Teacher’s and Students’ Perceptions Toward Teaching and Learning EFL at Sumba Hospitality Foundation

Persepsi Guru Bahasa Inggris dan Siswa terhadap Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di Sumba Hospitality Foundation

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seperti Sumba Hospitality Foundation, khususnya mengenai praktik dan manajemen pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: belajar mengajar bahasa Inggris; guru bahasa Inggris; persepsi; siswa pada kelas bahasa Inggris; Sumba Hospitality Foundation

Abstract: This qualitative study aims to discover teacher's and students’ perceptions of teaching and learning English at Sumba Hospitality Foundation. Due to the fact that EFL teachers' and students' perceptions have a critical role in the teaching and learning process, more studies have to be conducted in contexts related to this issue. This study has been organized to investigate how both parties view EFL teaching and learning in their setting based on their perceptions. Two English classes (each consisting of 15 students) have been observed. Ten students were randomly chosen, and a teacher was invited to the focus group discussion (FGD) and an interview related to the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Based on the qualitative analysis, the findings indicate that both EFL teachers and students have positive attitudes toward English. Both parties recognize the urgent necessity of English within their field of study, namely hospitality, as it serves as the primary language for tourists, enabling them to comprehend customer demands and facilitate communication. As the future hospitality staff, students have been directed by their EFL teachers to understand the importance of learning English as a school subject and communicating in English as an essential communication skill. This understanding underscores the importance of initiatives spearheaded by the DPR RI, particularly Commission X, responsible for education and tourism. As policymakers, Commission X must be apprised of the conditions and developments at training centers like Sumba Hospitality Foundation, particularly regarding English teaching and learning practices and management.

Keywords: EFL students; EFL teachers; perceptions; Sumba Hospitality Foundation; teaching and learning EFL

Introduction

English is a language that dominates foreign language learning in the world, either as a foreign language (EFL) or as a second language (ESL). In Indonesia, teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) was established in 1946 (Prayogo, 2022), meaning that English as a compulsory school subject has been commonly known since then. It is designated as a compulsory subject at various levels of education because it is considered important for students’ future work. There are many benefits of having good English skills, such as getting more opportunities to study or work abroad, having a bigger chance to get international scholarships for English-proficient international students, expanding career opportunities with high pay, and many more.

In today’s globalized world, English mastery is no longer a choice but a must because it is the most spoken language in the world, and millions of people around the globe use it for communication. Students must learn and master all skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking) and components (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) to perform well in English. Concerning the great output, EFL/ESL teachers have been trying to find better models and methods to implement these in their classes. More and more models and methods of teaching and learning English have been developed to improve students’ learning outcomes. Experts and practitioners have also tried to find effective ways of teaching and learning English to be applied to this subject’s learning process in all national and international schools.
Many studies have been conducted on the important role of English in Indonesia. Setyaningrum (2016) studied how English could improve someone’s living standards by providing high-paying jobs and occupations. In addition to career purposes, Andayani (2022) has found that English skills are essentially needed by higher-degree students, particularly in reading and comprehending literature and sources that are mostly written in English. This is in line with what has been revealed by Agustin (2015) related to the main reason why people need to speak this language, not only for a career but also for the reason that it is a global language used in almost all sectors in the world (Handayani, 2016). This study has also supported the studies above by highlighting the importance of English for vocational training students who will work in the tourism and hospitality industries.

In many national schools, Bahasa Indonesia is the predominant language of instruction during teaching and learning. This preference arises from the fact that both teachers and students share Bahasa Indonesia as their primary language. English, on the other hand, is employed sporadically as the need arises.

Contrastingly, most international schools in Indonesia adopt a bilingual program, where English and Bahasa Indonesia are utilized as the language of instruction for academic content. This applies to English subjects and encompasses the entire spectrum of educational material. The extent to which Bahasa Indonesia and English are employed in these schools depends on factors such as the chosen curriculum, the proficiency levels of students in English, and the teachers’ first language.

The implementation of an international curriculum, coupled with native English-speaking teachers, creates an environment where English takes a more dominant role in the instructional process. It becomes a primary tool for daily communication within the school. On the other hand, a mixed curriculum involving Indonesian or foreign teachers proficient in Bahasa Indonesia and students possessing advanced English skills often strikes a balance between the use of Bahasa Indonesia and English.

Challenges may arise when a teacher needs to become more proficient in Bahasa Indonesian, and students are at a beginner or low level of English proficiency. Effective teaching and learning methods become crucial for establishing clear communication throughout the educational process.

