



## Development and Validation of a Scale for Measuring Post-modernistic Critical Pedagogy-based Curriculum Beliefs among Iranian EFL Teachers

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### Abstract

This study aimed to identify the foundational principles of a post-modernistic critical pedagogy-based (PMCP) curriculum and to develop and validate a scale measuring English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' beliefs about curriculum in the Iranian high school context. Grounded in the theoretical traditions of critical pedagogy and postmodern curriculum theory, the study was motivated by long-standing concerns about the ideological rigidity, cultural narrowness, and behaviorist orientation of the current national English curriculum. Drawing on PMCP principles such as learner empowerment, cultural inclusivity, dialogic learning, and ethical pluralism, the initial conceptual framework was constructed through a synthesis of relevant literature and semi-structured interviews with in-service Iranian EFL teachers. Based on this framework, a 35-item questionnaire was developed to measure teachers' beliefs across four curriculum components: goals, content, methods, and assessment. A sequential exploratory mixed-methods design was employed to validate the scale. Content validity was confirmed through experts' review, while internal consistency was supported by Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = .898$ ). Exploratory factor analysis yielded a five-factor solution, accounting for 77.79% of the total variance. Model fit indices confirmed the structural adequacy of the instrument. The validated scale offers a theoretically grounded and empirically robust tool for examining teachers' curriculum beliefs within the Iranian school curriculum, thereby contributing to research and policy dialogue on a transformative curriculum reform in the centralized EFL education systems.

**Keywords:** Critical Pedagogy, Curriculum Validation, EFL Education, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Post-modern Curriculum.

English language education in Iran is implemented through a highly centralized system administered by the Ministry of Education, where English is introduced as a compulsory subject in secondary schools and serves as a key component of national examinations (Aliakbari, 2004; Atai & Mazlum, 2013). At this level, the primary objectives of English language learning

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emphasize reading comprehension, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary knowledge, while communicative competence and intercultural awareness have received less systematic attention ([Ebrahimi & Sahragard, 2016](#); [Fathi & Nezakatgoo, 2017](#)). The curriculum is nationally designed and prescribed through state-produced textbooks, and classroom instruction is largely shaped by these materials ([Riazi, 2005](#); [Safari & Rashidi, 2015](#)). Teacher education is mainly provided through short-term in-service training organized by the Ministry, focusing more on textbook implementation than on pedagogical reflection or critical engagement ([Atai & Mazlum, 2013](#); [Salimi & Rad, 2024](#)). Teachers, as the main mediators of curriculum implementation, often hold diverse perspectives on the value and feasibility of pedagogical innovation. However, their professional autonomy remains limited due to prescriptive syllabi, exam pressures, and a focus on test preparation rather than communicative or critical learning outcomes ([Safari & Sahragard, 2016](#); [Salimi & Rad, 2024](#)).

Curriculum theorists working within critical traditions have long questioned the ideological and structural assumptions underpinning traditional models of education, particularly in centralized and standardized systems ([Cahill & Gibson, 2012](#); [Casimiro Lopes & Fernandes De Macedo, 2009](#)). In contexts such as Iran, where national curricula are tightly controlled, English language instruction often reproduces behaviorist pedagogy, depoliticized content, and monolithic cultural representations ([Ebrahimi & Sahragard, 2016](#); [Fathi & Nezakatgoo, 2017](#)). Against this backdrop, post-modernistic critical pedagogy has emerged as a compelling theoretical paradigm for rethinking education curriculum design in English as a Foreign Language ([Mahmoodarabi & Khodabakhsh, 2015](#); [Salimi & Rad, 2024](#); [Shin & Crookes, 2005](#); [Tabatabaei et al., 2022](#)). Post-modernistic critical pedagogy synthesizes two powerful critiques of conventional schooling: the epistemological challenge of postmodernism and the emancipatory vision of critical pedagogy ([Sholle, 1992](#); [Wilkinson, 2022](#)). Rooted in call for education that promotes critical consciousness (*conscientização*) and social transformation, critical pedagogy foregrounds power, identity, and dialogue in educational contexts ([Freire, 1970](#)). [Giroux \(1994, 2011\)](#) extended these ideas by emphasizing democratic engagement, cultural pluralism, and curriculum as a site of political struggle. Postmodern theorists such as [Grumet \(1988\)](#) and [Slattery \(2006\)](#) have likewise rejected linear, objective, and technocratic models of curriculum, calling instead for interpretive, relational, and culturally responsive frameworks that honor multiplicity and lived experience.

In English language education, these ideas have profound implications. Scholars such as [Pennycook \(2001\)](#), [Norton and Toohey \(2004\)](#), and [Akbari \(2008\)](#) argue that language learning is inseparable from issues of identity, ideology, and cultural representation. From this perspective, the ELT curriculum should not merely teach grammatical competence but should foster critical engagement, sociopolitical awareness, and ethical citizenship. This requires moving beyond textbook-centered instruction and toward pedagogical practices that promote dialogue, learner agency, and intercultural understanding ([Akbari, 2008](#); [Mahmoodarabi & Khodabakhsh, 2015](#); [Norton & Toohey, 2004](#); [Slattery, 2006](#)). Despite revisions to English

textbooks in the past decade, Iranian EFL education continues to exhibit limited implementation of such practices, and teacher-centered routines remain predominant. Despite growing scholarly attention to critical and postmodern curriculum frameworks, their translation into EFL curriculum design has remained underdeveloped—especially in contexts shaped by top-down policy control. In Iran, the secondary school English curriculum has been widely critiqued for its structural rigidity, lack of cultural inclusivity, and emphasis on rote learning ([Aliakbari, 2004](#); [Atai & Mazlum, 2013](#); [Riazi, 2005](#)). More recent analyses and teacher perspectives further indicate that the revised textbooks have not substantially altered the pedagogical culture of classrooms, as they still emphasize linguistic form and standardized testing rather than critical inquiry or student participation. Existing textbooks also tend to promote standardized language models while neglecting local identities, social realities, and student participation. Although several Iranian scholars have called for more flexible and critical curriculum models ([Alimadadi et al., 2022](#); [Maftoon & Shakouri, 2013](#); [Akbarpour, 2023](#); [Behboudi et al., 2022](#)), few attempts have been made to construct and empirically validate such models in practice.

This study addresses that gap by identifying the key components of a post-modernistic critical pedagogy-based (PMCP) curriculum model for Iranian EFL instruction and by developing and validating a scale to measure EFL teachers' beliefs about these components. Rather than implementing a full curriculum, the study aims to construct a theoretical framework grounded in both international literature and local teaching experiences, and to operationalize this framework through a psychometrically sound instrument. This approach supports the broader goal of informing context-sensitive curriculum reform and expanding the methodological tools available for researching teachers' beliefs in EFL education systems shaped by ideological and bureaucratic constraints.

## Literature Review

### Critical Pedagogy in ELT

Critical pedagogy emerged as an emancipatory educational movement that challenges dominant ideologies, unequal power structures, and the reproduction of social inequalities within formal schooling. It is grounded in Paulo [Freire's \(1970\)](#) concept of *conscientização*, which advocates for education as a practice of freedom that enables learners to critically engage with social realities and transform oppressive conditions. Freire's rejection of the "banking model" of education, in which teachers deposit knowledge into passive students, laid the foundation for dialogic pedagogy, where learners and educators co-construct knowledge through reflective dialogue and mutual inquiry ([Freire, 1993](#)). Building on Freire's work, scholars such as [Henry Giroux \(1988, 1992\)](#) conceptualized critical pedagogy as a project of cultural politics and democratic education. Giroux emphasized that education is inherently political and that curricula must be responsive to historical, cultural, and ideological contexts. He argued for an education that interrogates dominant discourses, foregrounds student voice,

and promotes critical literacy as a means of empowering marginalized communities ([Giroux, 2001](#)).

