



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

MUHAMMAD BILAL AHMAD¹, GHULAM MUSTAFA², MUHAMMAD ASIF SHAHZAD³

ABSTRACT

The mindset towards learning English ultimately is one of the crucial elements. According to research, students' attitudes and interests matter in acquiring second language skills. Students' Attitude towards Learning English in Public and Private Schools at Secondary Level was the primary purpose of this study. Due to time and budget constraints, the study was delimited to the Sahiwal Division. A random selection of five hundred students from associated schools. The researchers went to considerable measures to ensure outstanding schools for both males and females. Then, using statistical methods and processes, the data were evaluated for means score, stand deviation, and t-test. According to the conclusion of this study, private secondary school students have a significantly higher attitude towards learning English than public sector secondary school students. Aside from that, private secondary school students are more enthusiastic about learning English. Students' attitudes towards learning English can be improved using effective tactics and styles, including visual, aural, and tactile. Teachers should motivate and encourage students to explore and improve their study and language skills during classroom activities like oral communications. Learn English by doing.

Keywords: secondary education, learning, public and private, attitude

JEL Codes: I10

I. INTRODUCTION

Philosophers and thinkers have defined learning in various ways, but the main component is changing the learner's behavior. So learning is related to the medium of instruction. Knowledge acquisition is vital to the human race's survival. Learning as a lifelong practice helps improve society's ideals. A lot of knowledge and learning practices change the person. God endowed humans with a computer-like memory system. Students learned from books, teacher lectures, and environmental practice. Such knowledge becomes an essential part of their knowledge. In this way, knowledge influences student behavior positively (Ahmad, 2015). Language is a source for learning while speaking and understanding language is the main distinction between humans and other creatures. Other creatures lack these skills. Language is a gateway to learning. People use it as needed. They ask questions when they do not understand something and get answers, so, language learning is essential in educational and vocational fields (Rafeeq et al., 2021). The foreign language allows students to express themselves in class. They need to know many words and vocabulary to grasp their curriculum fully. Language aids students in learning. It is the way to communicate with classmates and tutors. We know that English is a foreign language with much English, Technology, and Literature knowledge. The ability to read and write in English is required. Language plays a vital role in the learning process. The students are expected to have a comprehensive understanding of the English language (Ahmad et al., 2021). They should also respond rationally to questions raised by their teacher in class. It is a language that fosters a learning and teaching environment. Language skills are essential for social and educational growth. The students should be fluent in the relevant foreign language, English.

In Pakistan, English is considered a second language. The English language is a compulsory subject for all students from kindergarten to graduation. However, the majority of students lack vocabulary and its appropriate usages. So, the Punjab Government's Educational Department has been working hard to meet the set targets.

¹ Department of Humanities, COMSATS University Islamabad – Vehari Campus

² University of Lahore, Lahore

³ Department of Education, University of Education, Lahore-Vehari Campus

Learning abilities, age, interest, environment, peer appraisal, educated parents, and style are essential factors in learning English (Ali et al., 2021). English is an international language and a link tongue. Our parliament declared English as a metaphorical language in Pakistan. However, students have different preferences for subjects and languages such as Mathematics, Arabic, Urdu, and English. They show interest based on their mentality (Ali et al., 2021). A person's interest changes their attitude over time. A person who enjoys a language is more likely to learn it (Ali et al., 2020). We can assess a student's attitude towards a subject. The attitude can also be changed. A teacher should change a student's attitude towards a subject. Alkaff (2013) asserted that student behavior influences language learning ability. Those students who have a positive attitude towards learning English can learn more effectively than those who have a negative attitude. Learning English requires a positive attitude. Learning English requires a positive attitude. We use education to help students adopt socially acceptable behavior (Saman et al., 2019). A positive attitude is required for learning a second language. Student attitudes indeed influence book selection. Students' attitudes influence their ability to listen, speak, read, write, and create in a second language. Students with these qualities may be given challenging tasks. However, we cannot ignore the environment. Students who lived in an academic environment had a better attitude than students who did not. So, to summarize, the environment influences language learning. In short, attitudes play an essential role in successful language learning. Attitude is determined based on the individual's beliefs about performing the behavior's outcomes or attributes. Those who strongly believe that performing the behavior will result in positive outcomes will have a positive attitude towards it, while those who strongly believe that performing the behavior will result in adverse outcomes will have a negative attitude." The objective of the study is to compare the public and private students' attitude towards leaning English at secondary school level.

