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Generative AI Application Readiness Among Chinese University EFL Teachers: The Predictive Role of Organizational Support

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of in-depth integration between artificial intelligence and higher education, generative artificial intelligence (GAI) has gradually been integrated into university classroom teaching and has become a crucial driver for the reform of college English teaching. As the core practitioners of AI teaching implementation, university EFL teachers' generative AI application readiness directly determines the practical effect of the intelligent transformation of teaching. Using university EFL teachers in Chinese universities as research subjects, this study explores teachers' overall generative AI application readiness, the current state of university organizational support for AI teaching integration, and the predictive effect of organizational support on teachers' AI application readiness. This study collects empirical data through questionnaire surveys and analyzes the data using reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and regression analysis. The results show that university EFL teachers in China have a moderately high level of generative AI application readiness, university organizational support for AI teaching integration is relatively insufficient, and organizational support can positively and significantly predict teachers' generative AI application readiness.

1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has advanced the intelligent transformation of higher education. With its diverse functions, generative AI can be applied to the whole-process teaching of college English and effectively remedy the drawbacks of traditional teaching, such as rigid modes, insufficient interaction, and a lack of personalized teaching. Several national digital education policies have required colleges and universities to promote the in-depth integration of artificial intelligence into classroom teaching. As a core public basic course, the intelligent teaching transformation of college English is the focus of university digital reform. Teachers' cognition, application ability, and willingness to use generative AI, namely application readiness, are critical for the implementation of AI technology in teaching. Currently, college English teachers generally lack practical AI application skills, and improving them requires comprehensive organizational

support from universities. Few existing studies explore the correlation between organizational support and AI application readiness targeting college English teachers. Accordingly, this study focuses on this group and empirically analyzes the impact of organizational support on their generative AI application readiness to address this gap. Existing studies on educational AI mainly focus on science and engineering teaching scenarios, while empirical research on public foreign language disciplines remains scarce. Most studies prioritize individual teacher factors and lack in-depth discussion of university organizational support. Drawing on organizational support theory, this study develops a research model of "organizational support–generative AI application readiness" and empirically analyzes college English teachers. It enriches theories of foreign language education digitalization and provides a basis for future research. The findings help universities address gaps in AI teaching support, optimize training, resource allocation, and incentive policies, help teachers improve intelligent teaching capabilities, and effectively promote quality improvement in college English teaching. First, the research subjects are more targeted. Unlike existing AI teaching research that targets all university teachers, this study focuses specifically on university public foreign language teachers, which fits the actual scenarios of foreign language teaching in Chinese universities and makes the research conclusions more discipline-adaptive. Second, the research perspective is more practical. Moving beyond a single-perspective view of teachers' personal abilities, this study focuses on school-level organizational support. It tests the predictive effect of external support on teachers' technology application readiness, which better aligns with the practical needs of university teaching management. Third, the analytical procedure follows standard empirical research norms, adopting reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis for data processing, which yields findings with practical reference value.

2. Literature Review and Research Hypothesis

2.1 Definition of Core Concepts

2.1.1 Generative AI Application Readiness

Generative AI application readiness, also known as application preparedness, is a fixed term in empirical educational research. It refers to teachers' overall preparedness to apply generative AI technology in teaching activities. This state consists of three core dimensions: cognitive readiness, ability readiness, and willingness readiness. Cognitive readiness refers to teachers' understanding of the teaching value, functions, and applicable scenarios of generative AI; ability readiness refers to teachers' ability to operate AI tools and design AI-based teaching activities for English courses; willingness readiness refers to teachers' willingness to actively integrate generative AI into classroom teaching. In this study, generative AI integration specifically refers to various practical behaviors of integrating AI technology into college English classroom teaching [1-2].

2.1.2 Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support is a standard term in organizational behavior. In the context of university teaching in this study, it refers to the supportive resources and assurance measures universities provide to promote AI teaching integration, as subjectively perceived by university EFL teachers. It specifically includes four dimensions: training support, resource support, policy support, and atmosphere support. Training support refers to school-held AI teaching-related training, lectures, and practical guidance; resource support refers to hardware and software guarantees such as AI teaching tools, equipment, and network resources provided by universities; policy support

refers to school systems related to AI teaching incentives, assessment, and support; atmosphere support refers to the overall campus environment that encourages teachers to carry out intelligent teaching innovation.