In the context of English language teaching (ELT), critical pedagogy challenges the neutral positioning of language and the universalizing tendencies of global English. Language learning is inextricably tied to identity, power, and access to resources ([Norton & Toohey, 2004](#)). Critical language educators argue that ELT often privileges native-speaker norms, commercial textbook content, and culturally homogenized curricula that fail to reflect learners' lived experiences or socio-political realities ([Pennycook, 1994, 2001](#)). This calls for curriculum practices that are locally grounded, culturally inclusive, and socially responsive. [Akbari \(2008\)](#) emphasized the relevance of critical pedagogy in Iranian EFL contexts, noting that mainstream instruction often discourages reflection and reinforces linguistic hierarchies. He proposed a transformative model of ELT that fosters critical thinking, identity negotiation, and cultural sensitivity. Similarly, [Rashidi and Safari \(2011\)](#) demonstrated how critical pedagogy can create more democratic classroom environments in Iranian EFL settings by promoting dialogue and learner autonomy. Importantly, subsequent research has highlighted that teachers' beliefs play a decisive role in determining the extent to which such critical or dialogic orientations are realized in practice. When teachers hold beliefs aligned with empowerment, inclusivity, and reflection, they are more likely to enact critical pedagogy principles within prescribed curricular frameworks ([Akbari, 2008](#); [Fathi & Nezakatgoo, 2017](#); [Rashidi & Safari, 2011](#)). Conversely, when teachers' beliefs remain shaped by behaviorist assumptions, top-down curricular reforms have little practical impact on classroom transformation.

Despite its theoretical relevance, the practical integration of critical pedagogy into ELT curricula remains limited, particularly in centralized education systems such as Iran, where top-down curriculum mandates, exam-driven instruction, and ideologically framed textbooks prevail. Theoretical calls for student-centered, participatory, and justice-oriented pedagogy often remain disconnected from curriculum development practices. Accordingly, understanding teachers' beliefs about critical pedagogy becomes central to any attempt at curriculum reform, as these beliefs mediate how global theoretical models are interpreted and enacted within the Iranian EFL context ([Fathi & Nezakatgoo, 2017](#); [Salimi & Rad, 2024](#)). Consequently, there is a need for context-specific frameworks that operationalize the principles of critical pedagogy into assessable curriculum components, and tools that can measure teachers' beliefs about such frameworks.

### **Post-modern Curriculum Theory**

Postmodern curriculum theory emerged in response to the perceived limitations of modernist educational paradigms that privilege order, standardization, and objectivity. It challenges the dominance of technocratic curriculum designs that treat knowledge as fixed and transferable, proposing instead a view of curriculum as interpretive, situated, and deeply responsive to individual and cultural diversity ([Slattery, 2006](#)). Postmodern perspectives reject linear

curriculum planning models and emphasize fluidity, multiplicity, and ethical reflection in educational practice ([Pinar, 2004](#)). [Slattery \(2006\)](#) conceptualizes curriculum as an autobiographical, ecological, and aesthetic experience. He argues that curriculum should not be confined to instrumental goals or standardized content but should function as a dynamic process of meaning-making that reflects the interrelationship between individuals, cultures, and knowledge systems. Postmodern curriculum, in this view, embraces complexity, ambiguity, and cultural pluralism, and seeks to foster critical consciousness and moral imagination among learners.

Similarly, [Pinar \(2004\)](#) advocated for what he termed “currere”—a process of personal and reflective curriculum engagement that places subjective experience at the center of educational inquiry. He critiques traditional curriculum theory for its managerial logic and impersonal tone, calling instead for a reconceptualization of curriculum as a space for narrative, memory, and ethical becoming ([Pinar, 2004](#)). [Grumet \(1988\)](#) extended this orientation by foregrounding gender, affect, and relationality in curriculum discourse, advocating for feminist and autobiographical approaches that affirm learners’ voices and emotional experiences. Postmodern curriculum theory also resonates with critical pedagogy in its critique of universalism and its commitment to marginalized perspectives. Both paradigms advocate for dialogical, inclusive, and transformative education that resists hegemonic knowledge systems and values diversity. As [Doll \(1993\)](#) pointed out, postmodern curriculum is characterized by openness, self-organization, and interpretive dialogue, offering educators a framework for engaging learners in ethically and culturally meaningful ways.

In the field of English language education, postmodern curriculum theory challenges the taken-for-granted assumptions about what constitutes legitimate language, culture, and communication. It emphasizes that curriculum decisions—such as what texts are taught, whose English is valorized, and whose experiences are included—are never neutral, but ideologically laden ([Kumaravadivelu, 2006](#); [Pennycook, 2001](#)). From a postmodern perspective, language teaching materials should reflect the plurality of learners’ identities and encourage critical engagement with dominant linguistic and cultural norms. However, despite its theoretical appeal, the operationalization of postmodern curriculum theory in centralized educational contexts remains rare. In countries such as Iran, curriculum development is often controlled by bureaucratic bodies that emphasize uniformity, prescriptiveness, and exam-driven content ([Riazi, 2005](#)). Because teachers act as the main interpreters of curriculum policy, their beliefs about diversity, learner agency, and interpretive pedagogy largely impact whether postmodern principles can find practical expression in classroom contexts ([Fathi & Nezakatgoo, 2017](#); [Salimi & Rad, 2024](#)). Understanding these beliefs is therefore indispensable to realizing postmodern curriculum reform in Iran. While Iranian curriculum scholars have called for greater inclusion of local identities, interdisciplinary learning, and culturally responsive pedagogy ([Maftoon & Shakouri, 2013](#)), there remains a lack of empirically grounded models that translate postmodern principles into viable curriculum frameworks. This highlights the

need for studies that identify and systematize postmodern curriculum components in a way that is accessible, assessable, and relevant to context-specific educational reform efforts.

### **Critiques and Reform Needs of the Iranian EFL Curriculum**

Over the past two decades, the Iranian EFL curriculum has been the subject of extensive critique by applied linguists and education scholars. These critiques highlight structural, pedagogical, and ideological limitations that hinder effective language learning and obstruct efforts to foster learner agency, cultural responsiveness, and critical thinking ([Aliakbari, 2004](#); [Atai & Mazlum, 2013](#); [Riazi, 2005](#)). Although subsequent textbook reforms introduced after 2013 aimed to integrate communicative goals, studies and classroom evidence continue to show that the new series largely retain structuralist sequencing, teacher-centered instruction, and heavy reliance on examination preparation ([Ebrahimi & Sahragard, 2016](#); [Fathi & Nezakatgoo, 2017](#); [Safari & Sahragard, 2016](#)). As a centralized system, the Iranian high school English curriculum is developed and mandated by the Ministry of Education, leaving little room for localized adaptation, teacher autonomy, or student engagement with diverse contents. A prominent concern in the literature is the curriculum's exam-oriented structure and emphasis on grammatical competence over communicative or critical competence ([Safari & Rashidi, 2015](#); [Safari & Sahragard, 2016](#)). Instructional content is largely textbook-driven and aligned with national assessment standards, which prioritize discrete-point testing and decontextualized linguistic forms. This rigidity both in purpose and content results in limited opportunities for dialogic teaching, project-based learning, or interdisciplinary integration—core principles advocated by both postmodern and critical pedagogy frameworks ([Akbari, 2008](#); [Pennycook, 2001](#)).

Another recurring critique pertains to the lack of cultural and linguistic inclusivity in English textbooks. Studies have shown that official textbooks present homogenized content that fails to reflect the diversity of Iranian society or the pluralism of global cultures ([Aliakbari, 2004](#); [Atai & Mazlum, 2013](#)). Minority voices, local knowledge systems, and students' lived experiences are frequently excluded, reinforcing a narrow cultural worldview and undermining the relevance of curriculum materials for diverse student populations. This runs counter to the postmodern emphasis on multiplicity and the critical pedagogy principle of validating learners' cultural identities ([Kumaravadivelu, 2006](#); [Norton & Toohey, 2004](#)). Moreover, the curriculum's teacher-centered orientation restricts the pedagogical agency of instructors and positions students as passive recipients of knowledge ([Fathi & Nezakatgoo, 2017](#); [Riazi, 2005](#)). Because curriculum implementation ultimately depends on how teachers interpret these materials, their beliefs about learner agency and cultural inclusivity become crucial in determining whether reform policies lead to genuine classroom transformation ([Akbari, 2008](#); [Rashidi & Safari, 2011](#)). Teachers are expected to follow state-approved lesson plans and instructional guidelines, leaving little room for innovation or critical engagement with content. This approach contradicts the pedagogical ideals of [Freire \(1970\)](#) and [Giroux \(1992\)](#), who argue

that learners need to participate as co-constructors of knowledge in dialogic and reflective educational settings.