II. NULL HYPOTHESES

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students about their attitude towards learning English

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of public and private students' attitudes towards learning English

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

MacKeracher (2004) defines attitude as having cognitive, affective, and connotative components. The attitude is a way of thinking or behaving. Negative attitudes can be changed or otherwise modified with effort. A student's attitude towards the target language, speakers, and learning context may all play a role in determining their success in learning a language. Many studies have been done on attitude in second language acquisition, probably inspired by the knowledge that negative attitudes can be changed. Better teaching strategies, well-equipped classrooms, and a positive social environment can significantly improve student attitudes (Chay, and Troudi, 2006). Age, gender, language background, school type, and peer influences influence language acquisition and attitudes in second foreign language learning (Mawoli, and Babandako, 2011). Brown (2000) wrote about development early in childhood and resulted from parents and peer's attitude." It is well known that English has become the language of technology. This chapter describes the student's attitude towards learning English as a medium of instruction. The components and elements of the English language as second in Pakistan have been clearly stated. Knowledge is delivered and taken through instruction at secondary and higher learning stages. Various philosophers and thinkers have defined learning differently, but the main component is changing the learner's behavior. So learning is an essential element related to the instruction medium. Obtaining knowledge is vital to the survival of the human race. Learning as a lifelong practice contributes to positive social change. Whereas Allah has blessed humans with a computer-like memory system, awareness and learning practices change a person. The student learned from books, teacher lectures, or environmental practices. Such learning becomes an essential part of their knowledge. Thus, knowledge has a positive impact on student behavior. Due to previous educational practices, students react to new situations in the light of knowledge, "learning." Students learn by enhancing new activities and practices in schools and social environments. They make timely decisions to deal with new and recent special situations. The learning outcomes are changes in students' behavior that result from prior knowledge.

Tavil (2009) states that learning alters a student's attitude toward personal antiquities, knowledge actions, and reactions in certain situations. Language is an essential part of student learning. Students can learn more effectively in their mother tongue than in other languages. Mother tongue indeed aids in understanding educational situations. They quickly grasp their subjects in their native language. Understanding or using a few words or phrases does not imply a command of language. When gaining knowledge, one should comprehend the language and its nuances. English is widely known and used as a second language in Pakistan and worldwide.

Since it is an English business and technology language, almost all countries are interested in it. It is vital in research. It assists the researcher in completing their research. However, it needs to improve its vocabulary and usage for practical understanding and learning. Language learning requires a particular interest and attitude toward learning its basic, fundamental, and grammatically aspects. When students make mistakes or do not follow grammar rules, teachers must correct their errors or misspellings. It guides him in learning a second language.

Oliveria (1997) describes the behavior and attitudes of both male and female students in detail. Her research shows that when comparing student attitudes based on gender, female students are more interested in learning English than male students. However, the boys are not serious about English learning. Pakistan, a developing country, is in a similar situation. Male students have more opportunities to learn a second language, but they respond positively. Most male students waste time in other activities. According to Hashwani (2008), female students are more cautious about learning English than male students. Also, the mental status of men and women is not equal. Girls are more interested in learning English than boys. Girls learn better than boys. The people talk in their language. Language is essential in environmental and social activities to express our wants and needs. Learning begins when a baby is born, known as the mother language. Almost everywhere English is a compulsory subject. According to Arslan and Akbar (2012), English was taught in schools and educational institutions throughout Bosnia's history. After the war, a change was made in English language learning. Learning and understanding English was highly valued in Bosnia due to its global prominence. According to Shoaib and Dornyei (2005), student attitudes toward learning English vary by gender. Girls learn English more quickly than boys because they are keen to learn a second language. They learn more effectively because of this quality. In a situation, attitude means to act calmly. It includes observing a person's mental and emotional state with visual aids or listening to lectures given by knowledgeable professors inside or outside the classroom. Attitude also means feeling and reacting when faced with specific emotional and mental situations. As all of us know, Gaja Lakshmi has two attitudes: positive and negative. When a student is interested in learning a foreign language, basic grammatical rules, vocabulary, and appropriate usage, on the other hand, a person who has no interest in learning a second language will eventually have a negative attitude. Attitude includes knowledge gained from personal experiences and activities in one's life. The knowledge would change the relating person's behavior. Literate and illiterate people's experimental knowledge and learning system cause a sizeable emotional difference. It reflects the person's attitude towards learning a second language and understanding it completely.

