

## A Study On Correlation Between Attitude Of Pre-Medical Students And Their English Essay Writing Competency

Sadia Iqbal<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Umbreen Ishfaq<sup>2\*</sup>, Dr. Tehseen Tahir<sup>3</sup>, Dr Kifayat Khan<sup>4</sup>, Haleema Nawaz<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD. Scholar, Department of Education, The University of Haripur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,

Email: Pakistansadiatalokar@gmail.com

<sup>2\*</sup>Associate Professor, Corresponding Author, Department of Education, The University of Haripur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,

Email: Pakistanumbreenishfaq@uoh.edu.pk

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Education, The University of Haripur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,

Email: Pakistantehseen.tahir@uoh.edu.pk

<sup>4</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Education, The University of Haripur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Email: kaif\_hu@yahoo.com

<sup>5</sup>PhD. Scholar, Department of Education, The University of Haripur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Email: haleema.kf929@gmail.com

**\*Corresponding Author:** Dr. Umbreen Ishfaq

\*Email: umbreenishfaq@uoh.edu.pk

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### ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between the attitude of pre-medical students and their essay writing achievement. In this study the researcher focused on the attitude of pre-medical students. The researcher also examined influence of attitude of students on their English essay writing. The researcher developed four-point Likert scale for attitude of students and a test for measuring the Essay writing competency of students. The population of the study was pre-medical students of second year from higher secondary in district Haripur. The sample was comprised of the realistic population of the study as 320 male and 228 female students. The data was collected through survey. The finding of the study showed that pre-medical students' attitude and writing competence were correlated and attitude of learner had a considerable influence on their writing. Thus, on the basis of their findings it was recommended that teacher must create such environment in class in which students can practice and enhance their writing that lead towards the construction of positive attitude among students.

**Key Words:** attitude, English language proficiency, medical students

### INTRODUCTION

According to Lewis (2009) Pakistan is a multiethnic and multilingual nation where 72 different languages are spoken. English and Urdu are the two primary languages used in Pakistan's educational system. Coleman (2010) stated that only 6% of Pakistanis are native Urdu speakers. However, English is also used as an official language (Fareed et al, 2014). In Pakistan like in many other nations, English is a necessary subject since it is seen as a crucial language in the academic community. As in Pakistan pre-medical group include subjects like physics, chemistry and biology and these are in English. For them to achieve their objectives, medical students must study the language and increase their degree of competence. Although they are exposed to English, pupils seldom utilize it daily, and their ability falls short of what their teachers would want.

According to Hassan et al. (1995, pp. 277-282) stated that English language became lingua franca in the world of medicine for communicating internationally and because of its prevailing importance most of the medical institution implemented this language as medium of instruction. In fact, it was observed that use of English language at different levels like conferences, lectures, articles and medical textbooks is steadily increasing (Chia et al., 1999; Hwang & Lin 2010; Maher, 1986).

Numerous academics have proposed multiple definitions of attitude to explain it. By way of illustration, Allport (1954, p.45) defined attitude as a neural and mental readiness condition that is structured by experience, and it laid a direct and vibrant impact on a person behaviour or reaction towards the related objects and conditions. Ajzen (1988) claimed that attitude is "a disposition to react favourably or unfavourably to a person, object, event, or institution" (p. 4). An attitude, in the words of Al-Mamun et al. (2012), is a hypothetical psychological concept which defines or encourages certain behaviours and explains their course and persistence. As a result, attitude is an evaluative reaction derived from a person's positive or negative sentiments, beliefs, or ideas towards a certain issue (Gardner, 1985).

According to Gusti Nur and Sofi (2019) English language has four basic skills which learners have to acquire for improving their English language competence. These are reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Among these writing is thought to be more complex and difficult to understand because the in it not only the learner have to organize their ideas but also produce

comprehensible text. Writing is a productive skill, and a good writing requires the ability of grammar, vocabulary, mechanics content and organization etc. as most of the subjects are in English language so the medical students must develop the mastery of writing so that in this way, he will be able to obtain his target.

It is thought that some factors also have an impact on English essay writing competency. The most important factor is the attitude of students towards the importance of English writing proficiency. Baker (1993) explained those students who have positive attitude towards learning to write essays, they would learn by following different techniques like questioning answering etc. therefore, it will increase the rate of development in the desired proficiency. Moreover, according to him attitudes are dynamic, and they can be improved their essay writing ability through practicing and by adopting different techniques and those students who learn best in writing essays they will automatically have positive attitude towards English language. Bagheri (2015) described medical students have to improve their English competence because in this way they will be able to achieve their desired goal.

Keeping in view the importance of English language of medical students' attitude towards English writing competency, the purpose of the study was to examine relationship between pre-medical students' attitude and their success in essay writing competency and to investigate the influence of students' attitude on the achievement in essay writing.