Although some reform efforts have been introduced, such as revisions to English textbooks and calls for communicative language teaching, these changes have often been superficial and disconnected from deeper epistemological and pedagogical shifts ([Atai & Mazlum, 2013](#)). Reform proposals in the Iranian EFL literature have included integrating intercultural tasks, introducing project-based units, and embedding local sociocultural themes into reading passages to encourage reflection and critical awareness ([Akbari, 2008](#); [Mahmoodarabi & Khodabakhsh, 2015](#); [Rashidi & Safari, 2011](#); [Salimi & Rad, 2024](#)). However, these recommendations have rarely been adopted systematically within national curricular planning. Several Iranian scholars have advocated for more fundamental reform rooted in postmodern principles, such as pluralism, interdisciplinary learning, and socio-cultural responsiveness ([Akbari, 2008](#); [Aliakbari, 2004](#); [Mahmoodarabi & Khodabakhsh, 2015](#); [Rashidi & Safari, 2011](#); [Safari & Sahragard, 2016](#); [Salimi & Rad, 2024](#)). However, few attempts have been made to systematize these proposals into cohesive frameworks or to validate them through empirical research. The absence of validated tools for assessing teachers' beliefs about transformative curriculum principles represents a critical gap in the current literature. Since teachers' beliefs significantly shape pedagogical practices and openness to curricular change ([Borg, 2006](#)), it is essential to understand how educators conceptualize critical and postmodern approaches to curriculum. Addressing this gap requires the development of instruments that can reliably measure teachers' orientations toward curriculum models informed by critical pedagogy and postmodernism—particularly in centralized systems where such orientations are underrepresented in formal policy.

The shortcomings outlined above are clearly reflected in the existing high-school English curriculum, which remains heavily textbook-dependent and focused on linguistic accuracy, while critical and intercultural objectives receive minimal attention ([Ebrahimi & Sahragard, 2016](#)). For example, the “Vision” series, used nationwide, presents uniform lesson topics, controlled vocabulary lists, and limited opportunities for open dialogue, offering little space for local adaptation or learners' voices. Such design characteristics illustrate the gap between national curriculum policy and the emancipatory aims of postmodern and critical pedagogy. To respond to these contextual realities, the present study sought to construct and empirically validate a curriculum model that embodies post-modernistic critical pedagogy (PMCP) principles and to examine how these principles align with Iranian EFL teachers' professional orientations. In doing so, the study gives empirical substance to longstanding reform proposals that have remained primarily conceptual in the Iranian context ([Akbari, 2008](#); [Mahmoodarabi & Khodabakhsh, 2015](#); [Rashidi & Safari, 2011](#)). Furthermore, the study specifically engaged in-service teachers as participants, since their practical engagement with the national

curriculum provides unique insight into the feasibility of PMCP principles in real classroom contexts.

This study focused on identifying the foundational components of a post-modernistic critical pedagogy-based (PMCP) curriculum for Iranian high school English instruction and developing a psychometrically sound instrument for assessing EFL teachers' beliefs about those components. Drawing on theoretical insights and qualitative data from in-service teachers, the study aimed to build a conceptual model reflective of postmodern and critical values, and to construct a scale capable of capturing the extent to which those values resonate with teachers' professional beliefs. Accordingly, the research addressed the following questions:

1. What are the core components of a post-modernistic critical pedagogy-based curriculum model for EFL instruction in Iranian high schools?
2. How valid and reliable is the instrument developed to measure Iranian EFL teachers' beliefs about the proposed curriculum model?

## Method

### Research Design

This study employed a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design to identify the foundational components of a post-modernistic critical pedagogy-based (PMCP) curriculum model and to develop and validate an instrument measuring Iranian EFL teachers' beliefs about these components. The main reason for selecting such a design was to ensure that theoretical insights and contextual needs informed the construction of the model and its measurement tool. The study was conducted in two phases: a qualitative phase that informed model development and a quantitative phase that tested the validity and reliability of the corresponding questionnaire. The qualitative phase drew on two sources: an extensive review of literature in critical pedagogy and postmodern curriculum theory, and semi-structured interviews with experienced Iranian EFL teachers. The interview protocol was designed based on the themes emerging from the literature review, including learner empowerment, cultural inclusivity, ethical pluralism, dialogic pedagogy, and assessment reform. Each interview consisted of ten open-ended questions that were reviewed by two specialists in curriculum studies to ensure conceptual relevance and clarity before data collection. Interviews were conducted face-to-face or online in Persian, recorded with participants' consent, and transcribed verbatim for analysis. These interviews were intended to elicit teachers' views on equity, cultural inclusivity, student agency, and critical engagement, as well as perceived gaps and limitations in the current national EFL curriculum. Data from the interviews were thematically analyzed and triangulated with theoretical principles to generate the preliminary structure of the PMCP curriculum model. Themes were coded manually through repeated reading and constant comparison until conceptual saturation was achieved. The final themes—such as “dialogue and reflection,” “learner agency,” “cultural representation,” and “ethical responsibility”—informed the initial item pool of the questionnaire.

The second phase involved the construction and validation of a 35-item questionnaire designed to measure teachers' beliefs about the proposed model. The items reflected four curriculum domains—goals, content, methods, and assessment—identified during the qualitative phase. This mixed-methods design was chosen not merely because it is common in curriculum studies but because it allowed the qualitative findings to guide instrument construction and to provide contextual justification for quantitative testing. Although teachers' beliefs are complex and interpretive, quantifying them through validated scales facilitates broader generalization and reliability testing. The qualitative phase therefore ensured theoretical grounding, while the quantitative phase established psychometric rigor. Validation procedures included expert review, content validity indexing, reliability analysis, and exploratory factor analysis. This methodological design allowed for the integration of theoretical, empirical, and contextual insights in a structured and replicable manner. The mixed-methods approach provided a robust foundation for ensuring both the conceptual grounding and psychometric integrity of the final instrument. Nevertheless, the study acknowledges that no single design can fully capture the depth of belief systems; hence, mixed-methods research was used pragmatically to balance interpretive depth and measurement precision.

### **Participants**

Participant selection followed a three-stage process aligned with the qualitative exploration, expert evaluation, and quantitative validation phases of the study. Sampling strategies were purposive and criterion-based to ensure relevance, diversity, and expertise in relation to English language teaching and curriculum engagement in the Iranian secondary school context.

In the qualitative phase, twelve in-service EFL teachers were interviewed to contextualize and inform the development of the PMCP curriculum model. These participants were selected based on their familiarity with the national English curriculum, a minimum of five years of teaching experience in public high schools, and a demonstrated willingness to critically reflect on pedagogical practices. The sample included male and female teachers with academic backgrounds in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) or English literature, holding BA or MA degrees. Their insights were used to identify core themes and align theoretical constructs with practical classroom realities. All twelve teachers had been trained under the Ministry's professional development programs and had taught from both the previous "Right Path to English" and the revised "Vision" textbook series, ensuring their deep familiarity with curriculum reforms and pedagogical expectations. For expert validation, seven university faculty members with doctoral qualifications in TEFL, curriculum studies, or applied linguistics were invited to review the proposed model and the initial version of the questionnaire. Each had at least ten years of academic or professional experience in their respective fields. They evaluated the internal structure, conceptual clarity, and relevance of the model to the Iranian EFL context. Their feedback contributed to the refinement of item wording, content alignment, and construct clarity. A separate group of three experts—drawn from this original panel—later

participated in the formal Content Validity Index (CVI) rating to avoid redundancy and to ensure manageable inter-rater analysis, as suggested in scale development procedures (Lynn, 1986).