Mehrens and Lehmann (1987) stated that educational work significantly impacts student attitudes. Positive or negative attitudes towards learning languages, especially second languages, depend on the student's environment. Vigorous activities are too near to express students' attitudes towards language learning. The literate natives increase positive attitude for language learning and politeness in dealing with the student. The illiterate members of the society may cause a negative attitude towards language learning skills. According to Mammon, Rahman, and Hossain, attitudes are divided into three categories: cognitive, evaluative, and behavioral. Cognitive attitude components have personal points of view, perceptions, and ethical, social values. The evaluative element influences an individual's liking or disliking, so language learners' behavior relates to learners' dependence on elders and self-competence in second language acquisition. Willingness is critical for learning a second language. It is due to students' interest in the corresponding language. Oliveria (1997) states that because female students do not have many outdoor activities, they have ample time to learn and study at home. So, they can quickly achieve their target objectives and goals. Because boy students spend time outside, they have less time to read, learn, and memorize lessons. According to Lakshami (2013), students' attitudes matter greatly when learning a second language. Researchers argue that attitudes are crucial to learning. Second language learning skills are based on attitude components and elements. Students with positive attitudes learn the English language more effectively. According to Visser (2008), mental capacities and abilities are essential for English second language learning, but the attitude toward learning is critical in any situation. According to Kiptui and Bmugua (2009), the lack of positive attitude was the cause of poor English language learning in secondary schools in Kenya. The learning of English as a second language varies significantly across countries. Students learn English as a second language from the age of 4 or 5, while in Spain, students learn English from 3. Sweden's educational institutions start the English language learning from 7 to 10. In Germany, students start learning English at the age of 8 to 10 years old, 53%. However, some educational institutes start at the age of 8 to 10 years and others at 5. In the UK, English language learning begins in the 8th grade. English language learning is not mandatory in Estonia. The students are free to choose it. With God's blessing, Pakistan is a vast Muslim state. She has four provinces, each with its mother tongue. English is a mandatory subject from kindergarten to graduation, and Pakistani English teachers are selected on merit because they are well-trained and qualified. They use practical tools and techniques

to teach English as a second language. They do their best to achieve their goals and objectives. In a developing country, most people are poor and spend a laborious life. These parents are mostly illiterate. It is not suitable for their children's education. Students from such backgrounds lack adequate English language learning resources. Nearly 20% of students do not have a positive attitude towards learning a second language. So, the tutor should have better awareness to teach and guide the students, they want to pass the class with the subject of English. According to Lakshami (2013), male students have a more positive attitude towards English language learning than female students. Tasmania Soleiani claims that male medical students in Iran are more enthusiastic about learning English than female students, with mean scores of 67.7 versus 63.9.

According to Arslan and Akbar (2012), 74% of students are enthusiastic about learning English in Bosnia, while 26% are less enthusiastic. According to Ushida (2005), some students have a positive approach to learning online English language courses, while others have a negative response and high anxiety for second language learning. In the current era, English is considered the language of the teaching-learning process. Many countries have adopted it as a medium of instruction in educational institutions. Society demands to adopt an international language, English. Malaysian schools now use English as a medium of instruction. The Engineering Petroleum University has emphasized teaching and learning in English. Pakistan has also been developing a curriculum and valuing English. In Pakistan, many public and private schools teach in English. Most studies have concluded that learning styles strongly link language acquisition and academic achievement. They are divided into teaching and learning styles. Both styles are effective in secondary teaching and learning. The findings of the researches emphasize the significance of learning styles in improving the capacity of learning situations. The researchers found that students respond positively to improved study habits and learning styles. In addition, learning styles play an essential role in this era. These styles help them to study more efficiently. Dunn et al., (1989) claims that teaching and learning styles are interconnected. If teachers want to deliver effective learning, students' learning styles should be considered. Similarly, teaching and learning styles are vital to completing the process successfully. It is stated that the importance of learning styles cannot be overstated. Learning styles influence academic achievement positively. It has also been proven that students with practical learning styles that match teaching styles and textbook approaches outperform others.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Comparing students' attitudes regarding learning English at the secondary school level is the focus of the current research. The current study is descriptive research since it collects a wide range of data to understand the current phenomena better (Ezeani, 1988). The dispersed population was surveyed using the survey method. This study's demographic includes all secondary school students in the Sahiwal division of public and private secondary educational institutions. A total of 500 students from public and private high schools made up the sample for this study. Students in the secondary school grades were chosen at random for this study. The researcher went to great lengths to gather the most accurate data possible. Participants came from a wide range of schools, with varying pupils taking part in each. Researchers were granted permission by the principals of two high schools to collect comparative data from ninth- and tenth-graders. Due to the data collection procedure, the researcher carefully picked the schools focusing on female educational institutions. Female secondary schools proved to be a challenge for the researchers when collecting data. The researchers adapted and used a self-created questionnaire to collect data for this investigation. The original questionnaire contained 25 items, all of which were rated on a five-point scale. Research instruments were validated and re-tested in small-scale pilot research to ensure validity and dependability. Another group of researchers was tasked with identifying any potential ambiguities in the survey's questions. The questionnaire was fine-tuned, with specific questions reworded, and then administered as a pilot study. Thirty male and female students from urban and rural schools were randomly assigned to participate in a pilot study to ensure the questionnaire was reliable and valid. It is essential to conduct a promising pilot study in the same manner as the final study by selecting a representative sample and negotiating access to it, providing an instrument, calculating response rates, and assessing those data (Gorard, 2003; Ali and Bibi, 2020; Kassem et al., 2019; Haider and Ali, 2015; Senturk and Ali, 2021; Sajid and Ali, 2018; Roussel et al., 2021). The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using the 'Cronbach's alpha,' and a value of 0.87 was found, indicating high reliability. The researcher visits the school and asks students and teachers random questions regarding the school's policies and procedures.

