

INTERVENTIONIST, NON-INTERVENTIONIST, OR INTERACTIONIST: INVESTIGATING TEACHER BELIEFS AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN INDONESIAN EFL CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT Teachers' beliefs about classroom management and pedagogical practices can generally be categorized into interventionist, non-interventionist, or interactionist approaches, which describe how teachers design learning environments, manage student behavior, and implement instructional strategies. This study investigates the relationship between teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practices in Indonesian EFL Senior High Schools, focusing on their alignment and the factors shaping their decisions. This qualitative, multiple-case study explored the perspectives of two certified English teachers with differing levels of congruency between their stated beliefs and observed practices. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, analyzed thematically, and validated through peer reviews, expert validation, and member checking to ensure accuracy and reliability. Findings revealed five key factors influencing teachers' pedagogical decisions: students' academic competence, psychological well-being, future objectives, learning competence, and school-provided learning facilities. Results indicate that Teacher A initially held an interventionist belief but exhibited an interactionist teaching style due to classroom challenges that reshaped her perceptions. Conversely, Teacher B maintained a strong interventionist approach, making only minor adjustments based on student feedback and professional development experiences. Despite their differing levels of congruency, both teachers expressed satisfaction with their teaching practices. This study concludes that teacher effectiveness in Indonesian EFL classrooms depends more on adaptability and student needs than strict alignment between beliefs and practices. These findings contribute to the discourse on teacher belief systems, pedagogical adaptability, and classroom management strategies in EFL contexts, highlighting the dynamic nature of teachers' professional growth and instructional decision-making.

Keywords: alignment, classroom management, EFL, pedagogical practices, teacher beliefs

INTRODUCTION

The curriculum implemented in Indonesia's education system has changed throughout the years. One of its key objectives was to transition classroom instruction from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach, emphasizing student autonomy and active engagement in the learning process (Hartoyo et al., 2023). However, despite the national rollout of the current curriculum and ongoing policy reinforcements, full adoption has been inconsistent, with many teachers continuing to rely on older, traditional methods. This gap between curriculum reforms and classroom practices suggests that factors beyond policy, particularly teachers' beliefs, play a critical role in shaping their instructional decisions and behaviors (Woodcock & Reupert, 2023).

The relationship between teacher beliefs and classroom practices has long been recognized as complex and reciprocal. Teachers' pedagogical decisions are often influenced by their underlying beliefs, yet these beliefs can be reshaped through direct teaching experiences (Sundqvist et al., 2025). Classroom management, for example, requires teachers to balance various influences, including their beliefs about student behavior, instructional strategies, and environmental factors. As new teachers transition from their pre-service training into the classroom, they face significant challenges in aligning their beliefs with practical classroom needs (Asare & Amo, 2023). First-year teachers frequently use strategies such as rewards and preventative measures to manage classrooms, although their confidence and perceptions of strategy effectiveness vary (Woodcock & Reupert, 2023).

Research has consistently shown that teachers' pedagogical beliefs influence their classroom management strategies and overall teaching practices (Soleimani & Rahimi, 2021). Teachers' beliefs are also closely tied to their knowledge base, including pedagogical content

knowledge (PCK) and mathematical knowledge for teaching (MKT). Teachers with stronger subject-specific knowledge were more able to act in accordance with their pedagogical beliefs, handling students' errors more effectively and maintaining alignment with reform-based practices (Larsson et al., 2024). The findings highlight the importance of teacher development, particularly the enhancement of knowledge base and self-efficacy as teachers grow in their careers. This is especially important for EFL teachers, whose instructional choices must be informed by both their beliefs and their professional knowledge (Hirpa et al., 2024).

Moreover, teachers' beliefs about classroom management often align with broader educational philosophies, which can be categorized into interventionist, non-interventionist, and interactionist orientations (Tannenbaum et al., 2024; Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980). Non-interventionist teachers assume that learners have an innate drive to engage in the learning process, offering them more freedom to express themselves. Interventionist teachers, conversely, believe that learners' behaviors and outcomes are primarily shaped by the environment, prompting them to exert more control over classroom activities. Interactionist teachers fall between the two extremes, acknowledging that students influence their surroundings, while the learning environment can also shape students' behaviors and experiences (Larsson et al., 2024; Woodcock & Reupert, 2023). These varying beliefs significantly influence classroom management strategies and the way teachers handle student behavior and instructional delivery. For example, teachers' beliefs about written corrective feedback (WCF) often do not align with their actual practices, with environmental factors and student needs playing a critical role in shaping their responses (Soleimani & Rahimi, 2021). Similarly, teachers' beliefs about collaborative writing and its impact on students' language learning can influence their approach to classroom management and student engagement (Ruth, 2024).