In the quantitative phase, the finalized questionnaire was administered to 165 high-school EFL teachers from multiple provinces across Iran. Stratified sampling was used to ensure variation across geographic and institutional settings. Eligibility criteria included at least three years of teaching experience at the secondary level and current or recent use of the nationally mandated English textbooks. Questionnaires were distributed both electronically via Google Forms and in paper format during regional teacher workshops to maximize accessibility and participation. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was assured. The sample size exceeded the recommended minimum participant-to-item ratio for exploratory factor analysis, meeting methodological standards for scale development (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Table 1 presents demographic information about the participating teachers.

Table 1.

*Demographic Information of Participants (Quantitative Phase)*

| Variable            | Category           | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender              | Male               | 72        | 43.6%      |
|                     | Female             | 93        | 56.4%      |
| Academic degree     | BA                 | 64        | 38.8%      |
|                     | MA                 | 89        | 54.0%      |
|                     | PhD                | 12        | 7.2%       |
| Teaching experience | 3–5 years          | 38        | 23.0%      |
|                     | 6–10 years         | 61        | 37.0%      |
|                     | 11–20 years        | 54        | 32.7%      |
|                     | More than 20 years | 12        | 7.3%       |
| Age range           | 25–30              | 28        | 17.0%      |
|                     | 31–40              | 79        | 47.9%      |
|                     | 41–50              | 45        | 27.3%      |
|                     | Above 50           | 13        | 7.8%       |

### Instrument Development

The main instrument developed in this study was a 35-item questionnaire designed to measure Iranian EFL teachers' beliefs about the core components of a post-modernistic critical pedagogy-based (PMCP) curriculum model. The design of the instrument was informed by a combination of theoretical analysis and qualitative data collected during the first phase of the study. Foundational literature in critical pedagogy (Darder, 2012; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1994, 2011) and postmodern curriculum theory (Pinar, 2004; Slattery, 2006) was reviewed to extract key curriculum principles. These included cultural inclusivity, learner agency, dialogical pedagogy, interdisciplinary integration, transformative goals, and alternative assessment practices. These principles were then triangulated with themes emerging from interviews with

in-service Iranian EFL teachers to ensure contextual relevance. To construct the items, the researchers first organized the emergent interview codes under the four curriculum domains identified in the qualitative phase. For instance, comments emphasizing “student participation,” “creative problem-solving,” and “ethical dialogue” were categorized under goals and methods; remarks concerning “representation of minorities” and “integration of social issues” informed the content domain; and teacher reflections on “alternative assessment” and “self-evaluation” guided the assessment items. Sample statements were initially written in Persian, translated into English, and reviewed for semantic equivalence by two bilingual experts.

The resulting framework was organized into four curriculum domains—goals, content, methods, and assessment—considering which a pool of items was generated to reflect beliefs about desirable curriculum features. All items were written in clear, context-sensitive language, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). The initial drafts of the questionnaire were reviewed by three faculty members specializing in TEFL and curriculum design. The reviewers evaluated each item for clarity, conceptual alignment, and contextual appropriateness. In cases where reviewers suggested overlap between theoretical domains, items were rephrased or relocated. For example, an item initially under “methods” referring to ‘encouraging reflective discussion’ was shifted to “goals” to maintain construct coherence. Based on their feedback, several items were revised for improved precision, and the distribution of items across the four domains was balanced.

Subsequently, a pilot study was conducted with a group of 35 EFL teachers to assess item clarity and the internal consistency of the instrument. The pilot results yielded a high overall Cronbach’s alpha of .898, indicating strong internal reliability and suggesting that no major revisions were necessary prior to full-scale administration. Minor refinements were made to wording based on teacher feedback—for instance, replacing abstract terminology with classroom-based phrasing. The finalized questionnaire consisted of 10 items addressing curriculum goals, 9 items addressing content, 8 items on teaching methods, and 8 items on assessment. These items were developed to reflect both the theoretical commitments of PMCP and the pedagogical realities of the Iranian EFL context. The instrument served as the primary tool to quantitatively evaluate teachers’ beliefs about the proposed model and to provide empirical evidence of the model’s structural validity.

### Validation Procedures

The validation of the instrument occurred in two integrated phases: expert validation and statistical validation. This two-tiered approach ensured both conceptual soundness and psychometric robustness. In the first phase, expert validation was conducted to assess the content relevance and internal structure of the instrument. The initial questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of seven experts in applied linguistics, TEFL, and curriculum studies. These reviewers evaluated the conceptual clarity, structural coherence, and alignment of each item with the theoretical principles underlying PMCP. Using a four-point rating scale, they

assessed item relevance, clarity, and representativeness. A Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated for individual items and for the entire instrument, with all items exceeding the recommended threshold of .78 (Lynn, 1986). To examine the consistency among expert ratings, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated, showing high inter-rater agreement ( $r = .765$  to  $.852$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Feedback from this stage led to several minor but meaningful refinements—for example, the term “pluralism” was replaced with “cultural diversity,” and the phrase “ethical education” was expanded to “ethical and intercultural understanding” to enhance clarity. These modifications ensured that the instrument accurately reflected the intended constructs and was understandable to teachers from different regions. In the second phase, statistical validation was conducted through the administration of the questionnaire to 165 in-service Iranian EFL teachers. The data were subjected to multiple statistical analyses to examine the instrument’s reliability and construct validity. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha, which yielded a coefficient of .898 for the full instrument, indicating a high level of reliability. The subscale alphas ranged from .650 to .699, which are considered acceptable for exploratory studies, particularly in scales with few items (DeVellis, 2003; Taber, 2018). Content validity of the final version was confirmed again after these analyses by comparing factor-retained items with their original conceptual domains, showing strong theoretical alignment.

To explore the underlying factor structure, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .908, and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ( $\chi^2(595) = 9926.594$ ,  $p < .001$ ), confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Principal Axis Factoring with Promax rotation was used to extract latent factors. A five-factor solution emerged, accounting for 77.798 % of the total variance. These factors corresponded closely to the four original conceptual domains—goals, content, method, and assessment—along with an additional factor representing pedagogical integration across domains. In interpreting model adequacy, conventional cut-off values were adopted: KMO  $\geq .60$  for sampling adequacy, factor loadings  $\geq .35$  for item retention, and communalities  $\geq .30$  for inclusion (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Factor loadings ranged from .355 to .883, and inter-factor correlations ( $r = .315$  to  $.745$ ) demonstrated coherence and theoretical distinctiveness among constructs.

## Results

### Design of the PMCP Curriculum Model

The first research question was concerned with designing a curriculum model for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction in Iranian high schools grounded in the principles of post-modernistic critical pedagogy. To address this question, the model was constructed through a combination of theoretical synthesis and empirical data collection. The theoretical foundation drew on key works in critical pedagogy and postmodern curriculum theory, particularly those of Freire (1970), Giroux (1994, 2011), Brosio (2000), Slattery (2006), and others who emphasize equity, cultural responsiveness, empowerment, and learner agency as

core principles of transformative education. These works collectively informed the conceptual components of the model, including critical consciousness, dialogical learning, social justice, reflective praxis, learner-centeredness, and multicultural inclusivity.

To enrich and contextualize the theoretical foundation, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Iranian high school EFL teachers. The interview data offered grounded insights into the perceived shortcomings of the existing curriculum and textbook series and highlighted the practical relevance of several postmodern and critical pedagogy principles. Teachers emphasized the absence of cultural diversity, critical thinking, student participation, and creative pedagogical practices in the current curriculum. They expressed concerns over the rigidity and prescriptive nature of content and the dominance of teacher-centered instruction. Illustrative excerpts from the interviews reveal these concerns: one teacher remarked, “Our textbooks tell students what to think, not how to think; they memorize dialogues without ever reflecting on real issues.” Another participant commented, “Everything is predetermined—from objectives to exercises—so teachers cannot adapt lessons to students’ lives or interests.” A third teacher highlighted the cultural limitations, stating, “Students never see their own communities represented; the book assumes everyone lives the same way.” These observations were classified into four major thematic areas—goals, content, methods, and assessment—each of which aligns with foundational curriculum elements emphasized in curriculum design literature.