2.2 Research Status at Home and Abroad

2.2.1 Research on Teachers' AI Application Readiness

Foreign scholars began researching teachers' readiness to apply intelligent technology earlier. Most studies have confirmed that teachers' technology cognition, operational ability, and subjective willingness directly affect the implementation effect of intelligent teaching technology. Relevant studies have pointed out that most liberal arts teachers have low acceptance of generative AI, and their overall technology application readiness is lower than that of science and engineering teachers, mainly due to the lack of discipline-adaptive technical training [3]. Domestic relevant research started relatively late. Existing studies have found that Chinese university teachers' overall AI application readiness is at a medium level, with significant differences among teachers across disciplines, teaching, age, and educational background [4]. Research on foreign language teachers shows that English teachers generally recognize AI's auxiliary role in teaching. However, insufficient practical application ability remains the main personal factor limiting AI integration in teaching.

2.2.2 Research on the Correlation between Organizational Support and Teachers' Technology Application

Existing studies have proven that organizational support is a key external factor affecting teachers' technology application behaviors [5]. Sufficient school support can effectively reduce teachers' fear of difficulty in applying new technologies and improve teachers' motivation and practical ability in technology learning [6]. Scholars have found that special training, resource supply, and policy incentives in universities can significantly improve teachers' willingness and practical level of AI teaching application [7]. However, most existing studies have not conducted specific analyses in college English disciplines, and the predictive effect of organizational support on EFL teachers' AI application readiness needs further empirical verification.

2.3 Research Hypothesis and Core Model

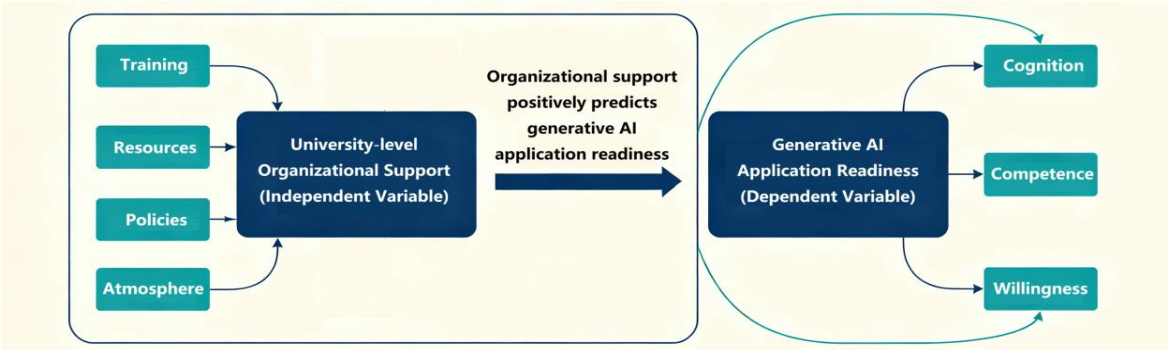

Figure 1: Core Research Model

According to existing literature conclusions and theoretical sorting in this study, the more sufficient the school's organizational support is, the more AI teaching and learning resources, practical guidance, and incentive guarantees teachers can obtain; the stronger teachers' AI cognition

level, application ability, and practical willingness will be, and the higher the corresponding generative AI application readiness will be. Accordingly, this study puts forward the core research hypothesis: university organizational support has a significant positive predictive effect on university EFL teachers' generative AI application readiness.

The core model of this study is a univariate prediction model with the specific path: Organizational Support → Generative AI Application Readiness. With organizational support as the independent variable and generative AI application readiness as the dependent variable, this study examines the independent variable's predictive effect on the dependent variable. Figure 1 presents the research model framework.

3. Research Design

3.1 Research Questions

This study conducts empirical analysis focusing on three core research questions:

RQ1: What is the level of generative AI application readiness among Chinese university EFL teachers?

RQ2: What is the level of perceived organizational support for generative AI integration among Chinese university EFL teachers?

RQ3: To what extent does organizational support predict generative AI application readiness among Chinese university EFL teachers?