The condition mentioned above can be found in an international vocational training center called Sumba Hospitality Foundation in Southwest Sumba Regency, Indonesia. It is an international hospitality training center, and several teachers are not initially Indonesians and do not speak Bahasa Indonesia, let alone Sumba. This is an interesting phenomenon to look at, particularly the issue related to how students who need to be more skillful in English view the process of teaching and learning English in the classroom with English as the language of instruction. Considering this, this research has been carried out to answer the following questions: What are the perceptions of both teachers and students of Sumba Hospitality Foundation in Southwest Sumba, Indonesia, towards the teaching and learning of EFL?

This is an important issue to raise, particularly with the DPR RI (The House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia), especially Commission X (which is in charge of education, research, sports, and tourism) because this commission is responsible for education and tourism in this country. As the policy maker, this commission must know the condition and development of this training center, which is considered great in its practices and management, especially in the English teaching and learning process.
In answering the previously mentioned question, a qualitative study focused on the perceptions of EFL teachers and students of Sumba Hospitality Foundation in Southwest Sumba, Indonesia, towards the teaching and learning EF has been conducted to fulfill the objective of finding out and identifying both parties’ perceptions regarding the process of English language teaching and learning.

In a qualitative study, it is commonly believed that the research subject has a very strategic role because all data will be collected through and from the subject. Qualitatively speaking, research subjects are called informants, who provide information or data the researcher needs to achieve the research objective. This study’s main subjects (key informants) were the EFL teachers and students of the Sumba Hospitality Foundation in Southwest Sumba Regency, NTT, Indonesia. Two English classes (each consisting of 15 students) have been observed. Ten students were randomly chosen, and a teacher was invited to the focus group discussion (FGD) and an interview related to the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Detailed information about the subjects’ opinions, attitudes, and experiences has been collected through three instruments. The data from observation, FGD, and interviews were then interpreted and qualitatively analyzed, which will be discussed in this paper.

Perceptions of Teaching and Learning

It has previously been mentioned that the main aim of this study is to explore EFL teachers’ and their students’ perceptions of teaching and learning English at Sumba Hospitality Foundation in Southwest Sumba, Indonesia. Knowing their perceptions is essential because perception is assumed to directly and positively influence the teaching and learning output. Perception as the keyword in this study has been interpreted differently by researchers, experts, authors, and practitioners. Perception is selecting, organizing, and interpreting information as inputs to create a meaningful picture of the world (Kotler, 2009). Another definition of perception is given by Sugihartono et al. (2007), stating that the brain’s ability or process to interpret stimuli gets into human sensory organs. The interpretation process in perception has also been supported by Asrori (2009) in his definition of perception, which refers to an individual’s process of interpreting, organizing, and giving meaning to stimuli that come from the environment as the individual’s domain resulting from the process of learning and experience. Discussing the learning process, perception belongs to the cognitive domain, which can then be defined as a cognitive process experienced by everyone in understanding any information related to his environment through sight, hearing, appreciation, feeling, smelling, and touching to produce meaning (Fadila & Lestari, 2013; Thoha, 1999). When perception is viewed from the angle of a school setting, it can be claimed as teachers’ or students’ response or assessment of their environment received by the five senses. In this study, the focus has been on teachers’ and students’ perceptions of teaching and learning English.

Individual perceptions are commonly driven by internal (attitudes, personality, motivation, expectations, behavior, interests) and external factors (intensity and repetition). These factors are essential in teaching and learning English to shape teachers’ and students’ perceptions of the process. A growing number of studies have found that there is a correlation between internal and external factors, teachers’ and students’ perceptions, and learning achievement (Dhanasobhon, 2007; Fakye, 2010; Imsa-Ard, 2020; Manalu, 2014; Soleimani & Somayeh, 2013). This wide variety of research findings has suggested that internal and external factors enormously impact English language teaching and learning, eventually affecting students’ proficiency and performance.
Due to the fact that EFL teachers’ and students’ perceptions have a critical role in the teaching and learning process, more studies related to EFL have to be conducted in varied contexts. This study in Sumba Hospitality Foundation has been organized to explore how both parties view EFL teaching and learning in their setting based on their perceptions. Factors covered by internal ones include attitudes and behavior (how teachers and students tend to understand and respond either positively or negatively towards each other as the instructors and the learners, the process of teaching and learning, and the classroom atmosphere during the process); personality (what type of person the teacher or the learner is as an individual, an extrovert or an introvert); motivation, expectations, and interests (how teachers and students combine their needs or what they want with their attempts to achieve their goals in teaching/learning English). External factors, which consist of intensity and repetition (how intense teachers and students use English in their in-class practice activities), have also been essential considerations.