Table 2 presents a synthesis of the theoretical principles identified in the literature and their empirical substantiation based on teacher interviews, now including a column specifying the corresponding curriculum domain. This alignment served as the basis for the conceptual framework of the proposed curriculum model. Each principle is linked to its original theoretical source and supported by evidence from the interview data, including the frequency of references made by the participants to each theme. These frequencies reflect both the urgency and relevance of each principle in the context of Iranian high school EFL education.

Table 2.

*Core Principles and Themes Informing the PMCP Curriculum Model*

| No. | Theoretical Principle  | Sources                               | Empirical Support from Teacher Interviews (Theme)                              | Curriculum Domain | Frequency |
|-----|--|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------|-----------|
| 1   | Critical consciousness, problem-solving, dialogical learning | Freire (1970); Giroux (2001, 2011)    | Lack of critical thinking and dialogic practice in textbooks                   | Goals / Methods   | 4         |
| 2   | Elimination of oppression and inequality                     | Brosio (2000); Mahmoudi et al. (2014) | Emphasis on social injustice, discrimination, and lack of equal representation | Goals             | 16        |
| 3   | Cultural responsiveness and diversity                        | Giroux (1994); Slattery (2006)        | Ignored cultural diversity in content and examples                             | Content           | 33        |

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| No. | Theoretical Principle   | Sources   | Empirical Support from Teacher Interviews (Theme)                         | Curriculum Domain  | Frequency |
|-----|---|---|---|--------------------|-----------|
| 4   | Learner-centered pedagogy and student autonomy                | Aliakbari (2004); Slattery (2006)                           | Lack of student participation and interaction in learning activities      | Methods / Goals    | 23        |
| 5   | Reflective praxis and co-construction of knowledge            | Freire (1970, 1993); Henderson & Kesson (2004); Shor (2002) | Limited opportunity for reflection and creativity in classroom tasks      | Methods            | 13        |
| 6   | Attention to students' lived experience and educational needs | Vygotsky (1934); White et al. (2014)                        | Teachers reported low relevance of textbooks to students' needs           | Content / Goals    | 31        |
| 7   | Interdisciplinary and emergent curriculum                     | Slattery (2006)   | Desire for integrated themes and flexible instructional approaches        | Content / Methods  | 8         |
| 8   | Moral and ethical decision-making in education                | Capper (1993); McLaren (1998)                               | Need for attention to values and inclusion of ethical themes in textbooks | Goals / Assessment | 15        |
| 9   | Pluralism and representation of minority voices               | Forghani et al. (2015)                                      | Textbooks fail to represent ethnic and cultural diversity in Iran         | Content            | 21        |
| 10  | Creativity and innovation in pedagogical content and delivery | Slattery (2006)   | Teachers found current materials lacking in creativity and engagement     | Methods / Content  | 17        |

**Note.** Frequencies reflect the number of coded references in teacher interview data aligned with each principle. The “Curriculum Domain” column indicates which dimension of curriculum design (goal, content, method, or assessment) each principle primarily corresponds to.

Following the classification and validation of these components, a visual model was developed to represent the structure and interrelationship of the curriculum elements. The proposed PMCP curriculum model, shown in Figure 1, is organized around four interrelated domains: goals, content, methods, and assessment. Each domain incorporates the theoretical and empirical themes identified earlier and collectively aims to guide the design and implementation of a student-centered, socially just, and culturally relevant EFL curriculum for the Iranian secondary education context.

Figure 1.

*Proposed PMCP Curriculum Model for Iranian EFL High Schools*



**Validation of the PMCP Curriculum Model**

To answer the second research question, the study evaluated the validity and reliability of the proposed post-modernistic critical pedagogy-based curriculum model (PMCP) through a combination of expert judgment and statistical analysis. The first stage of the validation involved collecting experts' opinions about the internal validity of the proposed model. Seven TEFL experts were asked to evaluate the model in terms of its completeness, organization, conceptual alignment with PMCP principles, and overall comprehensiveness. As clarified in the Method section, the first group of seven experts evaluated the conceptual and contextual alignment of the model, while the second group of three experts performed the detailed CVI ratings and provided item-level feedback. This ensured both theoretical coherence and statistical rigor across validation stages. The descriptive statistics for each evaluation item are presented in Table 3. Results show that the experts rated all aspects of the model above the theoretical mean of 3. The highest mean rating was given to the alignment between the model's elements and PMCP principles ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ), followed by the model's

comprehensiveness ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 1.66$ ). These findings indicated a high level of conceptual and structural validity as perceived by the experts in the field.

Table 3.

*Internal Validity Ratings by TEFL Experts on the PMCP Curriculum Model*

| Evaluation Criteria   | Mean | SD   |
|---|------|------|
| How complete do you think the proposed model is?                                | 3.18 | 0.72 |
| How appropriate is the type and arrangement of pattern elements?                | 3.62 | 0.94 |
| To what extent is the proposed model suitable for PMCP principles?              | 3.81 | 0.72 |
| To what extent do you find this model appropriate for PMCP curriculum?          | 3.50 | 0.50 |
| To what extent is the model appropriate in terms of organization and structure? | 4.06 | 0.68 |
| To what extent are the mentioned elements relevant to the PMCP principles?      | 4.18 | 1.33 |
| How comprehensive do you think the model is?                                    | 4.12 | 1.66 |

Note: All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

After experts' evaluation of the model structure and its conceptual alignment with post-modernistic critical pedagogy, the structural fit of the model was further tested using standard model fit indices. These included the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio ( $\chi^2/df$ ), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Normed Fit Index (NFI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI). The chi-square/df ratio was 2.245, which falls below the commonly accepted threshold of 3.0, indicating a good model fit. The CFI and NFI values were .932 and .903 respectively, both exceeding the minimum cutoff of .90, suggesting strong comparative and normative fit. The RMSEA value of .082 is within the acceptable range, and the GFI value of .828 meets the standard criterion for acceptability. To interpret these fit statistics, conventional psychometric standards were applied: values of  $\chi^2/df < 3$ ,  $CFI \geq .90$ ,  $GFI \geq .90$ ,  $TLI \geq .90$ ,  $RMSEA \leq .08$ , and  $SRMR \leq .08$  were considered indicative of satisfactory model adequacy (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). These results confirmed that the proposed curriculum model demonstrates an acceptable overall fit and can be considered statistically robust in terms of its internal structure.

Table 4.

*Model Fit Indices for the PMCP Curriculum Model*

| Fit Index                                       | Value | Recommended Threshold |
|---|-------|-----------------------|
| Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom ( $\chi^2/df$ ) | 2.245 | $\leq 3.00$           |
| Comparative Fit Index (CFI)                     | 0.932 | $\geq 0.90$           |
| Normed Fit Index (NFI)                          | 0.903 | $\geq 0.90$           |
| Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) | 0.082 | $\leq 0.10$           |
| Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)                     | 0.828 | $\geq 0.80$           |

The validation of the measurement instrument began with an examination of its content validity using the Content Validity Index (CVI). This process involved three experts in curriculum studies who independently reviewed the questionnaire items for relevance, clarity, and alignment with the principles of post-modernistic critical pedagogy. Each item was rated

on a four-point scale, and inter-rater agreement was computed using Pearson correlation coefficients. The correlation coefficients among the raters demonstrated strong and statistically significant agreement. The correlation between Rater 1 and Rater 2 was .852, while Rater 1 and Rater 3 showed a correlation of .765. The correlation between Rater 2 and Rater 3 was .826. All values exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of .70 for CVI reliability and were statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level. According to [Lynn \(1986\)](#), such levels of agreement are indicative of high content validity, especially when fewer experts are involved in the rating process. These results confirmed that the items on the questionnaire were judged to be appropriate and relevant representations of the proposed curriculum model's dimensions.

Table 5.

*Inter-rater Agreement on Content Validity of the PMCP Questionnaire*

| Raters            | Pearson Correlation | Significance (2-tailed) | N  |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----|
| Rater 1 & Rater 2 | 0.852**             | 0.000                   | 35 |
| Rater 1 & Rater 3 | 0.765**             | 0.000                   | 35 |
| Rater 2 & Rater 3 | 0.826**             | 0.000                   | 35 |

Note: All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). CVI was assessed based on expert ratings of 35 questionnaire items.