3.2 Research Subjects

Using convenience sampling, this study selected in-service EFL teachers from multiple public and private undergraduate universities in China to ensure sample diversity across different institutional contexts. This survey distributed 320 questionnaires and recovered 306 valid questionnaires, for an effective recovery rate of 95.63%. The basic sample information is as follows: in terms of gender, 242 female teachers and 64 male teachers; in terms of teaching age, 89 teachers with 5 years or below, 157 teachers with 6-15 years, and 60 teachers with 16 years or above; in terms of educational background, 43 teachers with bachelor's degrees, 236 with master's degrees, and 27 with doctoral degrees; in terms of professional titles, 92 teaching assistants, 165 lecturers, and 49 associate professors and above.

3.3 Research Tools

This study collects data through self-compiled questionnaires. The initial questionnaire items were revised by subject-matter experts to enhance content validity, and a small-scale pilot test was implemented to identify and adjust ambiguous items prior to formal survey. The questionnaire consists of three parts: the first part is the basic demographic information of teachers; the second part is the University Organizational Support Scale, including 16 items covering four dimensions: training support, resource support, policy support, and atmosphere support; the third part is the University EFL Teachers' Generative AI Application Readiness Scale, including 15 items across three dimensions: cognitive readiness, ability readiness, and willingness readiness. All questionnaire items adopt a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 point ("completely inconsistent") to 5 points ("completely consistent"), where higher scores represent higher corresponding levels. Only scale reliability was assessed in the present study.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

This study uses SPSS 26.0 statistical software for data processing and follows a standardized analysis procedure: first, reliability analysis is conducted to test the reliability and stability of questionnaire data; second, descriptive statistics are performed to analyze the overall level of organizational support and AI application readiness; third, Pearson correlation analysis is used to examine the association between the two variables; fourth, regression analysis is carried out to test the predictive effect of organizational support on AI application readiness.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis tests the internal consistency and stability of questionnaire data. Cronbach's α coefficient serves as a widely-used criterion for reliability assessment. Generally, an α coefficient greater than 0.7 indicates acceptable scale reliability. This study tests the reliability of the two core scales, and the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the α coefficients for the Organizational Support Scale, the AI Application Readiness Scale, and the total scale are all above 0.8, which satisfies the requirement for good internal consistency of the measurement instrument. It should be noted that Cronbach's α only reflects scale reliability rather than validity. The content-level validity of the questionnaire was guaranteed through expert review and pilot test before formal data collection.

Table 1: Scale Reliability Analysis Results

Scale Name	Number of Items	Cronbach's α Coefficient	Reliability Evaluation
Organizational Support Scale	16	0.842	Acceptable
Generative AI Application Readiness Scale	15	0.867	Acceptable
Total Scale	31	0.859	Acceptable

4.2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

To answer the first two research questions, this study conducts descriptive statistics on the overall and dimensional scores of organizational support and generative AI application readiness, calculating the mean value (M) and standard deviation (SD). The specific results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistical Results of Variables and Their Dimensions (M±SD)

Variables and Dimensions	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Organizational Support (Total Variable)	3.12	0.58
Training Support	2.96	0.63
Resource Support	3.05	0.61
Policy Support	2.89	0.67
Atmosphere Support	3.58	0.52
Generative AI Application Readiness (Total Variable)	3.46	0.55
Cognitive Readiness	3.72	0.49
Ability Readiness	3.10	0.62
Willingness Readiness	3.59	0.51

In terms of teachers' generative AI application readiness, the overall mean score reached 3.46. Among its three dimensions, cognitive readiness obtained the highest mean score (M=3.72). Willingness readiness ranked second (M=3.59). By contrast, ability readiness had the lowest score (M=3.10).

For perceived organizational support, the overall mean score was 3.12. Atmosphere support achieved the highest score (M=3.58). Training support (M=2.96) and policy support (M=2.89) were comparatively lower. Resource support (M=3.05) stayed at a modest level.

4.3 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Before conducting regression analysis, this study uses Pearson correlation analysis to examine the association between organizational support and generative AI application readiness. Table 3 presents the results.

Table 3 shows that the correlation coefficient between organizational support and university EFL teachers' generative AI application readiness is 0.628 ($p<0.01$), indicating a significant, moderate-to-strong positive correlation between the two variables. In other words, the higher the level of organizational support teachers perceive, the higher their generative AI application readiness will be. This result lays a solid data foundation for subsequent regression analysis and hypothesis verification.