The interplay between teachers' beliefs, classroom management, and pedagogical practices is an essential area of study, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching in Indonesia. This study aims to investigate the factors that influence teachers' decisions and their alignment with classroom practices in Indonesian EFL senior high schools. The following research question guides the study: "What are the factors that influence teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practices in the EFL classroom?". By examining how teachers' beliefs shape classroom management strategies and pedagogical practices, this study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on teacher professional development, classroom management strategies, and the dynamic nature of teacher beliefs in evolving educational contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section synthesizes the theoretical underpinnings and existing research relevant to the relationship between teacher beliefs, classroom management, and pedagogical practices in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. It offers an overview of previous studies in this domain, providing insight into how teachers' pedagogical beliefs shape their classroom behavior and instructional strategies. Additionally, the review identifies gaps in existing research and demonstrates how the present study contributes to advancing the understanding of these relationships in Indonesian EFL settings.

Teacher Beliefs and Pedagogical Practices

Teacher beliefs are central to understanding instructional behavior and classroom management strategies (Almunawaroh et al., 2024). They are shaped by personal experiences, professional development, cultural contexts, and the teachers' academic training (Woodcock & Reupert, 2023). Teacher beliefs are complex and multifaceted, often encompassing assumptions about learning, students, and the purpose of education (Larsson et al., 2024). These beliefs, in turn, influence how teachers approach classroom management and

pedagogical practices. Several studies have highlighted the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between teacher beliefs and classroom actions (Soleimani & Rahimi, 2021). While teachers' stated beliefs often inform their practices, the latter can also reshape or challenge the beliefs they initially held (Moonthiya, 2024; Sundqvist et al., 2025). This is consistent with findings in various EFL contexts, where teachers adapt their instructional approaches based on classroom realities, including student behavior, institutional policies, and available resources (Hirpa et al., 2024).

In the context of classroom management, teachers' beliefs about student behavior and instructional methods play a pivotal role (Soleimani & Rahimi, 2021). EFL teachers' beliefs about written corrective feedback (WCF) did not always align with their actual classroom practices, suggesting that environmental and contextual factors influence their pedagogical decisions (Soleimani & Rahimi, 2021). Similarly, teachers with strong subject-specific knowledge were more capable of acting in alignment with their pedagogical beliefs, whereas teachers with lower levels of knowledge faced constraints in applying their beliefs consistently (Larsson et al., 2024). This underscores the importance of aligning pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) with teachers' beliefs to ensure effective teaching practices (Almunawaroh et al., 2024).

Classroom Management Strategies

Classroom management plays a vital role in effective EFL teaching, as it helps teachers create a positive learning environment while addressing diverse student needs. Research shows that teachers often struggle with classroom management due to factors like students' academic competence, psychological needs, and engagement (Hirpa et al., 2024). Teachers' ability to adapt their strategies to these dynamics is crucial for aligning their beliefs with effective classroom practices.

Teachers' beliefs about language instruction, including the role of students' language repertoires, also impact classroom management. Those who adopt student-centered approaches may face challenges in balancing these beliefs with a standardized curriculum (Paulsrud et al., 2023). Moreover, classroom engagement, influenced by students' emotional states, plays a significant role in classroom management. Positive emotions increase engagement and improve teaching effectiveness, while negative emotions can hinder these outcomes (Hu et al., 2024). Reflective practice and ongoing professional development are essential for teachers to evaluate and adjust their strategies to enhance classroom management (Gudeta, 2022).

Professional Development and Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to effectively teach and manage a classroom, plays a key role in the alignment between teachers' beliefs and practices. Teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to adjust their teaching methods to meet diverse student needs, even when their practices do not fully match their beliefs (Ahmad & Shah, 2022). Professional development (PD) programs that promote reflective practice and teacher agency enhance self-efficacy, empowering teachers to adapt their strategies and improve their effectiveness (Gudeta, 2022). Such programs help teachers evaluate their practices and make informed adjustments, leading to better alignment between their beliefs and classroom behaviors (Al-Maamari, 2021).