Continuing with the validation of the PMCP questionnaire, the next step involved assessing the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's alpha. This reliability analysis was performed to evaluate whether the items within each component of the questionnaire consistently measured the same underlying construct. The questionnaire was structured around four main components of the PMCP curriculum model: goals, content, method, and assessment, with a total of 35 items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the four subscales ranged from .650 to .699, while the overall reliability index for the complete questionnaire was .898. These results indicated an acceptable to high level of internal consistency across the instrument. Although individual subscale alphas were slightly below the conventional threshold of .70, they were still considered acceptable for new instruments and smaller item sets, as suggested by [DeVellis \(2003\)](#) and Vaske et al. (2017). The high overall alpha confirms that the questionnaire reliably measures the intended construct of curriculum implementation based on post-modernistic critical pedagogy principles. Therefore, the instrument demonstrates strong potential for use in future empirical investigations and curriculum evaluation studies.

Table 6.

*Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Indices for the PMCP Questionnaire*

| Component | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-----------|-----------------|------------------|
| Goals     | 10              | 0.650            |
| Content   | 9               | 0.693            |
| Method    | 8               | 0.669            |

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| Component  | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Assessment | 8               | 0.699            |
| Total      | 35              | 0.898            |

Note: A minimum alpha value of .65 is considered acceptable for new scales or subscales with fewer than 10 items.

To further examine the construct validity of the PMCP questionnaire, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted. Prior to factor extraction, the suitability of the dataset for factor analysis was evaluated using two standard tests: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The KMO index was calculated at .908, which is considered excellent and well above the minimum threshold of .60, indicating that the sampling was adequate for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded a statistically significant result,  $\chi^2(595) = 9926.594$ ,  $p < .001$ , confirming that the correlations among items were sufficiently large for factor analysis. Together, these results supported the appropriateness of conducting EFA on the questionnaire data.

**Table 7**

*KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sampling Adequacy*

| Test                         | Value    |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)     | 0.908    |
| Bartlett's Test ( $\chi^2$ ) | 9926.594 |
| Degrees of Freedom (df)      | 595      |
| Significance (p-value)       | < .001   |

Note:  $KMO \geq .60$  and significant Bartlett's test ( $p < .05$ ) indicate suitability for factor analysis.

Following confirmation of sampling adequacy, Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) with Promax rotation was used to extract the underlying factors of the PMCP questionnaire. The factor extraction was guided by the eigenvalue-greater-than-one criterion and further supported by the visual inspection of the scree plot. The EFA revealed a five-factor solution, which together accounted for 77.798% of the total variance. These five factors corresponded to the four conceptual dimensions of the proposed curriculum model—goals, content, method, and assessment—with one additional latent factor that reflected cross-cutting elements. The distribution of variance among the components showed that Factor 1 alone explained 60.689% of the variance, while the remaining four factors contributed more modest, yet meaningful, portions of the explained variance. These results indicated that the PMCP questionnaire is supported by a clear and interpretable factor structure, which aligns well with the theoretical framework used to design the instrument (Figure 2).

Table 8.

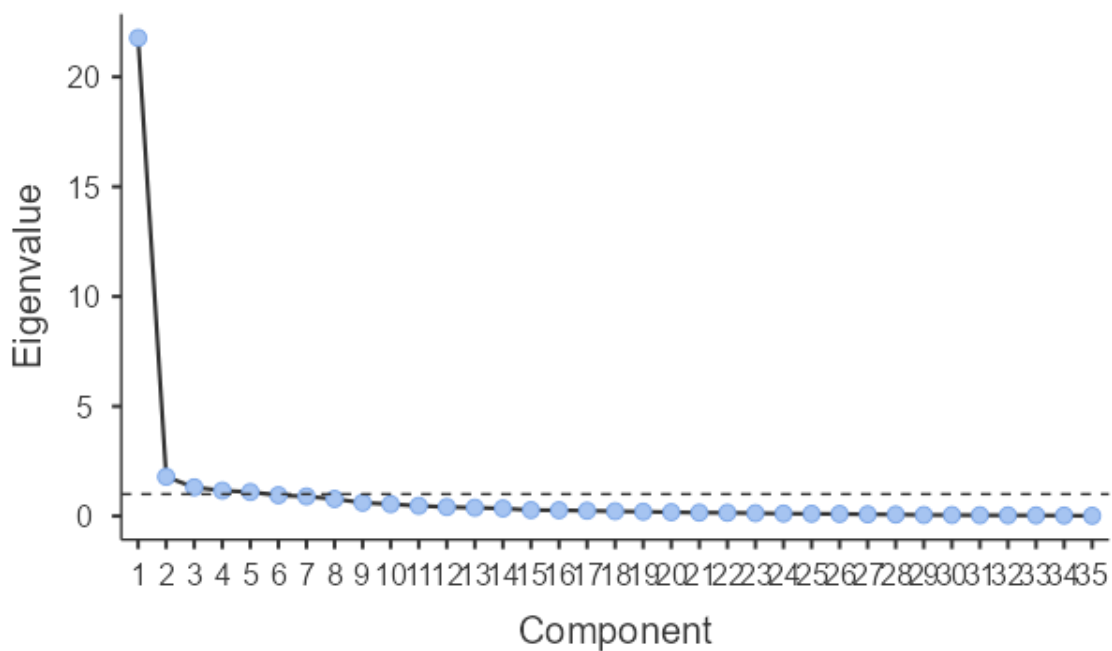
*Total Variance Explained by the Five-Factor Solution*

| Factor | Initial Eigenvalue | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
|--------|--------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1      | 5.366              | 60.689        | 60.689       |
| 2      | 2.495              | 9.601         | 66.289       |
| 3      | 1.365              | 4.126         | 70.415       |
| 4      | 1.308              | 3.705         | 74.120       |
| 5      | 1.325              | 3.678         | 77.798       |

Note: Extraction method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Figure 2.

*Scree Plot for the PMCP Questionnaire Factor Structure*



The final stage of the exploratory factor analysis involved examining the factor loadings and inter-factor correlations to assess the interpretability and construct validity of the extracted factors. Principal Component Analysis with Promax rotation was employed to account for the theoretical intercorrelation between the constructs of the PMCP framework. Promax was particularly suitable given that post-modernistic goals, methods, content, and assessment practices are conceptually interconnected in curriculum theory. The pattern matrix revealed a five-factor solution, explaining 77.798% of the total variance, with items demonstrating strong and interpretable loadings. Many loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of .50, indicating a clear underlying structure and good item representation for each factor.

The first factor represented post-modernistic goals and pedagogical practices of teachers aimed at student empowerment, creativity, and critical engagement. Items loading on this factor

emphasized the need for cooperative learning tasks, practical strategies in classroom teaching, and opportunities for promoting negotiation and life skills. Additionally, this factor captured the importance of renewing textbook content to support learner agency and encourage responsibility for learning. The co-occurrence of goal-oriented and method-oriented items suggests that in practice, educational objectives and pedagogical strategies are often implemented in tandem within a transformative curriculum. The second factor clearly captured dimensions of assessment, particularly non-traditional and holistic approaches aligned with post-modern pedagogical values. Items addressing the use of both quantitative and qualitative assessment, the role of student participation, and the integration of portfolio and diary methods loaded strongly here. This factor also included items promoting differentiated and online assessment practices, indicating a coherent construct that values inclusivity, responsiveness, and adaptability in evaluation strategies. The consistency of this factor with the original PMCP-based assessment domain confirms the stability of this construct in empirical application.

The third factor primarily included items reflecting the content dimension of the curriculum, especially in relation to sociocultural inclusiveness and critical consciousness. This factor emphasized the need to remove supremacy and discrimination from textbook content and advocated for the inclusion of both majority and minority perspectives. Additionally, it reflected calls for textbooks to raise awareness of social challenges and to develop problem-solving and group cooperation skills. This indicates that critical content elements are perceived as a distinct component of curriculum transformation within the PMCP framework. The fourth factor aligned with humanistic educational goals, encompassing statements related to promoting full learner competence, personal growth, tolerance, and open-mindedness. Items in this factor highlighted the importance of designing curricula that foster peaceful human relationships, adapt to social differences, and encourage critical thinking as a central educational outcome. These themes resonate with the affective and developmental dimensions of post-modern education, emphasizing values-based, empathetic, and holistic goals.

