**Exploring College EFL Lecturers’ Behavioral Intentions to Integrate AI into English Language Instruction**

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**Abstract**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly important part of global education, especially in language teaching, where it supports educators and learners through features like automated feedback, intelligent writing assistance, and adaptive learning systems. In the Vietnamese higher education context, particularly in Ho Chi Minh City, AI is still emerging in English  classrooms. This study was conducted to examine the key factors influencing Vietnamese college English lecturers’ behavioral intentions (BI) to adopt AI tools in their teaching practices. Guided by a combined framework of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) and Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), the study examined seven constructs: Performance Expectancy (PE), Effort Expectancy (EE), Facilitating Conditions  (FC), Social Influence (SI), AI Technological Knowledge (AI-TK), AI Pedagogical Knowledge (AI-PK), and AI Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (AI-TPACK).
Using a mixed-methods approach, we collected quantitative data from surveys with 31 EFL lecturers and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed using SPSS for statistical tests and thematic coding for qualitative insights.
The findings revealed that lecturers exhibited a positive behavioral intention towards AI integration. All investigated factors (PE, EE, FC, SI, AI-TK, AI-TPK, AI-TPACK) showed significant positive correlations with BI. Notably, AI-TK exhibited the strongest association with behavioral intention, followed by AI-TPACK and AI-TPK. Despite minor challenges such as limited training and infrastructure, most participants expressed enthusiasm for AI’s potential to enhance instructional quality and learner engagement. These results offer practical recommendations for teacher training, policy development, and strategic planning in Vietnam’s higher education sector.

***Keywords*:** artificial intelligence, language teaching, AI-TPACK, UTAUT, higher education

**1. Introduction**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping education, creating new opportunities for personalized, adaptive, and data-informed learning experiences. In English Language Teaching (ELT), AI-powered tools—such as intelligent tutoring systems, automated feedback, and natural language processing applications—are being increasingly adopted to support teaching and learning (Chatterjee & Bhattacharjee, 2020; Jordan & Mitchell, 2015). These tools offer several benefits: they promote learner autonomy, provide real-time formative feedback, and ease the burden of routine tasks for teachers. As AI technologies become more accessible, understanding educators’ readiness and willingness to use them is both timely and essential.

In Vietnam’s higher education landscape, interest in educational technology has grown, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated digital transformation across universities. While many institutions have shown enthusiasm for AI-enhanced learning tools, practical implementation remains limited. Constraints such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, and fragmented institutional support continue to impede progress (Nguyen & Le, 2023). Thus, the integration of AI into ELT in Vietnam reflects a dual reality: promising potential, yet significant challenges.

This study explores how college English lecturers in Vietnam perceive and intend to integrate AI into their language instruction. It draws on two influential frameworks: the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT; Venkatesh et al., 2003) and the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK ; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). UTAUT highlights external drivers of technology adoption, like performance expectancy and social influence, while TPACK focuses on teachers' internal competencies in blending technology with pedagogy and content. Together, these frameworks offer a comprehensive lens to examine both motivational and capability-based factors influencing AI integration.

By applying this dual-framework approach to the Vietnamese context, the study aims to (1) identify key factors shaping lecturers’ behavioral intentions; (2) explore how institutional and individual variables interact; and (3) offer practical insights for professional development and policy-making. This research contributes to global discussions on AI in education while addressing an underexplored area within Vietnam’s tertiary ELT context.

**2. Literature Review**

***2.1. UTAUT Model and AI Adoption in Education***

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) was developed to consolidate earlier models of technology acceptance and provides a comprehensive structure for analyzing user intentions. The model proposes four core constructs: Performance Expectancy (PE), Effort Expectancy (EE), Social Influence (SI), and Facilitating Conditions (FC), which influence users’ behavioral intention (BI) and actual technology use (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

In ELT contexts, PE refers to the degree to which lecturers believe AI tools can enhance teaching effectiveness. EE measures perceived ease of use, while SI considers how colleagues and institutional culture influence adoption. FC refers to available infrastructure, technical support, and training resources. Studies such as Lim and Harwati (2021) and Chatterjee and Bhattacharjee (2020) have confirmed the significant roles of PE and SI in shaping teachers’ BI across various educational settings.