Ongoing PD is crucial in strengthening teachers' confidence and adaptability, allowing them to refine their teaching practices over time. By fostering self-efficacy through PD, teachers are better equipped to align their beliefs with effective teaching practices, resulting in improved instructional outcomes (Barahona et al., 2024).

Gaps in Existing Research and Contribution of the Current Study

While much has been written on the connection between teacher beliefs and classroom management in various educational contexts, there remains a need for more research that explicitly examines these relationships in Indonesian EFL settings. The existing body of

research predominantly focuses on Western or other non-EFL contexts (Larsson et al., 2024; Woodcock & Reupert, 2023), with fewer studies investigating the specific challenges faced by Indonesian EFL teachers in aligning their beliefs with their classroom practices (Moonthiya, 2024). This study contributes to filling this gap by examining the alignment between Indonesian EFL teachers' beliefs and their classroom management strategies, offering new insights into how cultural and contextual factors shape pedagogical decision-making in EFL classrooms (Moonthiya, 2024).

By analyzing the factors that influence teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practices in Indonesian high schools, this study offers valuable contributions to the ongoing discourse on teacher beliefs, classroom management strategies, and pedagogical adaptability (Soleimani & Rahimi, 2021). It expands the understanding of how teachers navigate conflicting demands, from policy mandates to student needs, and the implications for teacher training and development (Hartoyo et al., 2023).

RESEARCH METHODS

Study Design

This qualitative case study explores the relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom management practices in Indonesian EFL senior high schools. Focusing on two English teachers, it provides an in-depth examination of how their pedagogical beliefs align or conflict with their teaching behaviors and identifies the factors influencing their classroom decision-making. This approach allows for a detailed understanding of the contextual and individual factors shaping pedagogical practices in real-world settings (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Participants

The study involved two certified English teachers from Indonesian senior high schools, selected based on varying levels of congruency between their stated pedagogical beliefs and actual classroom practices. The alignment was assessed through a self-assessment questionnaire and classroom observations. Teacher A exhibited moderate alignment, while Teacher B demonstrated a more consistent approach. Both teachers had at least ten years of teaching experience, held certification from the Indonesian Ministry of Education, and were actively engaged in teaching EFL. Teacher A had recently participated in professional development focused on student-centered learning, whereas Teacher B adhered to a traditional, teacher-centered approach. The demography of the participants can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Demography of the Subjects

Name (alias)	Gender	Level of Education	Years of teaching	Tendency	
				Belief	Practice
1. Teacher A	F	Bachelor degree	16	Interventionist	Interactionist
2. Teacher B	F	Bachelor degree	13	Interventionist	Interventionist

Data Collection and Instruments

The primary instrument for data collection in this study was semi-structured interviews, designed to further investigate the factors influencing the alignment (or misalignment) between teachers' stated beliefs and their classroom practices. The interview protocol was constructed to gain clarification and deeper insights from the data collected through the self-assessment questionnaire and classroom observations. The interviews aimed to explore the underlying factors affecting the teachers' pedagogical decision-making, including the influences on their beliefs, teaching strategies, and classroom management practices. This flexible approach allowed for a detailed understanding of the teachers' perspectives and the dynamic nature of their beliefs and practices in real classroom settings.

Data Analysis

The data collected through the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method was chosen to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within the data. Thematic analysis allows for a detailed examination of the qualitative data to understand how the teachers' beliefs and practices align, or fail to align, and to explore the factors influencing their pedagogical decisions. The analysis process involved several key steps. First, the interview transcripts were thoroughly read and re-read to familiarize the researcher with the data. Initial codes were then generated to identify significant pieces of information related to the research question. These codes were grouped into broader themes that captured recurring patterns in teachers' beliefs, classroom management strategies, and decision-making processes. The themes were continuously refined through an iterative process to ensure that they accurately represented the data. To enhance the validity of the findings, peer review and member checking were used to verify the analysis and ensure it accurately represented the teachers' perspectives.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The analysis of the interviews revealed that the first participant, Teacher A, exhibited an interventionist belief but demonstrated an interactionist approach in practice. Teacher B, on the other hand, maintained both interventionist beliefs and practices. Initially, both teachers attempted to implement their beliefs into the classroom environment, as expected when teachers enter a new setting and strive to align their actions with their beliefs. In Teacher A's case, her interventionist beliefs did not resonate with many of her students, leading to a shift in her approach over time. This finding aligns with previous studies, which suggest that teachers' perceptions of their students and classroom dynamics evolve, prompting them to reshape their beliefs (Woodcock & Reupert, 2023). In contrast, Teacher B successfully maintained her interventionist beliefs, making minor adjustments over time based on student feedback and professional development experiences. This supports prior research indicating that teachers' pedagogical practices adapt as they receive feedback, both from formal training programs and from student interactions (Asare & Amo, 2023).