Language Pedagogy and Language Exposure

Apart from perceptions, language pedagogy is also essential for teachers to direct the class in teaching and learning. It is the one that makes teachers understand how to conduct their classroom and find the best theories as well as techniques to teach language. Being open-minded to innovative, effective, and interesting teaching methods is essential for EFL teachers to get optimal learning outcomes. Teachers must create extensive opportunities for students to use English for various purposes. One of the best ways of doing this is by creating environments where students can immerse themselves in English. This is in line with what has been claimed by Duyet al. (1982), which is that effective learning can occur if great exposure occurs in a qualified environment. Natural immersion can be created in the classroom in various ways, such as watching English movies, reading English books, and using other authentic materials. According to Sivertzen (2013), this kind of natural immersion can be an effective input for students in language learning.

While language immersion can take place during the teaching and learning process in the classroom (for example, using English primarily as the language of instruction), students can also improve their English by experiencing language exposure mainly outside the classroom. There are various activities of this outside-of-class language exposure, such as listening to English programs on the radio or podcasts, watching English programs and movies on TV, having conversations with native speakers of English, reading English books, using English in daily communication, and so on. Several studies have been conducted on language exposure (Benson, 2001; d’Ydewalle & De Bruycker, 2007; Ghaderpanahi, 2012; Webb, 2010) and suggest that students who are exposed to a lot of English will get maximum results compared to those who are not (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005; Lambine, 2008; Agirdag & Vanlaar, 2018; Al Zoubi, 2018; De Wilde et al., 2020).

Going through both language immersion and language exposure in their daily (school) lives will give opportunities for students to have contact with the language they are learning (i.e., English). These students tend to exhibit higher levels of fluency (Cummins, 2009; Kinginger, 2011; Wilkinson, 1998) compared to their peers who (almost) never experience either language immersion, language exposure, or even both. Teachers who empower their students to learn English through language immersion and language exposure are those who can create an active and interac-
tive teaching and learning atmosphere in the classroom. This empowerment will improve students’ English skills, motivation, and interest in learning this language. This acknowledges that both external and internal factors are very important in the learning process, which will greatly affect both teachers’ and students’ perceptions and perspectives on the teaching and learning process of the lesson.

Both students’ and teachers’ perceptions essentially need to be looked at as their perceptions will shape their attitudes toward the teaching/learning subject and eventually influence how they teach/learn that subject and the output. The way of teaching and learning this subject makes students experience extraordinary progress in English language skills and abilities. The improvement of their learning outputs has proven it; most who have spoken English fluently could not speak it when they first enrolled in this school. Further explanation can be seen in the findings found in the next section.

**Teacher’s and Students’ Perceptions Based on Observation**

This study considers teachers’ and students’ perceptions of English language teaching and learning in the classroom equally important. As English language teaching and learning in the classroom progress, all perceptions have been interpreted from the findings through a qualitative study. The findings and discussion of both parties’ perceptions will cover external and internal factors identified through observations, FGD, and interviews. Several extracts of interviews will be provided to create an engaging voice in this writing.

Two EFL teachers, an Indonesian female and an African male, taught at Sumba Hospitality Foundation vocational training center. The African male teacher was on sick leave during this research period, so his teaching could not be observed, and his point of view about EFL teaching and the learning process could not be assessed in the interview section. The Indonesian female teacher not only taught her class but also took over his class during his absence; therefore, all observations and interviews were focused on her.

Data collection through observations has been done using an observation sheet, as shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things to observe</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is genuine communication.</td>
<td>Yes, the genuine communication exists during the teaching-learning process in the classroom, not only from teacher to students, but also from students to teacher and from student to student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher is skilled at organizing group work.</td>
<td>Yes, teacher groups the students either in pairs or in small groups of 4 or 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation on points of language are clear.</td>
<td>Yes, although it is not all the time, whenever she finds some points of language to be explained she will then explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material and equipment.</td>
<td>These consist of copies of materials from handouts, whiteboard, laptop, and active speaker for listening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim of the lesson.</td>
<td>The aim of the lesson is clear as it follows the objectives of general and specific instructional designs stated in the curriculum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Things to observe | Results
--- | ---
Teacher’s talking time vs. students’ talking time. | Teacher talks more (80 percent) as she always repeats her instructions and explains words and sentences whenever students do not understand. On the other hand, students are given chance to talk (20 percent), either individually or all together, to answer questions, give opinions, ask questions, or present the tasks.

Students’ uses of L1 & target language. | Students never use their L1 (mother tongue) nor Bahasa Indonesia, and they try to use 100 percent English.

Students’ spontaneous participation. | Yes, whenever teacher asks questions and expects voluntary answers, some of the students have been brave enough to participate spontaneously in answering the questions.