In Vietnam, where the EdTech landscape is rapidly evolving but often lacks centralized implementation frameworks, UTAUT provides a useful lens to explore how contextual factors—such as institutional encouragement or peer influence—interact with individual perceptions of usefulness and usability (Nguyen & Do, 2022). Recent findings indicate that while lecturers are aware of AI’s educational potential, their behavioral intentions are often moderated by concerns about infrastructure and the lack of pedagogical training in AI use (Pham & Le, 2023)

***2.2. TPACK and AI-Specific Competencies***

The TPACK framework offers a pedagogical view of technology integration, arguing that effective teaching with technology requires a synthesis of content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and technological knowledge (TK) (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Recent developments in AI education have led researchers to define AI-specific competencies within this model: AI Technological Knowledge (AI-TK), AI Pedagogical Knowledge (AI-TPK), and AI Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (AI-TPACK) (Schmid et al., 2020).

AI-TK refers to teachers’ understanding of how AI works (e.g., chatbots, automated essay scoring), while AI-TPK relates to strategies for effectively applying AI tools in instruction. AI-TPACK is a holistic construct that represents a teacher’s ability to align AI tools with pedagogical strategies and content goals. An et al. (2023) found that AI-TPACK was a significant predictor of Chinese English teachers’ intention to use AI tools, highlighting the framework’s relevance to language education.

In Vietnam, TPACK-based training programs have gained traction, especially in the context of broader digital transformation initiatives led by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). However, the inclusion of AI-specific competencies remains limited (Nguyen & Le, 2023). This research contributes to the growing discourse on AI pedagogy by explicitly addressing how these subdomains of knowledge influence behavioral intentions.

***2.3. Combined UTAUT and TPACK Approaches***

Given the limitations of each framework in isolation, scholars have increasingly combined UTAUT and TPACK to examine educational technology adoption more comprehensively (Teo et al., 2019). In these integrated models, TPACK is often viewed as influencing key UTAUT variables, such as PE and EE, which then predict behavioral intention.

This combined approach has been applied in several international studies to examine AI integration in ELT. For example, Lim and Harwati (2021) modeled the relationships between AI-TPACK and UTAUT constructs among pre-service teachers, revealing strong indirect effects on BI. Bardakci and Alkan (2019) also confirmed the mediation role of TPACK in technology adoption.

In Vietnam, few studies have explicitly integrated UTAUT and TPACK to investigate AI adoption. Tram (2024) conducted research with EFL lecturers in Viet Nam, suggesting that AI-TPK and AI-TPACK significantly predict perceptions of usefulness and ease of use. This suggests a promising direction for future research that addresses both technical competencies and contextual enablers. Hoang and Vu (2024) highlight that while teachers maintain traditional pedagogical practices, they view AI as a supportive tool with potential benefits. Although concerns about integration and reliability remain, AI is recognized as a non-disruptive aid in language teaching, suggesting opportunities for growth in teacher training and professional development.

***2.4. TPACK and Behavioral Intention***

In previous studies about BI, TPACK has been widely regarded as a significant factor influencing teachers’ willingness to adopt new technologies. Bardakci and Alkan (2019) and Lim and Harwati (2021) observed that teachers with stronger TPACK are more confident and capable of implementing technology-enhanced pedagogical strategies. Geng et al. (2021) further emphasized that well-developed TPACK enables instructors to create new practices that support students’ learning using emerging technologies.

The interrelation between AI-TPACK and behavioral intention has been especially salient in contexts where technology use is still emerging. In-service teachers in Vietnam often have strong pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) but lack familiarity with AI-specific technologies, which could reduce their confidence in using AI tools effectively (Nguyen & Le, 2023). As Hsu (2016) notes, the transition from PCK to TPACK—and by extension, to AI-TPACK—requires targeted professional development. When teachers are exposed to successful AI use cases and trained in AI pedagogical principles, they are more likely to express a positive intention to adopt AI in the classroom.

