

## Students' perceptions of teachers' beliefs and their effects on students' achievement

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### Abstract

Teachers' beliefs are a personal construct that can provide understandings, perceptions, and evaluation of teachers' practices. The purpose of this research was to find out the students' perceptions toward teachers' beliefs and their effect on students' achievement in English as a general subject at Universitas Negeri Padang. This research was ex-post facto research. The students of English as a general subject in 2018/2019 academic year were the population of this study. The sample was chosen by using a random sampling technique in which there were 150 students chosen as the subjects of this research. The data were taken by using a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed by using SPSS Statistics 18 Software. The result showed that there were no significant effects of teachers' beliefs on students' achievement. H<sub>0</sub> was accepted because the t-value was lower than the t-table. The value of the t-value was 1.008, while the t-table was 6.313.

**Keywords:** Students' perception, teachers' beliefs, achievement

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## Introduction

Teachers' beliefs affected the teaching and learning process in the classroom (Larenas, Hernandez, & Navarrete, 2015; Munoz & Escobar, 2012; Pajares, 1992). (I. Hidayat, 2007) states that teachers' beliefs determined the completeness of curriculum implementation and learning in the classroom. Besides, (Zheng, 2009) states that teachers' beliefs are a mental attitude that must be owned by the teachers in teaching material by applying appropriate methods, appropriate media, and how teaching material was meaningful for students. These beliefs cover a broad spectrum of motivational constructs. Precisely, (Hardré & Sullivan, 2008) and (Kaplan & Maehr, 2007) argues that (a) teachers' beliefs regarding both the goals the students have (mastery or performance) and their interest and perceived value of the material; (b) teacher beliefs regarding the nature of student motivation as intrinsic or extrinsic and whether they believe the ability to be successful is linked to motivational efforts.

The excellence achievement in learning was an ambition for all educational communities. Students, given the appropriate time and support, can achieve academic success (Georgiou & Tourva, 2012). It was up to their teachers to ensure that, regardless of individual circumstances, they all receive the support they require to achieve the highest standards possible. The achievement was what learners do with what they learn; it is the outward and visible sign of progress. It might take the form of passing an examination, but it was observable in the actions, products, and or behavior of learners wherever active learning takes place. An assessment aims to measure students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Sari, 2018).

Based on the observation on teaching English as a general subject at Universitas Negeri Padang, it was found that most of the lecturers used the lecture method in delivering teaching material in the classroom. The focus of learning is on the teacher-centered because the lecturers were more active in explaining the material, and the students pay attention and take notes about the material that has been explained. In the teaching and learning process, the recitation method was used to motivate the students to be more active —

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for example, the practice of answering questions, writing projects, translating stories, etc. In speaking skills, the students practiced the skill in a short time. The lecturers also gave more assignments in the form of individual projects after learning was completed both oral and written forms.

The use of teaching strategies in English classes was assumed to be based on teachers' beliefs about how to teach English as a foreign language at the university level. The concept of teachers' beliefs in English as a general subject at Universitas Negeri Padang was focused on applying strategies in teaching language skills (speaking, reading, listening, and writing) and understanding grammar and vocabulary. Teachers' beliefs will be implemented in the form of teaching strategies that will affect students' achievement. It is also assumed that students will perceive their teachers' beliefs based on the teaching strategies the teachers used in class. Therefore, students' perceptions of teachers' beliefs will influence students' achievement of learning. The following will be discussed both the concept of perception, teachers' beliefs, and students' achievement.

Perceptions are defined differently by some experts. According to (Marliani, 2010), perception is a perspective toward a particular thing or expressing an understanding of the result overview. It means that perception is related to external factors, which are responses by five senses, memory, and soul. Perception is the work of the human mindset every day. Perception can be said as the core of communication, while interpretation was the core of perception, which identical to decoding in the communication process. The process of perception consists of three stages: selection, organization, and interpretation (Bruno, 2002; Parameswaran & Beena, 2006). We select information, to which we attend through our sense organs (sight, sound, smells, taste, and touch). Students will get a specific perception of what they experience in classroom interaction in the teaching and learning process.

Teachers' beliefs are personal constructs that can provide understanding, assessment, and evaluation of teacher practices (Kuzborska, 2011; Utami, 2016). All teachers hold beliefs about their work, their students, their subject matter, and their roles and responsibilities. Popular beliefs about language learning can affect all aspects of the language teaching profession. Thus, beliefs about language learning and teaching that they apply when they plan their instruction; choose the teaching strategy, the media, the material and the type of resources; interact and communicate with their students in the class.

According to (Pajares, 1992), teachers' beliefs had an influence that is greater than the teacher's knowledge of how they plan to learn, on the types of decisions they make, and on the practices in their classrooms. (Horwitz, 1988) stated that some preconceived beliefs are likely to restrict learners in the range of strategies they use. For example, some language learners believe that they should not say anything in the foreign language until they can say it correctly, and some believe that if beginning learners are permitted to make errors at the early stages of language learning, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later.