Students’ encouragement. | It happens almost all the time during the lesson.

Correcting. | Teacher always corrects students' work and provides feedback.

Are the aims of the lesson clearly formulated and communicated? | The lesson has clear aims but it does not seem to be well formulated and communicated to students.

In your opinion is the classroom atmosphere due to the aims and the contents of the lesson? | Yes, it can be clearly seen that the classroom atmosphere is due to the aims and the contents of the lesson.

What have you learned from this observation? | There are several points to briefly say: the teacher can manage the class really well; the aim(s) of the lesson is/are clear; even though the teacher talking is 60 percent, it does not seem like she dominates the talking because students also talk and discuss with their teacher and peer(s) during the lesson.

The main objective of this observation was to get pictures of the classroom atmosphere during the teaching and learning process. This was reflected by the items to observe, which measured both teacher’s and students' efforts to take part in the process. The result of the observation was then qualitatively analyzed. It has been shown that students tried to participate and interact during the teaching and learning process using English. They always answered questions given by their teacher and talked to their peers in English during the discussion. Table 2 shows the findings of observations taken from one meeting.

### Table 2. Observations Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction Analysis Categories (Adapter from Flanders)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher asks a display question (i.e. a question to which she knows the answer).</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher asks a referential question (i.e. a question to which she does not know the answer).</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher explains a grammatical point.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher explains meaning of a vocabulary item.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher explains functional point.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher explains point relating to the content (theme/topic) of the lesson.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher gives instructions/directions.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher praises.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher criticizes.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interaction Analysis Categories (Adapter from Flanders) | Total
--- | ---
Learner asks a question. | 2
Learner answers questions. | 22
Learner talks to another learner. | 13
Period of silence or confusion. | 5

Source: Nunan (1988).

The observation sheet demonstrated that students were not passive in the teaching and learning process; they asked questions to their teacher, answered the teacher’s questions, and talked to and discussed with their peers (s) despite their confusion. These activities were done because of their teacher’s encouragement and motivation, which created a conducive learning environment. This kind of learning environment is a favorable setting for students to extensively use English in the classroom, as Dulay et al. (1982) mentioned, as a great exposure that could lead to effective learning. This result highlighted that students’ participation and interaction were affected by their motivation, which was influenced by the teaching and learning environment created by their teacher. The teacher’s skill and ability to create this kind of environment resulted from her positive perception and good attitude toward English as the subject she was teaching.

The aforementioned result has then been triangulated to bring a thorough interpretation of this study’s findings. Other instruments to be triangulated include focus group discussions and interviews, which involve both groups (teacher and students). The questions raised in the FGD were the same as those asked in the interview but focused more on motivation, expectations, and interests. Both findings have then been analyzed using coding and can be found in Table 3 and Table 4.

The observations show that the teacher and her students have positive attitudes and perceptions toward the teaching and learning activities. This can be seen by the teacher’s attitude and behavior in teaching and communicating with her students and how they responded to their teachers’ instructions and tasks. This is in line with the way they gave their answers to the questions in the interview, as shown in Table 5.

### Table 3. Interview Coding on Teacher’s Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes and behavior</strong></td>
<td><strong>Personality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive attitudes; good behavior.</td>
<td>Friendly; energetic; helpful; and enthusiastic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Interview Coding on Students’ Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes and behavior</td>
<td>Motivation, expectations, and interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive attitudes; good behavior.</td>
<td>Having high level of motivation in learning and practicing English; showing interesting ways in engaging, participating, and interacting in the teaching and learning process; trying to use 100 percent English in the classroom; not allowing themselves to use their first language during English lesson; using comprehensive authentic learning materials based on Cambridge curriculum; participating actively in hands-on activities to encourage themselves to talk; making efforts to build their self-confidence; taking part in fun activities designed by their teacher to make them enjoy the lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Intensity and repetition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly: energetic; helpful; enthusiastic: diligent; disciplined; inquisitive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive attitudes; good behavior.</td>
<td>Highly motivated students; having good expectation to be able to achieve their best; interested so much in their learning activities and their teacher’s way of teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly motivated students; having good expectation to be able to achieve their best; interested so much in their learning activities and their teacher’s way of teaching.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Interview Extract