Therefore, understanding how AI-TPACK influences behavioral intention is crucial for designing effective teacher training programs. Strengthening AI-related TPACK is likely to influence perceived usefulness and ease of use, both of which are core predictors in UTAUT. As demonstrated by Nguyen, Vo, and Tran (2025), when teachers see tangible improvements in student outcomes, such as in pronunciation via SpeechAce, they are more inclined to accept and incorporate AI tools into their daily teaching routines.

***2.5. Empirical Studies and Vietnamese Perspectives***

Although Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English Language Teaching (ELT) is a rapidly expanding field, empirical research specific to Vietnamese higher education remains limited. Existing literature suggests that while lecturers express positive attitudes toward AI integration, they often encounter institutional and personal challenges that hinder implementation. For example, Pham and Le (2023) reported widespread interest among Vietnamese lecturers in using AI for writing instruction and formative assessment; however, this interest is often constrained by a lack of structured training programs and formal institutional support. Similarly, Nguyen and Tran (2024) observed that the increasing use of generative AI tools by students has introduced new pedagogical concerns, particularly around instructional design and digital ethics.

To bridge these gaps, Vietnamese universities have initiated professional development initiatives such as AI4Teachers, aimed at enhancing instructors’ digital competencies. Nonetheless, access to these opportunities remains uneven across regions, and participation is inconsistent. The absence of standardized frameworks for evaluating AI integration remains a barrier to the sustainable and scalable implementation of AI in Vietnamese ELT contexts.

Recent studies have examined the practical applications of AI for specific language skills. For instance, Nguyen, Vo, and Tran (2025) conducted a quasi-experimental study using SpeechAce, an AI-powered pronunciation tool, among Vietnamese EFL learners. Their findings revealed significant improvements in both segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation after an 8-week intervention. The study highlighted how AI-generated, real-time feedback fostered learner autonomy and engagement, underscoring the value of AI- Technical Knowledge (AI-TK) and AI-Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (AI-TPK) in supporting targeted skill development.

More broadly, Vietnamese research has begun to explore theoretical models beyond traditional technology adoption frameworks like UTAUT and TAM. Tran and Nguyen (2024) made a notable contribution by integrating the Cognitive Appraisal Theory (CAT) and the Artificially Intelligent Device Use Acceptance (AIDUA) model in a study of 309 Vietnamese lecturers. Their analysis revealed that AI literacy, hedonic motivation, and social influence significantly shaped perceived performance and effort expectancy, which in turn influenced emotional attitudes. These emotional responses ultimately mediated both behavioral intention and resistance to AI adoption. The study emphasizes the multidimensional nature of AI adoption, calling attention to psychological and emotional variables often overlooked in standard adoption models.

Collectively, these findings underscore the relevance of adapting the UTAUT-TPACK framework to better incorporate emotional, motivational, and contextual variables—particularly in early-stage adoption environments like Vietnam. They also highlight the urgent need for AI-specific teacher training programs, institutional support structures, and localized frameworks that reflect the cultural and infrastructural realities of Vietnamese higher education.

***2.6. Research Gaps and Significance***

The literature demonstrates the applicability of UTAUT and TPACK, individually and in combination—for investigating AI adoption in ELT. Yet, in the Vietnamese context, there is limited empirical work that connects AI-specific TPACK constructs with behavioral intention in the Vietnamese educational context through a UTAUT lens. There is also a lack of longitudinal or comparative studies across institutions.

This study addresses these gaps by applying a dual-theoretical framework to analyze the behavioral intentions of college EFL lecturers in Ho Chi Minh City. It contributes to the understanding of how internal teacher competencies and external institutional factors intersect to influence AI adoption, with implications for teacher education, policy development, and AI integration strategies.

**3. Methodology**

3.1. Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach to examine the behavioral intentions of Vietnamese EFL lecturers regarding the integration of AI into English language teaching. The research was grounded in a hybrid theoretical framework that merged the UTAUT model (Venkatesh et al., 2003) and AI-TPACK frameworks (Schmid et al., 2020). To better capture AI-related instructional readiness, the study incorporated three additional constructs: AI-TK, AI-TPK, and AI-TPACK. This integrated model facilitated a comprehensive analysis of lecturers’ cognitive, pedagogical, and technological preparedness for AI adoption.