Table 3: Results of Variable Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variable	Organizational Support	AI Application Readiness
Organizational Support	1	—
AI Application Readiness	0.628**	1

Note: ** indicates $p<0.01$, representing statistically significant correlation.

4.4 Regression Analysis

To answer the third research question and clarify the predictive degree of organizational support on AI application readiness, this study conducts a univariate linear regression analysis with organizational support as the independent variable and generative AI application readiness as the dependent variable. The model-fitting and effect-test results show that the model fits well ($F=189.63$, $p<0.001$).

The regression results show that the standardized regression coefficient of organizational support is 0.628 ($p<0.001$), indicating that organizational support significantly and positively predicts university EFL teachers' generative AI application readiness. The model R^2 is 0.394, meaning organizational support explains 39.4% of the variance in teachers' AI application readiness, with a stable and significant predictive effect. This study supports its core research hypothesis. This indicates that improving university organizational support can effectively promote teachers' AI application readiness and is a key external factor in optimizing the intelligent transformation of English teaching.

5. In-Depth Discussion of Research Results: Teachers' AI Readiness Shortcomings and Structural Imbalance Mechanism of Organizational Support

5.1 Differential Characteristics and Causes of the Three Dimensions of University EFL Teachers' Generative AI Application Readiness

Empirical data from this study show that college English teachers in China possess a moderately

above-average overall readiness for generative AI application. Prominent disparities in cognition, willingness, and competence create an unbalanced pattern of "high cognition, high willingness, and low competence," revealing key obstacles to intelligent foreign language teaching transformation. With a cognitive readiness score of 3.72 and a willingness readiness score of 3.59, teachers demonstrate relatively positive perceptions and intentions toward generative AI teaching. This pattern may be related to national digital education policies and the popularization of intelligent educational technologies. Driven by digital education strategies and widespread AI educational tools, most teachers can recognize AI's potential value for addressing deficiencies in conventional English teaching, and show willingness to integrate generative AI into lesson design, classroom instruction, and after-school tutoring, which lays a subjective foundation for AI-teaching integration.

By contrast, competence readiness reaches only 3.10, which is notably lower than cognitive and willingness readiness. One possible explanation for this gap, as suggested by prior research, is that although college English teachers have solid competence in linguistics and pedagogy, they often lack systematic exposure to computer-related and intelligent technology training, which may produce structural gaps in technical knowledge. It may reflect the real-world situation that many teachers can only grasp basic generative-AI-related functions and struggle to conduct in-depth instructional design for English listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For instance, they may find it difficult to deploy generative AI for personalized oral training, hierarchical writing evaluation, and differentiated reading teaching. Such a disconnect between positive cognition and limited practical capacity has also been documented in existing studies on liberal-arts teachers' technology adoption. Furthermore, varying technical competence across teachers of different ages and educational backgrounds, together with insufficient hierarchical training channels reported in previous work, might further contribute to the slow improvement of practical AI teaching capabilities among college English teachers.

5.2 Structural Imbalance and Underlying Causes of University AI Teaching Organizational Support

The data of this study show that the overall perceived organizational support provided to EFL teachers for AI teaching sits at a modest level (M=3.12). The four dimensions exhibit an unbalanced profile: atmosphere support scores highest, resource support stays average, while training support and policy support obtain comparatively low scores. This structural imbalance may restrict universities' capacity to meet the practical demands of intelligent foreign language teaching.

Atmosphere support achieves the highest score (M=3.58). This finding may reflect the broader digital transformation trend within higher education. University administrators have attached importance to intelligent teaching reform and built a campus-level innovative atmosphere via teaching meetings, research notifications and reform publicity, which enables teachers to perceive institutional reform orientations. Nevertheless, atmosphere support represents soft contextual support. As indicated by prior studies, without matching hard resources, institutional policies and targeted training, a positive reform atmosphere alone cannot easily translate into tangible teaching-reform outcomes.