The Five Identified Influencing Factors

Five key factors emerged as influencing teachers' beliefs and practices: students' academic competence, students' psychology, students' future objectives, students' learning competence, and the learning facilities available at the school. Table 2 summarizes the main findings from the interviews.

The most significant factor identified was students' academic competence. Both teachers adjusted their beliefs to accommodate the academic needs of their students. Teacher A would alter her strategy if students struggled, using peer-teaching or individual approaches to better engage them. Teacher B also focused on identifying students in need of extra support and would either explain the material herself or have peers assist. Both teachers prioritized ensuring that students understood the material, particularly because academic competence plays a crucial role in language learning (Soleimani & Rahimi, 2021).

Table 2. The interview summary

Topic	Teacher A	Teacher B
Basis for teaching belief	English is fun	English for academic objectives
Factors that influence teaching practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students' academic competenceStudents' psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students' academic competenceStudents' future objectivesStudents' learning competenceLearning facilities
Satisfaction with teaching	Satisfied	Satisfied

The second factor is students' psychological development. Teacher A noticed that many students struggled with shyness and a lack of engagement, which affected their motivation. To address this, she used peer-teaching and occasionally allowed students to engage in brief conversations to refresh their focus. Students' attention spans fluctuate, and teachers must adapt their methods to maintain engagement (Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980). However, directing students' social interactions towards productive content-related discussions could further enhance motivation and focus.

The third factor is the influence of students' future goals. Teacher B aligned her practices with the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of her students, who were primarily focused on post-graduation employment. By designing lesson activities that were directly linked to students' career goals, Teacher B utilized principles from Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to motivate students by fulfilling their needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. This approach demonstrates the importance of tailoring lessons to students' personal goals to maintain engagement and motivation (Asare & Amo, 2023).

The fourth factor was the students' learning competence. Teacher B faced challenges when shifting to a student-centered approach, as many students were accustomed to the teacher-centered methods of the previous curriculum. She had to adapt her teaching practices to foster students' independence and collaboration, which aligned with research on the importance of matching teaching strategies to students' learning preferences (Tannenbaum et al., 2024). This also highlights the challenges teachers face when attempting to shift pedagogical approaches in response to evolving curricula (Larsson et al., 2024).

The final factor identified was the availability of learning facilities, such as ICT resources. Teacher B adapted her practices to the available technology, choosing when to incorporate it based on the perceived value for her lesson. Teachers sometimes reconsider the use of ICT depending on its utility and relevance to the lesson (Ahmad & Shah, 2022). This reflects a pragmatic approach to using resources that best serve instructional goals.

Despite differences in the congruency between beliefs and practices, both teachers expressed satisfaction with their teaching methods, suggesting that misalignment does not necessarily detract from effective teaching. Both participants were willing to make compromises when needed to achieve their teaching objectives. This finding aligns with the broader discourse on teacher adaptability, suggesting that pedagogical effectiveness can be achieved even when beliefs and practices do not align perfectly (Asare & Amo, 2023).

Discussion

Teacher Beliefs and Practices: Implications for Effectiveness

In this study, the gap between teachers' beliefs and their actual teaching practices was noticeable. Teacher A showed a mismatch between her interventionist beliefs and the interactionist practices she used in the classroom, while Teacher B's beliefs and practices were more consistent. Despite this difference, both teachers felt that their teaching was effective, which suggests that having beliefs and practices perfectly aligned may not always be necessary for successful teaching.

The reason for this may lie in the fact that teaching is a dynamic and context-dependent process. Teachers often adjust their methods to deal with the realities of the classroom, such as the behavior of students, the resources available, and the learning environment. Teacher A's shift from interventionist to interactionist strategies is an example of how teachers adapt when they realize that their initial approach is not working as well as expected. Teachers often modify their teaching styles to meet students' needs, and this flexibility is an important part of effective teaching (Woodcock & Reupert, 2023).