3.2. Participants

The study involved 31 English language lecturers from higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City. Purposive sampling was employed to capture a range of digital proficiency levels while ensuring a common professional background in English language instruction. All participants gave informed consent, and ethical considerations, including voluntariness, anonymity, and confidentiality, were carefully upheld. The research protocol received approval from the institutional review board before the commencement of data collection.

3.3. Research Instrument

The survey instrument was developed based on established constructs from the UTAUT model (Venkatesh et al., 2003) and AI-TPACK frameworks (Schmid et al., 2020), with appropriate adaptation to the context of English language instruction in Vietnamese colleges. Each construct was measured using multiple items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”).Data were collected through an online questionnaire comprising 30 items distributed across eight constructs:

Definitions and measurement items for each construct are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Construct Definitions and Sample Items*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Construct** | **Definition** | **No. of Items**  | **Sample Item** |
| PE | The extent to which lecturers believe AI tools can improve their teaching performance | 4 | "AI can help me improve the quality of teaching." |
| EE | The degree of ease associated with using AI applications in English teaching | 4 | "AI systems for teaching are easy to use." |
| FC | The perception that institutional and technical infrastructure supports AI use | 4 | "My school provides resources for me to apply AI in teaching." |
| SI | The degree to which peers and leaders influence one’s decision to adopt AI in teaching | 4 | "Teachers who use AI are well respected by colleagues." |
| AI-TK | The lecturers’ awareness and understanding of how AI works in educational settings | 3 | "I understand how AI tools such as ChatGPT or Grammarly function." |
| AI-TPK | The ability to apply AI tools for pedagogical purposes in English teaching | 2 | "I know how to use AI to support pronunciation or writing practice." |
| AI-TPACK | Integrated knowledge of using AI in a way that combines pedagogy, content, and technology | 6 | "I can design tasks using AI tools that meet students’ learning needs." |
| BI | The likelihood that lecturers will continue using AI in future teaching | 4 | "I plan to use AI in my English teaching in the future." |

The items were adapted from prior studies (e.g., Venkatesh et al., 2003; Schmid et al., 2020; An et al., 2023) and refined through expert consultation and a pilot test to ensure contextual appropriateness.

In addition to the questionnaire, a semi-structured interview protocol was developed to gather qualitative insights. The interview guide included open-ended questions designed to explore participants’ experiences, perceptions, and challenges in integrating AI tools into English language instruction. Questions were formulated based on the constructs of the UTAUT and TPACK models, and were reviewed by two TESOL experts for clarity and alignment.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out in two sequential phases. In the first phase, the online questionnaire was distributed via institutional email using Google Forms. All 31 submitted responses were complete and subsequently included in the analysis. In the second phase, four participants were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews, ensuring variation in both survey responses and teaching contexts. The interviews were conducted online, recorded with participants’ consent, and transcribed for qualitative analysis.

3.5. Data Analysis

**Reliability Testing**

To evaluate internal consistency, Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for the complete instrument, resulting in a value of .952, which indicates excellent reliability. All corrected item-total correlations exceeded .50, supporting the use of parametric statistical methods.

**Quantitative Analysis**

Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficients were used to examine relationships among the variables. Behavioral Intention showed significant positive correlations with AI Knowledge (r = .801, p < .001), AI-TPACK (r = .700, p < .001), and SI (r = .665, p < .001).

A multiple linear regression was conducted to identify the predictors of Behavioral Intention. The model was statistically significant, F(7, 23) = 16.662, p < .001, and explained 83.5% of the variance in Behavioral Intention (Adjusted R² = .785). AI Knowledge (β = .871, p < .001) and SI (β = .359, p = .035) emerged as significant positive predictors, whereas EE negatively predicted intention (β = –.439, p = .008). All Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were below 5.5, indicating no concerns regarding multicollinearity.

**Qualitative Analysis**

Interview transcripts were thematically coded using both deductive (UTAUT/TPACK constructs) and inductive methods. Three major themes emerged:

1. Perceived instructional value of AI tools

2. Technical and institutional barriers

3. Demand for AI-focused pedagogical training

These insights contextualized and expanded on quantitative patterns in the Vietnamese ELT landscape.