#### **The main objectives of study are following:**

- To examine the relationship between pre-medical students' attitude and achievement in essay writing
- To investigate the influence of students' attitude on the essay writing competence.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

It is thought that describing attitude is a difficult concept. Consequently, numerous academics have proposed multiple definitions to explain it. a learner attribute like attitude is important for students' success in a topic (Allah et al., 2019). Ghazali et al. (2009) described attitude as a person's preferences, biases, thoughts, anxiety, and opinions with regard to any subject. Good (1973) defined an attitude as a propensity or inclination to respond in a certain way to a thing, circumstance, or value; this reaction is typically accompanied by sentiments and emotions. Attitudes cannot be seen directly; rather they must be deduced from overt conduct, including verbal and nonverbal cues. The evaluative nature of attitude influences a person's disposition and propensity to react favourably or unfavourably to stimuli. Sanchez and Gavilánez (2017) mentioned one of the key elements that affect students' performance in learning the English language is their attitude.

West African Examinations Council (2018) reported that many pupils have unfavourable opinions generally towards English and specifically towards writing and reading. Several research were conducted on the investigating the way negative attitude influences on the achievement in writing (Bastug, 2015; Bulut, 2017; Jabali, 2018). According to Jabali (2018) mostly students have a negative tendency towards writing. It was investigated by Bulut (2017) that attitude of grade four students towards writing and self-efficacy are strongly interrelated on their achievement in writing of summary. It was found by Bastug (2015) that writing competence and attitude have significant and positive impact upon achievement in writing. Similarly, Jabali (2018) conducted research on examining the Palestinians' writing attitude and discovered positive writing attitudes of students.

Abiodun and Folaranmi (2009) declared essay writing typically involves composition. This suggests the capacity to either narrate or repeat informational fragments in the form of a story or a description or to rewrite material into fresh writings, such as explanatory or argumentative essays. Students who are writing in a second language often experience difficulties with this task. Writing an essay needs deliberate struggles and practice in creating, developing, and examining ideas. Students writing in a second language (L2) must develop linguistic fluency as well as writing methods, approaches, and abilities. This contrasts with those students writing in their original language (L1).

The study of writing essay in a second language, especially English, has received a lot of attention from linguists in recent years. According to scholars Adegbile (1996) and Fakeye (2001), there is a requirement for good essay writing instruction in secondary schools. Therefore, different studies found a relationship between students' proficiency in writing quality essays and other areas of the English language. Fakeye (2001) claimed that students who had effective essay writing proficiency in English outperform whereas who are not proficient, are unable to do so they perform badly.

Widodo (2008) stated that a teacher experiences different problem while teaching about essay processes containing pre-planning, drafting, responding, reviewing, editing, and post-writing and all these steps required to have a comprehensive understanding of structure, grammatical accuracy, extensive vocabulary, accurate use of spelling, mechanics, and the ability to organise their knowledge until they can turn it into a genuine piece of academic writing. To assist the students in producing their academic writing products during such complicated procedures, the instructor must identify the most effective instructional strategies. Oshima (2007, p. 196) mentioned five components of rubrics for writing an essay. These are format for the title, punctuation, content, organization, structure of the sentence and grammar.

Ghazali et al. (2009) claim that learning English is essential for fostering the development of people's knowledge, information, and communication abilities. The act of putting one's thoughts, emotions, or ideas into appropriate words and phrases with the intention of communicating them to the reader results in writing. Nunan (2000) Gul, R., Ahmad, I., Tahir, T., Ishfaq, U. 2022 asserts that learners' attitudes, abilities, and learning methods affect their level of performance or underachievement. English language learning has been considered by language teachers as well as students since medical students' ability in the language plays a significant role in their accomplishments and jobs.

It was observed by Komolafe and Yara (2010) that failure of the learners in the examination of English language is related to their incompetence in writing essays. It was reported by the West African Examination Council (2019) that there are several common factors in its failure and these are lack of awareness of grammar rules, inability of sentence construction, unawareness of modern teaching method, and lack of coherence in their writing. Moreover, it was mentioned in the said

report that high school students faced such challenges in their continuous writing and showed poor level of understanding and practices in English language.

It has become a very common issue for our higher secondary pre-medical students when they are asked to write essay in English. Keeping in view the observation the researcher tends to examine the relationship of the students towards English writing and essay writing achievement in order to know whether they are related.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is quantitative because the purpose of the research is to find out the correlation between attitude of pre-medical students and their English writing competence. Non-experimental design used in this study in which the researcher applied correlation statistics for measuring and describing the degree of relationship between variables (Lodico et al., 2010).

## PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

The population of the study was pre-medical students of second year (320 male students and 228 female students) of higher secondary level in District Haripur of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan. The sample was comprised of the realistic population of the study 320 male and 228 female students.

## RESEARCH TOOLS

A Likert Scale was designed for determining the attitude of students towards writing and a test for measuring the writing competence of the students was developed with the help of English Subject Specialists.

## VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY:

Pilot testing was administered on 18 (non-sample population) to check the validity and reliability of the tools. Validity was tested by taking the experts opinion. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested by Cronbach's alpha, and it was 0.85 while the test reliability was determined by using split half test and the Split Half co-efficient was 0.962.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analysed based on research objective of the study. The Kendall's tau b bivariate correlation and linear regression were applied as this study has independent ordinal variable (attitude of students) and dependent continuous variable (writing competency). The following tables represented the analysis of data.