Another important factor to consider is self-efficacy, which refers to a teacher's belief in their ability to manage their classroom and help students learn. Research shows that teachers

with strong self-efficacy are more likely to adapt their practices to better fit the needs of their students, even if those practices do not fully match their original beliefs (Asare & Amo, 2023). For example, a teacher may be able to adjust her methods because she gained confidence in her ability to meet her students' needs, despite the mismatch between her beliefs and her practices.

However, misalignment is not always easy to deal with. It can cause discomfort for teachers because their actions may not match their beliefs, which can lead to stress or confusion about what works best in the classroom (Soleimani & Rahimi, 2021). The amount of stress teachers feel in these situations can depend on how much pedagogical knowledge and experience they have. Teachers who have received more professional development are better equipped to handle misalignment and adjust their teaching without feeling overwhelmed (Almunawaroh et al., 2024).

Classroom management beliefs also play a role in how misalignment affects teaching. Teachers, especially those early in their careers, may use strategies that do not always align with their beliefs because they are still learning how to manage their classrooms effectively (Woodcock & Reupert, 2023). For example, a teacher may stuck to an interventionist approach over time, which suggests that some teachers may feel more comfortable with structured, teacher-led practices, even if they know there are other methods available.

The gap between a teacher's beliefs and their practices does not always mean that teaching is ineffective. In fact, the ability to adapt to the classroom context is key to successful teaching. Misalignment can show that a teacher is flexible and willing to adjust their methods to suit their students' needs. Still, it's important to recognize that professional development, self-efficacy, and pedagogical knowledge are important in helping teachers handle this misalignment. Over time, through reflection and learning, teachers can bring their beliefs and practices into better alignment and improve their teaching (Ruth, 2024).

Impact of Educational Policies and Cultural Context on EFL Practices

In Indonesia, teachers' beliefs and practices are shaped by national policies and cultural factors. The Merdeka Curriculum, promoting Differentiated Instruction, offers both opportunities and challenges, particularly in accommodating diverse student needs (Burner & Carlsen, 2023). Teachers are required to adjust their practices to engage all students, despite varying abilities. Moreover, Indonesian EFL teachers navigate a balance between local values and the demands of teaching English, with multilingualism playing a key role. While teachers express positive beliefs about multilingualism, these beliefs often do not fully align with their practices due to the pressures of standardized curricula (Burner & Carlsen, 2023).

Despite the influence of dominant policies, Indonesian EFL teachers exercise agency in adapting their practices to address the complexities of culture and interculturality. Teachers negotiate between home cultures and target language cultures, adjusting their methods to accommodate both local and global values (Tannenbaum et al., 2024). Additionally, teachers' own learning experiences shape their beliefs. Positive school learning experiences continue to influence pedagogical beliefs even after years of professional development (Alvear et al., 2023). These factors highlight the need to contextualize teacher beliefs and practices within Indonesia's unique educational and cultural landscape, emphasizing the importance of tailored teacher training and policy to support the evolving needs of EFL classrooms. However, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum requires not only curriculum adaptation but also the development and evaluation of educators' moral and professional standards (Muvid & Ridho, 2022), which can further guide and refine the teaching practices within the Indonesian context.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices, focusing on how various factors influence these in the context of Indonesian EFL classrooms. The findings revealed that while teachers' beliefs and practices may not always align perfectly, the flexibility and adaptability of teachers enable them to effectively meet the diverse needs of their students. Factors such as students' academic competence, psychological needs, learning goals, and available facilities play a significant role in shaping teachers' instructional choices. The study also highlighted that misalignment between beliefs and practices does not necessarily hinder teaching effectiveness, as teachers like those in this study adapted their practices to address real classroom challenges. Moreover, the influence of educational policies, such as the Merdeka Curriculum, and cultural context further shapes teachers' approaches, necessitating an understanding of these factors for effective teacher development.

The findings have important implications for teacher training and policy, emphasizing the need for continuous professional development and support to help teachers adapt their beliefs and practices. Teachers should be encouraged to reflect on their practices and beliefs, particularly when confronted with challenges in the classroom. The study's limitations include its small sample size and focus on only two teachers, which may not fully capture the diversity of experiences across different educational settings in Indonesia. Future research could explore how teacher beliefs and practices vary across different regions of Indonesia, with a focus on how teacher self-efficacy and classroom management strategies contribute to effective EFL teaching in a variety of contexts. Additionally, further research could investigate the long-term impact of curriculum changes on teachers' beliefs and practices, particularly within the evolving educational landscape shaped by the Merdeka Curriculum.

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