 **4. Results**

4.1. Descriptive Overview of Constructs

The descriptive statistics in Table 2 indicate that participants generally expressed positive attitudes toward AI integration across all measured constructs. Behavioral Intention (BI) recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.25, SD = 0.50), reflecting strong willingness among lecturers to incorporate AI into their teaching practices.

High mean scores were also observed for AI Knowledge (AI-TK), AI-TPACK, and PE AI-TK emerged (M = 4.10, 4.05, and 4.02 respectively), suggesting a combination of cognitive readiness and recognition of the instructional value of AI tools. However, EE had the lowest mean score (M = 3.45, SD = 0.72), indicating persistent concerns about the usability and complexity of AI applications.

These findings suggest that despite considerable enthusiasm for AI adoption, the perceived ease of use remains a key challenge that may hinder broader implementation.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics for Study Constructs (N = 31)*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Construct** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Min** | **Max** |
| PE | 4.02 | 0.61 | 2.80 | 5.00 |
| EE | 3.45 | 0.72 | 2.00 | 5.00 |
| FC | 3.60 | 0.68 | 2.25 | 5.00 |
| SI | 3.80 | 0.70 | 2.00 | 5.00 |
| AI-TK | 4.10 | 0.55 | 3.00 | 5.00 |
| AI-TPK | 3.95 | 0.60 | 2.50 | 5.00 |
| AI-TPACK | 4.05 | 0.58 | 3.00 | 5.00 |
| BI | 4.25 | 0.50 | 3.00 | 5.00 |

***4.2. AI Knowledge as a Key Predictor***

AI-TK emerged as the most significant factor influencing lecturers’ intention to incorporate AI into their teaching practices. It demonstrated the strongest Pearson correlation with BI (r = .801, p < .001) and held the highest predictive value in the regression model (β = .871, t = 4.424, p < .001). These results indicate that lecturers who possess greater familiarity with AI tools are more likely to adopt them in their professional activities.

The interview data supported this pattern. Several participants shared practical examples of how they have integrated AI into lesson planning and activity design:

“I use AI mostly to create quizzes, speaking prompts, and prepare for my lessons.” — Lecturer 1

“It makes my job easier when designing open-ended questions or checking student responses.” — Lecturer 3

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between BI and the independent variables.

**Table 3**

*Pearson Correlations Between Behavioral Intention and Independent Variables*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | PE | EE | FC | SI | AI-TK | AI-TPK | AI-TPACK |
| BI | .626\*\* | .536\*\* | .464\*\* | .665\*\* | .801\*\* | .640\*\* | .700\*\* |

Note. N = 31. \*\* p < .01.

***4.3. Social Influence and Peer Modeling***SI also played a significant role in predicting BI, with a notable regression coefficient (β = .359, p = .035) and a strong correlation (r = .665, p < .001). Many lecturers indicated that observing colleagues’ successful use of AI encouraged them to try these tools themselves, reflecting a broader departmental culture that supports technological innovation.

“I saw my colleagues using AI tools successfully, which made me more confident to explore them myself.” — Lecturer 3
“Our teaching environment encourages us to try new technology, and that motivates me.” — Lecturer 3

These insights highlight the importance of peer modeling and supportive institutional norms in fostering the adoption of new technologies.

***4.4. Effort Expectancy as a Barrier***

Although EE showed a moderate positive correlation with BI (r = .536, p = .002), its influence turned out to be negative and statistically significant in the regression analysis (β = –.439, p = .008). This suggests that while lecturers who are somewhat comfortable with AI may indicate a willingness to use it, the perceived complexity and required effort can still discourage actual adoption.

“Sometimes AI gives wrong answers or needs you to write very specific prompts. It’s not always easy.” — Lecturer 2
“If I’m not careful, the content may mislead students. That adds extra workload.” — Lecturer 3

These reflections point to the practical challenges and cognitive load involved in integrating AI tools into the teaching process. This reinforces the need for guided practice and prompt literacy in AI tools.