After obtaining consent from the headmasters/headmistresses/principals of the chosen schools, the researcher administered the questionnaires to the participants. The researcher personally collected the data. The professors' cooperation was commendable. Allowable time was provided for the students to answer each question on the

questionnaire. SPSS was used to analyze the tabulated data. Mean score, standard deviation, and t-test were employed to interpret the data presented in tables. Secondary school pupils' views about learning English are examined in the next section. There were 25 Likert-type questions in the data collection questionnaire. To see if there is a significant difference in opinion based on gender, the data was analyzed using the Mean Standard Deviation and the t-test.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students about their attitude towards learning English.

Table 1
Attitude Towards Learning English By Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	P
Female	200	112.68	10.41	8.41	.000
Male	300	100.13	13.08		

Table 1 shows students' responses about the attitude towards learning English by gender. The table reflects that the t-value (8.41) was significant at $p \leq 0.05$ for all male and female respondents. So, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it is concluded that female students ($M = 112.68$, $SD = 11.41$) have a significantly higher attitude towards learning English than male respondents ($M = 100.13$, $SD = 13.08$).

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of public and private students' attitudes towards learning English.

Table 2
Attitude towards Learning English by sector

Sector	N	Mean	SD	t	P
Public	250	100.01	14.45	5.77	0.000
Private	250	111.55	10.56		

Table 2 reflects responses of the secondary school students about their attitude towards learning English sector-wise. The table reflects that the t-value (5.77) was significant at $p \leq 0.05$ for all public and private sector respondents. So, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it is concluded that private school students ($M = 111.55$, $SD = 10.56$) have a significantly higher attitude towards learning English than public secondary school students ($M = 100.01$, $SD = 14.45$).

V. FINDING AND CONCLUSIONS

When male and female students were compared regarding their attitude towards learning English, the t-value (8.41) was found significant at $p \leq 0.05$. It can be concluded that female students ($M = 112.68$, $SD = 10.41$) have a significantly higher attitude towards learning English than male respondents ($M = 100.13$, $SD = 13.08$). The sector wise comparison reflects that t-value (5.77) was significant at $p \leq 0.05$ for the respondents of public sector and private sector secondary school students. It can be concluded that respondents of private secondary school students ($M = 111.55$, $SD = 10.56$) have a significantly higher attitude towards learning English than the secondary school students in private sector ($M = 100.01$, $SD = 14.45$). The conclusion of the study drawn from the findings as; the study concluded that female students showed higher attitude towards learning English as compared to male students. Similarly, conclusions were drawn that students of private secondary school students have higher attitude towards learning English as compared to students of public sector. The study's findings lead to these suggestions. English students should seriously consider adopting and studying English. This study shows us beneficial outcomes. Student values these outcomes. They should take this advice to heart. These ideas will help students learn English and perform better in class. Here are some ideas:

1. Students' attitudes toward studying English should be shaped by teachers using methods that encourage student participation.
2. According to the survey, women had a more positive attitude toward studying English than men. In order to better understand what influences students' attitudes about learning English, a qualitative study is recommended. The findings of this study can influence students' attitudes toward learning English.
3. Students find it tedious to study English since they have to spend much time in front of a book. Learners' needs and interests should be the primary considerations while designing a program.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, M. B., Ali, M. Q., and Zainab, N. (2021). Secondary School Teachers' Attitude toward Teaching English as a Second Language: A Comparative Study. *Negotiations 1* (3), 64-72.

