CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENGLISH AND ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract: The aim of this quantitative study is to discover that how the two independent variables, attitudes and achievement level, relate with each other. The study is comprised of a five-point Likert scale questionnaire administered to 120 students of three variant colleges to measure their attitudes. Students' transcripts were compared with the attitudes to analyse the related understanding of the problem and their implication in Pakistan's three streamed education system. The information collected from the tools reveal that attitudes do correlate with achievement. The relationship is significant but very weak. Students have over all highly positive attitudes, no matter which type of institute they attend.

Introduction: The very word attitude is fishy one. Attitude is a psychological construct, it is a mental and emotional entity that characterizes a person. Al-Mamun, Rahman, Rahman, and Hossaim (2012). Learning could not come about easily unless students have positive attitudes toward it on one hand, and attitudes might originate from life experiences, on the other hand. As such, since attitude can influence success or failure in learning, it plays a very crucial role. Prominent psychologist Gordon Allport (1935) described attitudes as a concept of social psychology which holds a distinctive and contemporary position.

Correlation between students' attitude and target language proficiency is a controversial issue among researchers. Saidat (2010) is of the view that research on language attitude has been initiated in the previous 50 years because of the growing interest on importance of the language use and the nature of individuals. Tahaineh and Danna (2013) noted that attitudes played an eminent role in determining one's behavior. It worked as a stimuli. Malallah (2000) focused on the inter relationships between attitude, motivation, anxiety and academic achievement of language learners. The research confirmed her hypotheses and found that the more a student was exposed to the English language, the more he showed positive attitude toward English language and English speaking population and the more a student needed the English language either for present studies or for future career, the more positive his attitudes appeared toward the language.

A large number of recent studies addressed the role of attitudes in learning foreign language in different cultural background with different variables. Sevim İnal -İlke Evin -A. Seda Saracaloğlu (2015) investigated that whether students' attitudes differ according to gender, type of high school, the medium of instruction, mother's education, father's education, knowing any foreign language and being or not being abroad and whether or not their achievement level differ due to the same contributions. Students showing negative attitude were not successful in their school grades. Elham (2012) contrasted the majority of the existing ideology of significantly positive relationship between attitudes and achievement in language learning. The results showed that there was no significant correlation between proficiency level of participants (high, middle and low) and attitude toward English Another similar study was conducted by Amirah (2016) in different universities in the US. Though the majority had very high positive attitude and showed willingness to invest effort and money in learning English regardless of gender and year of study, they had lesser intrinsic motivation and were mostly driven by extrinsic motives.

Research Methodology:

The hypothesis is:

1. H_0: There is no statistically significant relationship between students' attitudes toward English language and achievement scores.

- Two instruments were utilized in this study.
  1. A questionnaire about attitudes toward English
  2. Students' transcripts (Document Analysis)

Sample population of the investigation consisted of three groups of intermediate students with different mediums of instruction.

1. Punjab College Lahore: where English is the medium of instruction
2. Hamayat-e- Islam College Lahore: where English and Urdu both are the medium of instruction but exposure to English is lesser than Urdu.
3. Iqra Huffaz Girls College where Urdu and English both the languages are being used as the medium of instruction but their immediate interaction was with Arabic more than other two languages mentioned above.

Forty participants were selected from each group to participate voluntarily. Correlation coefficients were used in statistics to measure how strong a relationship between two variables was. Pearson product- moment correlation coefficient was utilized to measure the strength of the linear relationship between two variables: x= attitudes and y= percentage.The correlation coefficient was computed and tabulated using SPSS statistical software to determine the relationship

Results and Discussion:

Table 1.1: Correlations

Correlations		Attitudes	Percentage
Attitudes	Pearson Correlation	1	.193[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.034
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	10565.925	2046.200
	Covariance	88.789	17.195
	N	120	120
Percentage	Pearson Correlation	.193[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	2046.200	10585.467
	Covariance	17.195	88.954
	N	120	120
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

The correlation matrix shows the correlation coefficients for each pair of variables. Significance values and the sample size for the numbers of pairs of variables used in that correlation. Tukey test was preferably fit for the statistical evaluation of the matrix due to the clean data set.