The fifth factor captured elements of innovative and reflective pedagogy, reflecting how curriculum and instruction can evolve to address complexity, diversity, and critical engagement. Items within this factor addressed the need for critical thinking involvement in textbooks, varied and culturally responsive content, and the relevance of teacher roles in facilitating meaningful learning. This factor suggests an emergent structure that overlaps with both content and methods but focuses more specifically on adaptability and reflective engagement in instructional design. The inter-factor correlations ranged from  $r = .315$  to  $.745$ , suggesting moderate to strong relationships among the components. These findings confirm that while the extracted factors are empirically distinguishable, they are also meaningfully related. This supports the internal cohesion of the PMCP scale and the underlying theoretical assumption that educational goals, content, methods, and assessment practices are interdependent in the progressive curriculum models.

Table 9.

*Factor Loadings of Items on the Five Extracted Factors of the PMCP Questionnaire*

|        | Component |       |       |       |       | Uniqueness |
|--------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------|
|        | 1         | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     |            |
| item1  |           |       |       | 0.826 |       | 0.238      |
| item2  |           |       |       | 0.788 |       | 0.223      |
| item3  |           |       | 0.322 | 0.514 |       | 0.219      |
| item4  |           |       |       | 0.645 | 0.432 | 0.252      |
| item5  |           |       | 0.800 |       |       | 0.255      |
| item6  |           | 0.340 |       | 0.378 |       | 0.230      |
| item7  |           | 0.410 |       | 0.418 |       | 0.300      |
| item8  | 0.482     |       |       |       |       | 0.312      |
| item9  |           | 0.470 |       | 0.519 |       | 0.287      |
| item10 | 0.478     |       |       | 0.351 |       | 0.280      |
| item11 | 0.538     |       |       |       |       | 0.228      |
| item12 |           |       | 0.337 |       | 0.526 | 0.180      |
| item13 |           |       | 0.792 |       |       | 0.201      |
| item14 | 0.835     |       |       |       |       | 0.188      |
| item15 |           |       |       |       | 0.730 | 0.187      |
| item16 | 0.888     |       |       |       |       | 0.179      |
| item17 | 0.611     |       | 0.452 |       |       | 0.247      |
| item18 | 0.346     |       | 0.465 |       |       | 0.294      |
| item19 | 0.472     | 0.435 |       |       |       | 0.263      |
| item20 | 0.921     |       |       |       |       | 0.207      |
| item21 | 0.964     |       |       |       |       | 0.218      |
| item22 | 0.686     |       | 0.364 |       |       | 0.181      |
| item23 | 0.389     |       | 0.368 |       |       | 0.417      |
| item24 | 0.492     |       | 0.475 |       |       | 0.216      |
| item25 | 0.580     |       |       |       |       | 0.201      |
| item26 |           | 0.537 |       |       |       | 0.233      |
| item27 | 0.672     |       |       |       |       | 0.218      |
| item28 |           | 0.823 |       |       |       | 0.196      |
| item29 |           | 0.570 | 0.329 |       |       | 0.131      |
| item30 | 0.332     | 0.786 |       |       |       | 0.208      |
| item31 |           | 0.868 |       |       |       | 0.104      |
| item32 |           | 0.485 | 0.488 |       |       | 0.276      |
| item33 | 0.404     | 0.585 |       |       |       | 0.200      |
| item34 |           | 0.970 |       |       |       | 0.148      |
| item35 |           | 0.806 |       |       | 0.322 | 0.159      |

*Note:* All values represent factor loadings from the Principal Axis Factoring with Promax rotation method.

### Discussion

The present study sought to conceptualize a post-modernistic critical pedagogy-based (PMCP) curriculum model for Iranian high school English instruction and to develop and validate a corresponding measurement instrument assessing teachers' beliefs about this model. The findings offer important insights into the theoretical resonance, empirical feasibility, and contextual relevance of integrating critical and postmodern principles into centralized EFL curriculum development. In addressing the first aim of the study, the construction of the PMCP model revealed that Iranian EFL teachers identified with many of the transformative

educational values emphasized in critical pedagogy and postmodern curriculum theory. These included the fostering of learner agency, the validation of cultural plurality, the encouragement of dialogic learning, and the cultivation of ethical reflection. Such priorities align with longstanding critiques presented in the literature against technocratic and behavioristic curriculum models ([Freire, 1970](#); [Giroux, 1992](#); [Slattery, 2006](#)) and specifically respond to concerns raised about the Iranian EFL curriculum's narrow cultural scope and rigid pedagogical structure ([Aliakbari, 2004](#); [Atai & Mazlum, 2013](#); [Riazi, 2005](#)). By grounding the curriculum components in both international theoretical traditions and local teaching experiences, the study reinforces the argument, made in the Introduction, that effective curriculum reform must be both globally informed and contextually sensitive. The discussion here unfolds across three interrelated strands that collectively illuminate how Iranian EFL teachers conceptualize, validate, and potentially enact post-modernistic critical pedagogy in their professional contexts.

The empirical validation of the PMCP model further advances this point. The strong content validity, internal consistency, and coherent five-factor structure observed in the study support the view that teachers' beliefs about curriculum can meaningfully reflect postmodern and critical orientations, even within education systems characterized by centralized control and ideological standardization. As emphasized in the existing literature, critical language educators have argued that EFL instruction is inherently political and must interrogate whose knowledge, culture, and identities are privileged in curricular content ([Norton & Toohey, 2004](#); [Pennycook, 2001](#)). The teachers interviewed and surveyed in this study echoed these concerns, repeatedly highlighting the exclusion of minority voices, the lack of dialogical opportunities, and the dominance of textbook-centered instruction. Their perspectives substantiate earlier findings by [Rashidi and Safari \(2011\)](#) and [Safari and Sahragard \(2016\)](#), who documented Iranian teachers' frustrations with the constraints imposed by official curricula. By capturing these orientations systematically, the validated PMCP questionnaire addresses the methodological gap identified by [Borg \(2006\)](#), who stressed the need for empirical tools to measure teachers' beliefs in transformative educational contexts. This empirical correspondence between theoretical expectations and measured constructs demonstrates that teachers' beliefs, though subjective, can be systematically captured and analyzed through quantitative modeling when the instrument is conceptually grounded and psychometrically sound.

A particularly noteworthy finding was the emergence of a fifth latent factor in the exploratory factor analysis, which represented pedagogical integration across curriculum domains. This suggests that in teachers' conceptualizations, curriculum elements such as goals, content, methods, and assessment are perceived not as discrete categories but as dynamically interrelated practices. In other words, teachers viewed effective curriculum design as an ecosystem where instructional aims, materials, strategies, and evaluative procedures reinforce one another in a continuous feedback loop. This pattern of association signals teachers' recognition that meaningful learning requires coherence among what is taught (content), how it is taught (methods), why it is taught (goals), and how achievement is interpreted (assessment).

This insight resonates strongly with postmodern critiques of linear, segmented curriculum design ([Doll, 1993](#); [Slattery, 2006](#)), which advocate for an understanding of education as a relational, emergent, and context-dependent process. The presence of this integrative dimension underscores the importance of designing curriculum models that do not artificially separate ends from means but rather acknowledge the complex interplay between educational objectives and pedagogical enactments. Thus, the fifth factor may be interpreted as a manifestation of postmodern curriculum holism, representing teachers' belief that curriculum practice should emerge organically through reflective and dialogic interaction rather than predetermined sequences. Considering the studies emphasis on moving beyond technocratic paradigms, the identification of this integrated structure offers a theoretically consistent and empirically grounded elaboration of how postmodern curriculum principles might be operationalized in practice.

