

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a comprehensive description of the study. It consists of a background of the study, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, the aim of the study, and significance of the study.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

One of the factors that influence the effectiveness of the English learning process is an effective teacher. Effective teachers have certain characteristics that can satisfy students in their learning experience. Students' motivation, performance, and achievement in learning are influenced by the characteristics of effective teachers (Al-Yaseen, 2019; Alzebaree & Hasan, 2021). These characteristics relate to teachers' good performance, choice of learning methods, supportive feedback, personality, professional competence, communication, attitude, and guidance (Long & Tuyen, 2020; Ozcan, 2021). Students tend to be more motivated and active in learning when taught by teachers who have characteristics that match their preferences for effective teachers. This increased motivation contributes to a better understanding of the learning material, which in turn can improve students' learning achievement. Purnomo (2023) supported that when students like or feel comfortable with their teachers, then students are more likely to actively participate in class and be motivated to understand the lesson, while dissatisfaction with teachers can make students less engaged and motivated in the classroom. Thus, identifying effective teachers' characteristics is key in creating better English learning to improve students' motivation and learning achievement.

The effectiveness of English learning is also influenced by students' preferences. Consideration of student preferences can enable learning effectiveness and be an indicator of student engagement in the classroom (Sari et al., 2023; Seel, 2012). These preferences may be influenced by diverse student characteristics such as age, gender, personality, interest, motivation, level of development, and others.

For example, in terms of students' academic development, high-achieving students may be more interested in teachers who treat students fairly to create a fair competitive learning environment, while low-achieving students may prefer teachers who are patient and self-controlled because they need more support and attention. This match between students' preferences and effective teachers' characteristics can create a better learning environment. Therefore, it is important to consider students' preferences to match and fulfill their learning needs.

The relation between students' preferences and effective teachers' characteristics has an implication for learning quality. Loveta et al. (2020) argued that students' preferences for their preferred teachers influence their learning enthusiasm and engagement. Students who feel comfortable with teacher characteristics that match their preferences tend to be more motivated to learn and actively engage in the learning process, resulting in improved learning achievement. In addition, students' needs and interests in learning can be facilitated by understanding students' preferences for effective teachers' characteristics. The discussion about students' preferences can also be a way to determine their priorities (Giuseffi, 2016). Thus, by considering students' preferences for effective teachers' characteristics, the English learning process can be directed towards improved learning quality and meet students' satisfaction.

In the EFL learning context at the high school level, students' preferences for effective English teachers' characteristics influence their learning motivation which impacts their learning achievement. Based on the result of a preliminary interview with some senior high school students in Tasikmalaya, they experienced increased motivation to learn when they were taught by English teachers with characteristics they preferred. They feel that English teachers who explain the learning material clearly and comprehensively, adapt learning to their abilities, have good language proficiency, and exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors are considered to align with their preferences and are likely to increase their learning motivation in the class. It is also one of the factors that contribute to their improved learning achievement. Meanwhile, some characteristics of English teachers that do not align with their preferences tend to decrease their learning motivation which also

decreases their learning achievement. Seeing this phenomenon, the researcher thought that this was a uniqueness that deserves to be researched. Considering that there are not many studies that investigate students' preferences for effective English teachers' characteristics at the high school level, especially in Tasikmalaya.

A previous study about effective teachers' characteristics was conducted by Arnas and Assiddiq (2021) which aimed to describe the characteristics and teaching style of effective English teachers in one of the junior high schools. They used a qualitative method as a research design. Then, data collection in their study was conducted by observation and field notes which were then analyzed using three stages (data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification). The results showed that there are nine characteristics of effective English teachers and five teaching styles. However, there are some differences between their study and this study. Their study is divided into two focuses, namely effective teachers' characteristics and effective teacher teaching styles, while this study focused more on effective teachers' characteristics. Besides, their study was conducted at a junior high school level by only viewing the teacher's point of view through classroom observations and field notes, while this study was conducted at a senior high school level by viewing students' point of view through interviews. Hence, this empirical gap was an incentive for the researcher to explore different research related to a similar topic.

Based on the previous discussion, the researcher was fascinated to conduct a study titled, "Investigating Students' Preferences for Effective English Teachers' Characteristics in EFL Context." Ultimately, this study was expected to contribute insights into students' preferences for effective English teachers' characteristics, which also served as a guide for teachers and student teachers in improving their personal qualities, knowledge, and teaching skills according to students' preferences and needs, as well as a guide for students in choosing teachers in English courses to support their motivation and learning achievement.

## 1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background above, the researcher addressed the following question, “What are students’ preferences for effective English teachers’ characteristics in EFL context?”

## 1.3 Operational Definitions

- 1.3.1 Effective English Teachers’ Characteristics** : The distinctive features of English teachers in a senior high school in Tasikmalaya which are measured by factors such as interaction skills, teaching competence, material knowledge, and attitude or behavior, which successfully contribute to improving student motivation and learning achievement.
- 1.3.2 EFL Context** : EFL stands for English as a Foreign Language, which is a position where English as a language is taught to people whose primary language is not English and whose people do not speak English in society. The term EFL here refers to the context of English being taught at a senior high school in Tasikmalaya.
- 1.3.3 Students’ Preferences** : Students’ tendency to select characteristics of English teachers in a senior high school in Tasikmalaya that are considered effective.

## 1.4 Aim of the Study

Based on the research question, this research aims to investigate students’ preferences for effective English teachers’ characteristics in EFL context.

## **1.5 Significances of the Study**

### **1.5.1 Theoretical Use**

This study is useful for providing insights and theories of students' preferences for Effective English teachers' characteristics in EFL context.

### **1.5.1 Practical Use**

This study is useful for teachers and student teachers in developing their personal qualities, knowledge, and teaching skills to meet students' learning preferences and needs in English learning. It is also useful for students as a guide when choosing teachers in English courses to support their motivation and learning achievement.

### **1.5.1 Empirical Use**

This study is useful for providing empirical data for other researchers who are interested in examining students' preferences for effective English teachers' characteristics, as well as providing benefits for the researcher to increase knowledge and add experiences in compiling this study.