The above matrix shows that there was a positive but weak relationship between attitude and achievement in English, r=.193 and significance was .034. The effect size, although small, is still statistically significant at the 0.05 level for this two tailed test. The null hypothesis H_0 (that there is no relationship between the two variables) was rejected and the researcher had to go for alternate hypothesis H_1 which showed that there was relationship found between the two variables.

A low Pearson correlation or weak positive relationship does not mean that no relationship physically exists between the variables. The relationship may have a non-linear relationship. To check for relationship is linear or non- linear graphically, a scatter was created and presented below.
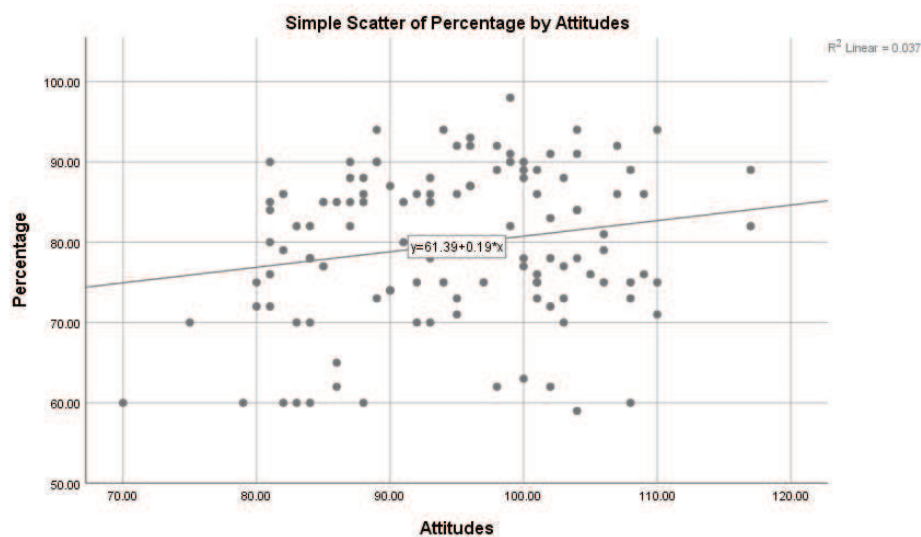
Figure 1.1: Attitudes' Scatterplot

The line went from left to right showing the equation as y= 61.39 +0.19*x and linear correlation is r linear = 0.037 showed positive, weak relationship. With real data, no researcher would expect to get values of r of exactly -1, 0, or +1.

These findings were indicative of what was upheld in current literature. In Tahaineh and Danna's (2013) opinion, attitudes have indirect relation with second language learning. The results of present study revealed weak, linear correlation between both the independent variables. The results were different to the identical study conducted by Malallah Seham. Identical findings to the present study were reported by Elham (2012). Amirah's (2016) views matched the present study findings, who observed Saudi students in different universities of the US and found that their TOEFL scores were consistently low but majority of them were willing to spend time and money on English language courses. The present correlational study findings support Burstall's theory. Burstall (1975) seconds Gardener (1974) with a little variation, whose theory revealed the important causal relationship between attitudes and learning outcomes. Gardener and his colleagues are of the view that attitudes are the principal which stimulate the successful learning. Gardener's socio-educational model contrasts with Schuman's Acculturation Model and Giles and Byrone's Inter- group Model. Both the models are concerned with natural setting for L2 learning. Gardener's Socio- educational model is concerned with the procedure of second language learning in formal setting. The same was explained by Lambert (1974) But Burstall (1975) takes both learning and attitudes as independent variables. To him not only positive attitudes produce successful learning but successful learning is capable of promoting positive attitudes too. So is proven by the present research study that attitudes do not only have causal effect rather achievement has the same effect on attitudes too. A very less number of studies confirmed, till so far that, there was a weak relationship between both the variables. As Elham (2012) reinforced the idea that measurement of attitudes could not predict achievement and achievement could not affect attitudes either in positive or negative way. But majority of studies, conducted on the same issue, braced that there was a strong, positive relationship between both the variables as it was verified by Gomleksiz (2010).When the researcher probed into the details, she found that the other similar studies about attitudes have different contexts than the present one's.

To conclude the results of this small scale study revealed that there was a significantly positive but weak linear relationship found between both the independent variables__ students' attitudes toward and

achievement in English. The relationship was weak but not negative as the variables did not oppose each other.

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