4.5. Regression Model Overview

To gain a clearer picture of how all variables collectively influenced behavioral intention, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4**

*Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Behavioral Intention*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Predictor** | **β (Standardized)** | **t** | **p** |
| PE | –.067 | –0.456 | .653 |
| EE | –.439 | –2.887 | .008 |
| FC | .072 | 0.517 | .610 |
| SI | .359 | 2.247 | .035 |
| AI-TK | .871 | 4.424 | <.001 |
| AI-TPK | –.102 | –0.615 | .545 |
| AI-TPACK | .296 | 1.785 | .087 |

 Note. Adjusted R² = .785, F(7, 23) = 16.662, p < .001

The model explains 78.5% of the variance in BI. Among the predictors, AI Knowledge remained the most influential, followed by Social Influence. In contrast, Effort Expectancy demonstrated a significant negative impact on behavioral intention.

4.6. Pedagogical Value of AI

Although PE, AI-TPK, and AI-TPACK did not reach statistical significance in the regression model, they showed moderate to strong correlations with BI. Interview data consistently emphasized the pedagogical benefits of AI, particularly in enhancing student engagement and supporting instructional design:

“AI helps me generate questions that are better suited to students’ needs.” — Lecturer 3

“For speaking and writing tasks, it helps me brainstorm and design creative activities.” — Lecturer 1

These results indicate that while pedagogical alignment may not directly predict behavioral intention, it remains essential for user satisfaction and long-term integration.

4.7. Institutional Support: A Mixed Picture

FC demonstrated the weakest correlation with BI (r = .464, p = .009) and did not significantly predict BI in the regression model (β = .072, p = .610). The interview data reflected variability in institutional support:

“There’s no formal support. I learn about AI on my own.” — Lecturer 2

“We had some short training sessions, and the school does encourage us to try it.” — Lecturer 3

These findings suggest that while institutional support is appreciated, it may serve more as a contextual moderator than a core driver of behavioral intention.

In summary, AI-TK and SI emerged as key enablers of behavioral intention, whereas EE functioned as a barrier, driven by concerns over the complexity of AI tools. While the pedagogical benefits of AI were acknowledged, they did not demonstrate strong statistical significance. Institutional support appeared inconsistent, highlighting the complex interplay between individual competence, perceived usability, and social influences in shaping AI adoption.

**5. Discussion**

5.1. Role of AI Knowledge and Performance Expectancy

This study confirms the pivotal influence of AI-TK on lecturers’ behavioral intentions to integrate AI into English language instruction. Participants with greater familiarity with tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, or automated assessment platforms described specific instructional applications where AI could enhance efficiency, engagement, and learning outcomes. These findings are in line with prior research highlighting the centrality of domain-specific technological knowledge in shaping perceived usefulness and ease of use, the two core constructs of the UTAUT framework (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Lecturers with higher levels of AI-TK were more likely to recognize AI’s potential for streamlining instructional tasks, personalizing instruction, and delivering real-time formative feedback. These outcomes closely reflect the dimensions of PE. The present findings are consistent with An et al. (2023), who found that AI literacy among English teachers positively predicted behavioral intention. In this study, the robust statistical relationship between AI-TK and Behavioral Intention (β = .871, p < .001) reinforces the importance of cognitive readiness as a precondition for adoption. Strengthening foundational AI literacy may therefore serve as a gateway to meaningful pedagogical innovation.

***5.2. Social Influence and Peer Practice***

SI was also found to be a statistically significant predictor of behavioral intention (β = .359, p = .035). Participants commonly cited peer experiences, informal discussions, and role modeling as critical motivators for exploring AI tools. These findings echo Tran and Nguyen (2024), who argued that peer cues and social modeling shape both performance and effort expectancy.

In collectivist educational cultures like Vietnam, peer validation and communal learning significantly influence decision-making. This aligns with de Jong et al. (2023), who emphasized the importance of horizontal collaboration in pedagogical innovation. Furthermore, the results resonate with Lim and Harwati (2021), who found that institutional encouragement, when reinforced by peer success stories, accelerated technology adoption. Institutions should thus consider leveraging professional learning communities and mentorship programs to facilitate the diffusion of AI integration practices and reduce risk aversion.