Teacher's beliefs were viewed as knowledge of a sort. All human perception was influenced by the totality of this generic knowledge structure-schemata, constructs, information, beliefs—but the structure itself was an unreliable guide to the nature of reality because beliefs influence how individuals characterize phenomena, make sense of the world, and estimate co-variation. Beliefs form part of the process of understanding how teachers shape their work, which was significant to the comprehending of their teaching methods and their decisions in the classroom (Kandilla, Pebriyani, Meliana, & Arbiansyah, 2018).

Regarding several researchers' statements above, we can say that teachers' beliefs correlate with the teaching-learning process. For this research, the researcher took some indicators related to the beliefs of teachers in the teaching-learning process. The indicators of beliefs are teaching strategy (Cordova, 2018; Doğruer, Meneviş, & Eyyam, 2010), teaching material (Floris, 2013), classroom management (Xu, 2012), teachers' role (Harmer, 2007), and assessment (Wafa, 2016).

Achievement is the result of learning that is usually taken at the end of one period of teaching. Students' achievement is the result of an evaluation of students' learning progress from various tasks or assessments given to the students (Ren & Bai, 2016; Zaim, Amri, & Asri, 2018; Zaim & Refnaldi, 2016). Achievement is a thing done successfully, especially with efforts and skills (Hornby, 1995). Achievement means a thing done successfully, and the action or process of achieving. It can be concluded that achievement is the ability of a person to express her knowledge, ideas, attitude, and skills to be better than before through the process of learning.

This research was conducted to answer two research questions: (1) How do students' perceptions about teachers' beliefs in teaching English as a general subject at Universitas Negeri Padang? (2) Is there any significant effect of students' perceptions toward teachers' beliefs on students' achievement in English as a general subject at Universitas Negeri Padang?

## Method

This research design was an ex-post-facto. It was *Non-experimental* designs that were used to investigate causal relationships without the treatments. This research was to find out teacher's beliefs and their effect on students' achievement in English as a general subject at Universitas Negeri Padang. The population of this research was students who take English as a general subject at Universitas Negeri Padang. In this study, researchers used the Simple Random Sampling method by giving equal opportunities to all elements to be selected as samples (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2011). The sample of this research was chosen using simple random sampling. The number of students who have been taken English as a general subject at Universitas Negeri Padang was 150 students and 12 lecturers from different classes.

The data were collected using a questionnaire of teachers' beliefs in teaching English as a general subject at Universitas Negeri Padang distributed to students who took English as a general subject. The researchers used a Likert scale in the questionnaire. Likert Scale, according to (Sugiyono, 2017) was the scale used to measure attitude, opinion, and perception of someone or group toward the social phenomenon. The researcher prepared the items of the questionnaire based on the indicators of teachers' beliefs. The indicators were teaching strategy, teaching material, teachers' role, classroom management, and assessment. Then, the questionnaire was validated by using expert validation. The achievements' scores of the students on English as a general subject were taken from teachers who taught this subject. The data were analyzed by using statistical analysis to find out the normality testing, and the regression testing. All of the data were analyzed using SPSS Statistics 18.0 Software.

## Results and Discussion

The university teachers had beliefs about what they considered appropriate for carrying out the learning process in the classroom. Based on the list of beliefs obtained from the teachers, the researchers asked the students to perceive their teachers' beliefs. The result of data analysis can be explained in the following.

### Teachers' Perception of Teachers' Beliefs

There are five indicators of teachers' beliefs in teaching English as a general subject: (1) teaching strategy, (2) teaching materials, (3) classroom management, (4) teacher role, and (5) assessment. The table below showed the students' perception of all beliefs of the lecturers that they think is appropriate to use along the teaching-learning process.

**Table 1.** Students' perception of teachers' beliefs

No	Indicators	Average Score	Category
1	Teaching Strategy	3.2	Medium
2	Teaching Material	3.2	Medium
3	Classroom Management	3.6	High
4	Teacher's Role	3.9	High
5	Assessment	3.3	Medium
	<b>Total</b>	17.2	
	<b>Average</b>	3.4	Medium

### Notes:

VL (Very Low) = 1.00 -1.50; L (Low) = 1.51 – 2.50; M (Mid) = 2.51 – 3.50; (High) = 3.51 – 4.50; VH (Very High) = 4.51 – 5.0; H

The tables above show that the students' perceptions toward teachers' beliefs had a medium category, with the average score is 3.4, in the range of 1-5. In detail, the medium category is in the indicators of teaching strategy, teaching materials, and assessment. However, in the indicators of classroom management and teacher's role, the average score is quite high, 3.6 and 3.9, with the category of Medium. It means that the students perceived the teachers' beliefs in a reasonable level.

### Students' Achievement

Learning outcomes were obtained from the scores of learning evaluation in English as a general subject given by each lecturer who taught English as General Subject classes. The achievement score can be seen in the following table.