- Ahmed, S. (2015). Attitudes towards English Language Learning among EFL Learners at UMSKAL. *Journal of education and practice*, 6(18), 6-16.
- Ali, M. Q., Amin, R. U., Nasrullah, and Alam, M. F. (2021). Cooperation, Motivation, and Anxiety: Evidence from Secondary School Level Urdu Speaking English Language Learners at District Vihari, Pakistan. *Linguistica Antverpiensia*, 2021(3), 4425-4431.
- Ali, M. Q., Kashif, N. U., and Shahzad, M. A. (2020). Brain Based Learning and Urdu EFL Learners' Academic Achievement in English at Secondary School Level in District Vehari. *Global Language Review*, V (II), 135-144.
- Ali, M. Q., Shahzad, M. A., Malik, N. J., and Iqbal, M. N. (2021). Students' Attitude towards Learning English at Secondary School Level in Punjab Province during COVID-19 Pandemic. *Harfo Sukhan*, 5(3), 18-32.
- Ali, A., & Bibi, C. (2020). Public Policies, Socio-Economic Environment and Crimes In Pakistan: A Time Series Analysis. *Bulletin of Business and Economics (BBE)*, 9(1), 1-11.
- Alkaff, A. A. (2013). Students Attitudes and Perceptions towards Learning English. *Arab world English Journal*, 4(2), 106-121.
- Asma, S. Muhammad, Q. A. & Najam, K. (2019). Students' Conceptual Mindfulness about Learning Pronunciation at College Level. *International Journal Online of Humanities*, 5(6), 30-52.
- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principle of Language Learning and teaching*. New Jersey.
- Chay, S. C. & Troudi, S. (2006). An investigation into the changes in perception of and attitudes towards learning English in a Malaysian college. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 18(2), 120-130.
- Dunn, R., Dunn, K. and Price, G. E. (1989). *Learning Style Inventory*. Lawrence, K. A: Price System, Inc.
- Ezeani, S. I. (1988). *Research Methods: A Realistic Approach*. Ibadan: Elohim Publishers.
- Haider, A., & Ali, A. (2015). Socio-economic determinants of crimes: a cross-sectional study of Punjab districts. *International Journal of Economics and Empirical Research*, 3(11), 550-560.
- Kassem, M. Ali, A. & Audi, M. (2019). Unemployment Rate, Population Density and Crime Rate in Punjab (Pakistan): An Empirical Analysis. *Bulletin of Business and Economics (BBE)*, 8(2), 92-104.
- Lakshami, B. S. (2013). Reflective practice in English classroom. *ZENITH International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 3(3), 176-182.
- MacKeracher, D. (2004). *Making Sense of Adult Learning (2ndED)*. Canada: University of Toronto Press Incorporated.
- Mawoli, M. A. and Babandako, A. Y. (2011). An Evaluation of Staff Motivation, Dissatisfaction and Job Performance in an Academic Setting. *Australian Journal of Business and Management Research*, 1(9), 1-13.
- Mehrens, W. A. and Lehmann, I. J. (1987). Using Teacher-Made Measurements Devices. *NASSP Bulletin*, 71(496), 36-44.
- Olivera, A. A. (1997). Student Attitudes towards Learning and School Study of Exploratory Models about the Effects of Socio-demographics and Personal Attributes. 1-6.
- Rafeeq, K., Ali, M. Q., and Zainab, N. (2021). Teachers' Mindful Conception about the Use of STEM Education at Secondary School Level. *Global Educational Studies Review*, VI (IV), 111-120.
- Roussel, Y., Ali, A., & Audi, M. (2021). Measuring the money demand in Pakistan: a time series analysis. *Bulletin of Business and Economics (BBE)*, 10(1), 27-41.
- Sajid, A. & Ali, A. (2018). Inclusive Growth and Macroeconomic Situations in South Asia: An Empirical Analysis. *Bulletin of Business and Economics (BBE)*, 7(3), 97-109.
- Şentürk, İ., & Ali, A. (2021). Socioeconomic Determinants of Gender Specific Life Expectancy in Turkey: A Time Series Analysis. *Sosyoekonomi*, 29(49), 85-111.
- Shoib, A. and Dornyei, Z. (2005). Affect in life-long learning: Exploring L2 Motivation as a dynamic process. In P. Benson & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Learners' stories: Difference and Diversity in language learning* (pp. 22-41). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tavil, Z. (2009). Parental Attitude Towards English Education for Kinder garden students in Turkey. *Kastamonu Education Journal* 17(1), 331-340.
- Ushida, E. (2005). The role of students Attitude and Motivation in 2nd Language Learning in Online Language courses. *CALLICO Journal* 2(1), 49-78.
- Visser, M. (2008). Learning under Conditions of Hierarchy and Discipline. The Case of German Army (1939-1940). *Learning Inquiry*, 2, 127 -137.