Training support (M=2.96) and policy support (M=2.89) constitute the weakest links in perceived organizational support. Drawing on existing literature, one plausible interpretation is that many current university-sponsored AI training activities are mainly designed for science-engineering disciplines or general courses, and insufficiently address the disciplinary characteristics of college English instruction. Such training often focuses merely on basic tool operation and offers limited practical guidance for listening-speaking-reading-writing teaching scenarios. Rigid training modes lacking hands-on practice may fail to foster teachers' practical

AI-teaching competence. Besides, prior research also points out that many universities have not yet formulated dedicated incentive and assessment frameworks for AI-assisted teaching innovation, which might reduce teachers' motivation to engage in AI-based teaching practice. Resource support (M=3.05) remains at a basic level. This result may be associated with shortages of foreign-language-specific intelligent resources and technical maintenance services, making general-purpose AI resources poorly adapted to EFL classroom requirements and hindering sustainable AI teaching practice.

5.3 Positive Prediction Mechanism and Practical Value of Organizational Support on Teachers' AI Readiness

Regression analysis in the present study confirms that overall organizational support can significantly and positively predict college English teachers' generative AI application readiness, with an explanatory power of 39.4%. This result highlights organizational support as a critical external factor that helps mitigate teachers' practical-capacity deficiencies and facilitates the intelligent transformation of foreign-language teaching.

It should be noted that the current study only examines the predictive relationship between the aggregate organizational support variable and aggregate generative AI application readiness. The dataset does not test separate path relationships among the four sub-dimensions of organizational support and the three sub-dimensions of application readiness. Theoretically and based on prior organizational-support-theory literature, it can be inferred that different components of organizational support may play different roles: training-related resources may help teachers acquire discipline-specific AI operational knowledge and thereby improve practical teaching competence; policy incentives may strengthen teachers' willingness to experiment with AI-empowered teaching; and campus innovation atmosphere may gradually shape teachers' cognition regarding the value of AI-assisted instruction. However, these hypothesized dimensional relationships remain untested in the current research and deserve verification in future studies via dimension-to-dimension regression or structural equation modeling.

Compared with prior studies that mainly emphasize individual-level teacher factors, this research extends understanding regarding the drivers of EFL teachers' generative-AI readiness. Teachers' application readiness is shaped not only by individual learning efforts but also by systematic institutional support from universities. Individual self-directed learning tends to be fragmented and lacks disciplinary targeting, which makes large-scale competence improvement difficult. A comprehensive organizational-support system integrating training, resources, policies and campus atmosphere is theoretically expected to empower teachers' AI-teaching capacity in multiple respects. This empirical finding offers a potential explanation for the phenomenon described in previous work: AI teaching reform in college English often "has strong atmosphere but limited practical implementation". Insufficient organizational-support inputs may prevent teachers' positive willingness from turning into real-world teaching practice. The present results provide empirical evidence for universities to optimize institutional AI-teaching support systems for college-English teachers.

6. Targeted Practical Countermeasures: Paths to Improve EFL Teachers' AI Application Ability Based on Supply-Demand Matching

6.1 Construct a Hierarchical and Subject-Specific Training System to Make Up for Teachers' AI Teaching Ability Shortcomings Precisely

In response to the common, homogeneous, and poorly adapted AI training in universities,

combined with the feature of college English teachers who have sufficient cognition but weak capabilities, universities need to establish a regular AI teaching training system featuring stratified classification, discipline specificity, and practical orientation to resolve the mismatch between training supply and teaching demand. The College English Teaching Office should establish a dedicated teaching and research team. Tailored training content is developed around the syllabus and core teaching scenarios in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, moving away from general technical lectures and focusing on practical foreign language teaching. Training modules cover AI pronunciation correction, intelligent writing evaluation, personalized reading material generation, classroom interaction design, and after-class stratified tutoring to fit daily teaching. Stratified training is delivered to young, middle-aged, and senior teachers based on teaching experience, technical foundation, and professional titles, avoiding a one-size-fits-all model.

Meanwhile, universities should diversify training formats and create a complete training loop that combines offline practical workshops, modular online courses, and one-on-one after-class tutoring. Offline practical workshops on AI-assisted English teaching are held monthly, with experts and outstanding frontline teachers demonstrating cases and providing hands-on guidance. An exclusive online learning platform provides short videos, teaching cases, and tool manuals for teachers' fragmented learning. A training assessment and review mechanism is established. After training, teachers must design AI teaching plans, which the research team will review. This helps teachers consolidate learning outcomes, systematically improve their ability in AI teaching design and practice, and make up for the deficiency in competence readiness.