**Table 2.** The mean score of students' achievement in learning English as a general subject

No	Category	Students' Achievement			
		Total Scores	Highest Score	Lowest Score	Mean Score
1.	High Achievers (n=79)	6676,75	95,4	80	84,5
2.	Low Achievers (n=71)	5304,17	79,9	39	71,9
3	All Students (n=150)	11980,92	95,4	39	79,9

In general, student learning outcomes were quite good for English as a general subject. The result of students' achievement explained that students who had high achievement had the high score on perception in teachers' beliefs. On the other hand, students who had low achievement had a low score in the perception of teachers' beliefs.

### Hypothesis Testing

#### *Test requirements analysis*

In testing the significant effect of teachers' beliefs on students' achievement, the researcher used normality testing in making normality data. The normality testing based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it was found that the z value of the three variables was above the significance value of 0.05, it was concluded that the data distribution is stated to meet the assumption of normality.

Therefore, the result from the ANOVA table below was used by the researcher to see the linearity of one another variable. From the results of the above output obtained, Sig. Y of  $0.857 > 0.05$ , then the relationship between the variable Y (learning achievement) and X (Teachers' Beliefs) could be said to be linear from the results which obtaining Sig. Y2 of  $1,664 > 0.05$ , then the relationship between variable Y (achievement of defense) with X (Teachers' Beliefs) could be said to be linear.

The relationship between what was believed by the teachers and their teaching practices produced actions that were suitable for the teachers to do and the students' understanding of the learning process. This was important to test whether the teachers are implementing what they believed in teaching in the classroom or not.

#### *Hypothesis testing*

In the second hypothesis, the researcher found that  $H_0$  was accepted because the t-count was lower than the t-table. The value of the t-count was 1.008, while the t-table was 1.976. It meant that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was accepted, and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was rejected. In short, teachers' beliefs did not have a significant effect on students' achievement in learning English as a general subject.

### Students Perceptions of Teachers' Beliefs in English as a General Subject

Students' perception toward teacher belief was proved to be a medium score from the aspect of five indicators of teachers' beliefs in the teaching-learning process in English as a general subject. It meant that what the lecturers' beliefs can be perceived good by the students. Lecturers who taught English as a general subject applied the indicators of teacher beliefs in the teaching-learning process, such as teaching strategy, teaching material, teachers' role, classroom management, and assessment. Among the five indicators, classroom management and teachers' role had the high score. It meant that students cared about the way how the teachers manage the class and the role of teachers in managing classroom activities. This finding is in line with the research done by (M. Hidayat, 2017) that revealed that there is a relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices related to classroom management. In addition, (Larenas, et al., 2015) also found that teachers should have flexibility in managing classroom activity. The roles of teachers are to decide the activity suitable for students' capacity to learn.

The teacher who did not believe in his/her professionalism and the ability to organize the learning process efficiently did not expect great results from the students and are often unable to solve discipline problems at the lesson. Teacher's beliefs are an essential factor for both the promotion of learning

motivation and achievement (Abdi & Asadi, 2015; Hardré et al., 2006). The teacher's beliefs in himself/herself affect both the teachers' openness towards bringing the innovation into the lesson and successful classroom management strategies as well (Hoy, 2000). It makes teachers' beliefs become one of the relevant issues in enhancing the teaching-learning process.

### **The effect of students' perception toward teachers' beliefs on students' achievement in English as a general subject**

The research result showed that there was no significant effect on students' perceptions of teachers' beliefs toward students' achievement. The five indicators of teachers' beliefs are extensive so that the result cannot be explicitly seen. For example, the particular type of assessment will have a good impact on individual students but not for other students since every student has a specific learning style and learning strategy. This finding is in line with (Tavani & Losh, 2003), who found that several psychological variables related to academic performance should be considered to measure academic performances. In addition, (Bracken, 2007) stated that students' achievements as the target of learning should be achieved as the result of learning activities inside and outside of the classroom. The indicators of teachers' beliefs did not include beliefs about learning activities inside and outside the classroom.

(El-Omari, 2016) found that students' achievement in English may be affected not only by aptitude to learn English, but also by extracurricular factors, such as practicing the language in communication and reading printed materials written in English. Therefore, improving the environment of learning English can raise the students' achievement. In addition, (Mosha, 2014) stated that the infrequent use of English at school and home, and poor conducive teaching and learning environment in the classroom contributed to having low students' achievement in English. Related to teachers' performance, (Olufemi, Adediran, & Oyediran, 2018) found that lecturers' effectiveness in communication, subject mastery, and class management is considered to be the influential factor that affected students' achievement in English.

## **Conclusion**

Students' perception toward teachers' beliefs was proved with a medium score from the aspect of teachers' beliefs used in the teaching-learning process in English as a general subject. It meant that lecturers who taught in English as a general subject was applied almost the indicators of teachers' beliefs in the teaching-learning process, such as teaching strategy, teaching material, teachers' role, classroom management, and assessment. However, the statistical analysis indicated that there is no significant effect of students' perception of teachers' beliefs toward students' achievement of English as general English in five indicators of teachers' beliefs.

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