The second major theme relates to teachers' positioning within the structural and ideological constraints of the national education system. In this regard, the findings of this study extend critical insights into the Iranian EFL curriculum discussed in the literature review. Studies by [Atai and Mazlum \(2013\)](#) and [Ebrahimi and Sahragard \(2016\)](#) pointed to the exam-oriented nature of Iranian English instruction and its marginalization of critical thinking and cultural responsiveness. In this study, teachers' reflections on the inadequacies of current textbooks, assessments, and teaching practices provide contemporary empirical evidence that these critiques remain highly relevant. However, the participants' endorsement of principles such as cultural inclusivity, interdisciplinary integration, reflective praxis, and ethical decision-making indicates a readiness among practitioners to envision alternative curricular options. While these findings suggest a growing receptiveness to post-modernistic critical pedagogy, it is also clear that translating such orientations into enacted practices would require addressing systemic constraints beyond individual teachers' beliefs. As such, the study offers a situated contribution to ongoing scholarly efforts to bridge the gap between critical curriculum theory and context-sensitive reform initiatives.

The third and final theme centers on the broader implications of these findings for curriculum reform, teacher education, and future inquiry. More specifically, the findings of this study offer several implications for curriculum development, teacher education, and future research in the Iranian EFL context. The validation of the PMCP curriculum model and measurement instrument suggests that many Iranian EFL teachers are attuned to the principles of learner agency, cultural pluralism, dialogic engagement, and ethical reflection, despite operating within a centralized educational system traditionally oriented toward standardization and prescriptive content. This highlights the potential for curriculum reform initiatives to align more closely with teachers' emerging professional beliefs, provided that institutional frameworks offer the necessary flexibility and support. The identification of a fifth integrative factor, wherein goals, content, methods, and assessment are perceived as dynamically interconnected, further implies that reform efforts should avoid overly compartmentalized approaches and instead embrace

holistic models of curriculum design. In teacher education programs, the results underscore the importance of systematically integrating postmodern and critical pedagogy principles into professional development curricula, as many teachers already demonstrate conceptual openness to these ideas. However, the data also suggest that fostering practical strategies for translating critical and postmodern values into classroom practices remains a necessary next step. In terms of research implications, the development of a validated instrument provides a means for further empirical exploration of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their instructional practices in centralized contexts. Future studies could employ the PMCP questionnaire longitudinally to examine how teachers' beliefs evolve in response to curricular or policy changes. Additionally, while this study focused on high school EFL teachers, the underlying framework could be cautiously adapted for investigating curriculum beliefs in other subject areas or educational levels within Iran, where similar tensions between standardization and critical engagement may exist. Collectively, these implications emphasize that while systemic constraints remain significant, teachers' professional orientations offer a meaningful entry point for pursuing contextually grounded and theoretically informed curriculum innovation. Overall, the synthesis of these three themes demonstrates that while systemic constraints remain powerful, Iranian EFL teachers' emerging professional orientations can serve as an entry point for contextually grounded and theoretically coherent curriculum innovation that embodies the principles of post-modernistic critical pedagogy.

### **Conclusion**

This study set out to conceptualize a post-modernistic critical pedagogy-based (PMCP) curriculum model for Iranian high school English instruction and to develop and validate a scale for measuring EFL teachers' beliefs about such a model. Drawing on theoretical traditions in critical pedagogy and postmodern curriculum theory, and informed by empirical insights from in-service teachers, the study produced a curriculum framework that foregrounds learner agency, cultural responsiveness, dialogic engagement, and ethical reflection. The validated measurement instrument demonstrated strong internal consistency and a coherent factor structure, indicating that teachers' conceptualizations of curriculum reform reflect an integrative view of goals, content, methods, and assessment. In doing so, the study addresses a gap in both the Iranian EFL literature and broader critical curriculum scholarship, offering a modest empirical contribution to the operationalization of transformative educational principles in centralized systems. By grounding the model development in both international theory and local practice, the study underscores the importance of context-sensitive approaches to curriculum innovation and highlights teachers' potential role as agents of educational change within structurally constrained environments.

While the findings of this study provide a foundational step toward integrating post-modernistic critical pedagogy principles into EFL curriculum discourse in Iran, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study focused on teachers' reported beliefs rather than

observed classroom practices, meaning that inferences about actual pedagogical enactment must be made cautiously. Additionally, the participant sample, was limited to high school EFL teachers, which constrains the generalizability of findings across other subject areas or educational levels. Future research could build on this study by investigating the extent to which teachers' beliefs about PMCP principles translate into instructional decisions and classroom interactions, using observational or mixed-methods designs. Longitudinal studies could also explore how exposure to professional development programs centered on critical pedagogy and postmodern curriculum ideas influences teachers' evolving orientations over time. Furthermore, adapting and validating the PMCP instrument for use in different educational contexts within Iran, or cautiously in similar centralized systems, could provide deeper insights into the relationship between systemic structures, teacher agency, and curriculum reform possibilities. Finally, it should be acknowledged that employing a mixed-methods design, although beneficial for triangulating theoretical and empirical insights, may not fully capture the interpretive depth of teachers' belief systems. Alternative qualitative or ethnographic approaches could therefore complement the present findings by offering richer accounts of how such beliefs are enacted and negotiated in practice.

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**Appendix A**

**Post-mosernistic Critical pedagogy-based (PMCT-based) Questionnaire**

Five likert scale: 5 is “I completely agree”, 4 is “I agree”, 3 means “I have no idea”, 2 is “I disagree”, and 1 means “I completely disagree”.

| Factors & sub-factors     |    | Statements   | CA | A | NI | D | CD |
|---------------------------|----|--|----|---|----|---|----|
| <b>PMCT-based goals</b>   | 1  | Curriculum for English teaching should create opportunities for full competence.       |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 2  | Curriculum should consider the personal growth in individuals.                         |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 3  | More opportunity should be given to group cooperation.                                 |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 4  | Critical thinking is the missing factor in the textbooks.                              |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 5  | It is time to remove supremacy in the contents.  |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 6  | It is necessary to remove discrimination in the content of English textbooks.          |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 7  | Curriculum should be adapted with social differences.                                  |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 8  | Curriculum should improve a peaceful relationship in human life.                       |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 9  | It seems necessary to create open-mindedness in English textbooks.                     |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 10 | Curriculum should encourage students to be more tolerant.                              |    |   |    |   |    |
| <b>PMCT-based content</b> | 11 | The content of textbooks needs to be renewed.  |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 12 | The contents should include varieties considering both majorities and minorities.      |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 13 | The contents should be free from any supremacy in social concepts.                     |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 14 | Improving creativity should be considered in the textbooks.                            |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 15 | Textbooks should provide more involvement in critical thinking.                        |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 16 | The textbook contents should prepare students for life skills.                         |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 17 | More opportunity is needed to promote negotiation among students.                      |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 18 | English textbooks should give awareness about social challenges.                       |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 19 | It is necessary to promote problem-solving skills in the textbooks.                    |    |   |    |   |    |
| <b>PMCT-based methods</b> | 20 | Practical strategies should be used in classroom teaching.                             |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 21 | Cooperative tasks are needed to be included.   |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 22 | Teaching process should focus more on group discussions.                               |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 23 | Mixed teaching methods are required in instruction.                                    |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 24 | Teachers’ roles should be defined clearly.   |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 25 | Encouraging students is important to help them take responsibility for their learning. |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 26 | Teaching methods should be applicable out of textbooks.                                |    |   |    |   |    |
|                           | 27 | Teaching strategies should consider both global and local issues.                      |    |   |    |   |    |

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| Factors & sub-factors        |    | Statements  | CA | A | NI | D | CD |
|------------------------------|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|
| <b>PMCT-based assessment</b> | 28 | Quantitative assessment is important in English classrooms.                               |    |   |    |   |    |
|                              | 29 | Qualitative assessment is necessary in English classrooms.                                |    |   |    |   |    |
|                              | 30 | Both formative (Dynamic) and summative assessments should be included in English classes. |    |   |    |   |    |
|                              | 31 | The extent to which students participate should be considered.                            |    |   |    |   |    |
|                              | 32 | Due to e-learning, online assessment is necessary to be blended.                          |    |   |    |   |    |
|                              | 33 | Due to mixed-ability learners, differentiation assessment should be used.                 |    |   |    |   |    |
|                              | 34 | Portfolio & diary in assessment are helpful in English classes.                           |    |   |    |   |    |
|                              | 35 | Language learners should be assessed based on language skills.                            |    |   |    |   |    |