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewer :</th>
<th>You said you are not originally here, right? What made you want to come and teach here, a school away from home?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher :</td>
<td>To be honest, I did not do a lot of research about this school before coming here. What I knew was this' a non-profit school and the students would be young Sumbaneses but I did not have any doubt to come and teach here although it is far from home. I think it is my call to be here with these students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer :</td>
<td>How do you find teaching here so far?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher :</td>
<td>All I can say is it has been great teaching here. I like the atmosphere of this school, all teachers are friendly, and the students are highly motivated. I like the program offered by the school and I am interested in the curriculum we are using, which is from Cambridge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviewer : | Do you like English?                                                                                                                                               |
| Student 1 :  | Yes, I like.*                                                                                                                                                     |
| Interviewer : | Why do you like English?                                                                                                                                          |
| Student 1 :  | I like my teacher, she is good.*                                                                                                                                  |

Interviewer : | Do you like English?                                                                                                                                               |
| Student 2 :  | Yes, of course.*                                                                                                                                                  |
| Interviewer : | Why do you like English?                                                                                                                                          |
| Student 2 :  | I like to speak English like my teacher. I want to learn hard.*                                                                                              |

*The answers have been given in their level of ability.

Looking at the teacher’s answer, her positive attitude in looking at the school where she is teaching, her peer teachers and students have created a positive atmosphere in the learning environment, which will eventually make students as her learners feel comfortable, encouraged, and inspired in their learning process (see their answers above). The observation results further show this teacher’s warm personality. It has been noted that she is friendly, energetic, and enthusiastic while teaching her students. Additionally, she seemed to always motivate her students by praising every student’s progress and accomplishment and providing feedback whenever needed. In this case, she believed that her students could improve their English level achieve-
ment and be better day by day. This teacher succeeded in impressing her students with her positive and good attitude, perception, and personality, which will directly or indirectly affect their English performance.

The teacher’s teaching performance is commendable. She simply provided high-intensity exercises and activities in every meeting, which greatly impacted students’ output. Basically, she used rote learning, in which she required her students to go through the process of repetition. However, meaningful learning was also applied in the forms of active learning, project-based learning, and peer collaboration. One simple activity of this type of learning was peer collaboration in performing role-plays.

As an English teacher, her intention in teaching English was to improve the learners’ communication skills to be later used in their future careers. She used English as a medium of instruction throughout the lesson to get the learners used to English communication in daily activities. Although she admitted that teacher talking time (TTT) was excessive in her English class because she was more dominant in talking than her students were, she was trying to make an effort to reduce her TTT and dedicate more class time to allow her students to talk and express their thoughts. She was still struggling with this issue since she lacked knowledge and experience about communicative language teaching (CLT) as an approach to improving students’ communication skills. In this case, she needed the advancement of CLT. Other effective ways she has improved her teaching quality were integrating body language into classroom interaction, which helped the students understand what she was taking; using the Cambridge curriculum which has benefitted the English teacher in allowing her students to develop their interests and talents in both content and skills; using authentic materials (texts, videos, and/or audios) to increase students’ interest in speaking because they were exposed to applications of real-world of the language, i.e. English; encouraging students by using hands-on, fun and immersion activities to build up their self-motivation.

Internal and external factors previously mentioned are assumed to be influential factors that will shape students’ perception of English as a school subject. Their perception will eventually impact their mastery and achievement in English as the learning output. This is in line with what has been suggested by several researchers that there is a direct correlation between teachers’ perceptions, students’ perceptions, teachers’ teaching quality, and students’ learning outputs (Dhanasobhon, 2007; Fakeye, 2010; Imsa–Ard, 2020; Manalu, 2014; Soleimani & Somayeh, 2013).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Having discussed the perceptions of both teacher and students toward teaching and learning English at Sumba Hospitality Foundation, it is believed that both parties have shown positive perceptions, good attitudes, and personalities toward ELT. Students have shown a positive attitude toward this school subject because they believe good English communication skills are necessary for their future. In addition, the EFL teachers in this school have tried to find good methods and strategies to be implemented in the teaching and learning process in the classroom to make them more interested in learning this lesson. The positive attitudes and perceptions of EFL teachers and students of Sumba Hospitality Foundation have led them to great achievement in the teaching and learning process of English. The students’ great achievement in English will lead them to various future careers in the industry.
of tourism and hospitality, which will contribute to economic growth for a developing country like Indonesia.

The existence of the Sumba Hospitality Foundation training center is important to consider as it can contribute to Indonesia’s tourism and hospitality industry. Through this article, it is expected that the DPR RI (The House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia), especially Commission X (in charge of education, research, sports, and tourism), will be able to pay more attention not only to this institution but also to other similar institutions, especially in the field of English language teaching. Providing a language laboratory and various English textbooks related to the hotel and tourism industry will better equip students with reading materials based on their field. In addition, the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka can be tried out in this school with its curriculum to see how it will impact teachers’ teaching and learners’ learning qualities.

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