5.3. Effort Expectancy and Perceived Complexity

Unexpectedly, EE showed a negative relationship with behavioral intention (β = –.439, p = .008). While UTAUT traditionally posits that perceived ease of use facilitates adoption, this inverse relationship suggests deeper issues with how ease is interpreted by lecturers. Participants expressed concerns about the pedagogical superficiality of some AI tools that are easy to use but fail to support complex instructional needs.

This insight adds nuance to the EE construct. Simplicity, in the absence of pedagogical alignment, may lead to skepticism about the tool’s educational value. As also reported by Pham and Le (2023), ease of use must be paired with instructional coherence to foster long-term engagement. This calls for a shift in training programs—from focusing solely on technical operations to showcasing meaningful, classroom-aligned use cases.

5.4. Facilitating Conditions and Institutional Readiness

Although FC did not emerge as a significant quantitative predictor, qualitative data emphasized their practical importance. Participants reported limited access to IT infrastructure, insufficient training, and the absence of formal policies guiding AI use. These institutional shortcomings mirror broader trends in Vietnamese higher education, where digital tools are often introduced ahead of proper systemic support (Nguyen & Le, 2023).

While FC may not have had a direct statistical impact in this study, it remains a latent structural variable that underpins the operational feasibility of technology adoption. Prior research (e.g., Chatterjee & Bhattacharjee, 2020) reinforces that institutional trust, resource availability, and clear policy guidelines significantly shape user confidence and sustained use. Vietnamese institutions must therefore align infrastructure, support systems, and leadership strategies to build an enabling environment for AI-enhanced ELT.

5.5. Pedagogical Alignment and AI-TPACK Awareness

Though AI-TPK and AI-TPACK did not emerge as direct predictors in the model, they showed strong correlations with behavioral intention (r = .632 and r = .700, respectively). This suggests that while lecturers may not yet fully operationalize these frameworks, awareness is emerging that AI adoption must be pedagogically integrated rather than just technically managed.

Interview data revealed that lecturers are already using AI for planning tasks, vocabulary development, and assessment design. However, they also expressed caution—highlighting the importance of aligning AI with learner autonomy, critical thinking, and assessment validity. These findings support Huang (2022) and Schmid et al. (2020), who argue that the long-term success of AI in education depends not on its novelty, but on its alignment with core pedagogical goals.

To translate AI-TPACK awareness into sustained practice, professional development must focus on context-specific training, co-design of instructional activities, and reflective experimentation. As Hsu (2017) noted, moving from theoretical frameworks to teaching expertise requires ongoing support and practical engagement with AI tools.

**6. Conclusion**

This study examined the behavioral intention (BI) of EFL lecturers to adopt AI tools in English language teaching, utilizing an extended UTAUT framework and a mixed-methods approach. By combining survey findings with insights from in-depth interviews, the research provided a comprehensive view of the cognitive, social, and institutional dimensions that shape AI adoption in pedagogical settings.

The analysis identified AI-TK and SI as the most significant enablers of AI integration, whereas EE emerged as a meaningful barrier. Although factors such as PE, AI-TPK, and Institutional support were positively associated with intention, they did not show statistical significance in the regression model. Nonetheless, qualitative data revealed that lecturers continued to value pedagogical alignment and institutional backing, highlighting the importance of these factors beyond their measurable influence.

These findings suggest that successful AI integration in TESOL depends not only on technical proficiency, but also on a supportive social environment and user-friendly tool design. Teachers need both confidence in their capabilities and encouragement from peers, along with tools that are intuitive enough to minimize cognitive strain. Institutional training programs, while important, must go beyond one-time interventions and ensure ongoing, context-sensitive support.

In summary, this study contributes to the expanding discourse on AI in language education by identifying key predictors of behavioral intention among EFL lecturers. It underscores the central role of AI-related knowledge and social reinforcement, while also drawing attention to practical concerns around usability. These insights hold implications for the design of teacher training, educational technology, and policy initiatives aimed at fostering meaningful and sustainable AI integration in language teaching.

Future research should consider larger and more diverse samples, as well as longitudinal approaches to track how intention develops into actual classroom practice. Cross-cultural and cross-institutional comparisons would also provide valuable perspectives on broader structural factors influencing AI adoption in education.

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