are suggested in light of these limitations and conclusions. To investigate how personality and mindset affect the development of CA over time and whether shifts in mentality come before shifts in adaptability, longitudinal research are required. The efficacy of GM treatments created especially for early career EFL teachers could be tested through experimental or quasi-experimental research. Narrative interviews and other qualitative research methods would offer significant insights into the lived experiences of teachers' perceptions of their own personalities and mindsets influencing their adaptation. Comparative studies across different educational contexts (e.g., public schools vs. private institutes) and across different career stages (novice vs. experienced teachers) would further refine the model. Finally, future research should integrate dispositional factors with contextual variables (e.g., collegiality, administrative support) to build more comprehensive, multi-level models of CA.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the ethics committee of Islamic Azad University. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design, material preparation, data collection, and analysis. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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