6.2 Improve Exclusive Resources and Incentive Policies to Build a Long-Term Organizational Guarantee System

Given structural deficiencies in organizational support resources and inadequate policies, universities and colleges should focus on the unique demands of college English teaching, optimize resource allocation, and improve institutional systems to provide solid support and long-term guarantees for integrating AI into teaching. To ensure resource guarantees, universities should increase targeted investment in intelligent foreign language teaching and purchase professional intelligent teaching platforms tailored for college English, including oral training systems, intelligent writing evaluation platforms, multi-dimensional vocabulary and grammar detection tools, and cross-cultural material libraries. Universities should build a shared repository of English AI teaching resources to collect courseware, teaching designs, and classroom cases, and reduce teachers' lesson-preparation burden. Full-time technical staff will be assigned to maintain and upgrade the systems to address poor resource adaptability and inadequate operation and maintenance.

In terms of policy incentives, universities may formulate administrative measures to incentivize innovative AI-assisted college English teaching and establish practical incentive and assessment mechanisms. For positive incentives, AI teaching practice, case development, and teaching reform projects will be incorporated into performance appraisal, merit evaluation, and professional title assessment. Outstanding teachers will receive bonuses and research funds to stimulate their enthusiasm for AI teaching innovation. Meanwhile, the school will adopt flexible assessment. Set differentiated criteria based on teaching workload and experience to avoid rigid one-size-fits-all requirements and ease teachers' concerns about reform. Special research projects for foreign language AI teaching reform will be launched to boost teaching through research and form a virtuous cycle of "practice-research-optimization".

6.3 Build Multi-Dimensional Communication Platforms to Create an All-Innovative Intelligent Teaching Ecosystem

Universities should leverage existing educational environments to strengthen intelligent teaching atmosphere construction and build diverse teacher exchange platforms, translating soft contextual advantages into tangible AI teaching reform outcomes. Regular activities, including college-level AI teaching innovation competitions, open courses, and case-sharing sessions, can provide practical teaching references. Targeted teaching and research salons can also be held to address common difficulties in AI teaching design, classroom implementation, and effect optimization, forming a collaborative innovation ecosystem for college English AI teaching.

Universities should establish interdisciplinary AI teaching research teams that include teachers of different ages and professional titles to promote the in-depth integration of AI with English reading, writing, speaking, and cross-cultural teaching, and to create exemplary teaching cases. Inter-university exchanges can introduce advanced AI teaching and management experience. Universities should encourage personalized AI teaching innovation tailored to student conditions and curriculum features. Such comprehensive environmental optimization improves teachers' generative AI readiness and facilitates the high-quality intelligent transformation of college English teaching.

7. Conclusion

First, college English teachers in China demonstrate an overall moderately above-average level of self-reported generative AI application readiness. Among three dimensions, cognitive readiness and willingness readiness obtain relatively higher scores, while ability readiness presents a relatively lower score, which may constitute the core constraint for the improvement of teachers' overall readiness. Second, teachers' perceived university organizational support for AI teaching integration remains moderate and presents structural imbalance across sub-dimensions: atmosphere support scores higher, whereas training support, policy support and resource support obtain relatively lower scores. Third, organizational support exerts a significant positive predictive effect on teachers' generative AI application readiness, explaining 39.4% of individual variance. As a critical external driver for the digital transformation of college English teaching, optimized organizational support can substantially enhance teachers' comprehensive AI application capacity. This study has certain limitations. The sample coverage is limited, restricting the generalizability of the findings. Future research can expand the sample scope to universities in different regions and levels. In addition, this study verifies only the direct effect of organizational support and does not examine mediating or moderating mechanisms. Further studies can explore complex variable relationships and conduct subgroup analyses based on teachers' teaching experience and professional titles to provide refined evidence for targeted teacher training and organizational support optimization. Moreover, the questionnaire used in this study is self-compiled. Although content validity was ensured by expert consultation and a pilot test, quantitative construct validity testing (e.g., EFA or CFA) was not performed in the current study. Future research could carry out corresponding construct validity tests to further verify the factor structure of the scales. In addition, this study only tested the predictive effect of the overall organizational support construct on aggregate generative AI application readiness, and did not examine dimension-specific paths between sub-dimensions of organizational support and sub-dimensions of application readiness. Follow-up research could adopt dimension-level analytical models to verify these hypothesized relationships.

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