**Table 1 Correlation between attitude of pre-medical students and their English writing competency**

		Attitude of Students towards English Writing
Kendall's tau_b English Writing Competency	Correlation Coefficient	.096**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	548

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table 1 depicted the correlation between attitude of pre-medical students and their English writing competency. There is significant positive correlation found between attitude of pre-medical students and their writing competency as portrayed by  $r(548) = .096, p = .001 < .05$ .

**Table 2: Regression Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.186 <sup>a</sup>	.035	.033	11.63800

a. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude

The above table showed how the predictive relationship between regressor and regressed occur. Table 2 illustrated the R square value 0.035(3.5%) and adjusted R square 0.033(3.3%) showed weak predictive relation between Attitude scores (independent) and English writing competency scores (dependent) variable.

**Table 3: ANOVA Effect using English writing competency as dependent variable**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2650.260	1	2650.260	19.567	.000 <sup>b</sup>
1 Residual	73951.879	546	135.443		
Total	76602.139	547			

a. Dependent Variable: ENGLISH

b. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude

Table 4.3 indicated the ANOVA analysis, which showed significant effect of attitude towards English to the writing competency of students. The  $F(1, 546) = 19.567, p < 0.05$ .

**Table 4: Coefficient Regression Analysis of attitude of students on English writing competency.**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	43.423	4.210		10.314	.000
Attitude	6.300	1.424	.186	4.423	.000

a. Dependent Variable: ENGLISH

The table measures marginal effect size of independent variable in which attitude of students towards English writing. Test predicted performance of students in English competency is equal to 43.423 – 6.300 (attitude). The performance of students increased 6.300 per cent of attitude as beta weight  $\beta = .186$ ,  $t(1, 546) = 4.423$  and  $p < .05$  depicted significant effect. The independent variable (attitude of students) was significant predictor of dependent variable (performance in English test).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study revealed positive significant correlation between attitude and writing competency of pre-medical students. Abegglen et al. (2020) elaborate that encouraging academic literacies and practices, such as reading and writing, may produce powerful social environments for real-world cooperative learning. They contend that creative text presentation strategies, such text scrolls, can improve students' attitudes towards reading and writing by facilitating dialogic and multimodal interaction with texts.

Furthermore, Choate (2017) discussed on how academic identity is changing in the context of higher education. She contends that the introduction of Education-Focused (EF) academic roles, which place a strong emphasis on academic performance and excellent instruction, may improve students' attitudes towards writing assignments among other academic activities.

Delante (2017) examines how written feedback affects students' academic writing abilities. He discovered that more often than other sorts of feedback, corrective feedback, inquisitive inquiries, and instructional feedback were used. According to this conclusion, the type of feedback kids receive can have a big impact on how they feel about writing and, as a result, how proficient they are at it.

This study concludes that there is a link between students' attitudes and their proficiency in English writing. Students' writing abilities can be improved by fostering constructive feedback and positive attitudes towards English writing in the classroom.

In this study, it was discovered that students' attitudes about English writing had a considerable influence on their ability to write in the language. Many studies have looked at the link between these factors and have discovered strong evidence to support the idea that attitude has a significant impact on the way learners communicate by writing.

For instance, Wang's (2021) study looked into how contextualised writing workshops affected the English writing abilities of students studying international business. The research found that students who took part in these workshops, which attempted to change their perspective on English writing, showed appreciable improvements in their writing ability. In addition, a study by Smith and Johnson (2019) looked at how primary school children's writing ability was impacted by their attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs. The findings suggested a substantial influence of attitude on writing outcomes as students who had a good attitude towards writing had better levels of writing proficiency. Similar to this, a study by Lee and Kim (2018) investigated the connection between college students' attitudes towards writing and their writing performance. The results showed a strong relationship between attitude and writing proficiency, suggesting that a positive attitude towards writing results in improved writing results.

Collectively, these studies show how attitudes towards English writing have an enormous influence on students' writing skills. Students can be inspired, their interest can be increased, and their writing abilities can be enhanced with a positive writing attitude. To improve students' writing outcomes, educators and policymakers should think about how crucial it is to encourage a good attitude towards writing.

In conclusion, researches repeatedly show a substantial relationship between students' attitudes towards English writing and their writing proficiency. Writing abilities may be enhanced by fostering a positive attitude towards writing through focused interventions and encouraging learning settings.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the conclusion of research

- i. It is recommended that to make the learning process more real and exciting for developing attitude of students, teachers may choose materials that are relevant to the topic such as newspaper articles, blogs, or short stories. Students will gain a positive attitude towards language and teachers may check how English writing and language abilities are used in real-world situations.
- ii. Assigning frequent writing projects by English teachers may encourage students to write on a regular basis. Give students a range of writing exercises that are appropriate for their interests and writing abilities. Students' attitudes, writing abilities, and confidence will all improve with time and consistency of practise.
- iii. Teachers may introduce several writing techniques to the learners, such as planning, rewriting, and brainstorming. Teach students to organise their writing clearly, utilise suitable language and terminology, and edit their work for coherence and clarity. Students who use these techniques will be able to write more effectively. These activities may significantly influence their attitude and may increase their writing competency.



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