



Factors Affecting the Secondary School Students' Attitude towards Learning English Language: A Case of a Higher Secondary School in Southern Bhutan

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author SS designed the article, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author SD supervised the work and corrected the first draft of the manuscript. Author KW co-supervised and provided feedbacks in the process. Author SC managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the factors affecting higher secondary school students' attitudes toward learning English as a second language in southern Bhutan. The study intended to investigate factors affecting the attitudes of Bhutanese secondary students towards learning English as the researcher could not locate any studies done by Bhutanese in Bhutan. The study is conducted to

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identify the factors that influence the attitudes of secondary school students toward English learning and their performance in English. The study employed the convergent parallel mixed-methods design guided by a pragmatic paradigm. The quantitative data consists of randomly administered questionnaires to 302 students from class IX to XII. The qualitative data was collected through focus group students and semi-structured interview teachers. The study employed simple descriptive and inferential statistical analysis for quantitative data and thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2018) for qualitative analysis. The findings indicated that secondary school students possess both positive and negative attitudes toward learning English as a second language. Further, the finding indicated that educational factors such as the classroom environment and classroom teaching-learning strategies are found to have influences on students' attitudes towards learning English. The finding also revealed that the authentic and appropriate textbooks and the use of interesting varieties of teaching-learning materials by teachers affect the attitudes of students towards learning English. The home and community environment such as parental support and the opportunities to speak English in the community are also found to have an impact on student's attitudes toward learning English. The finding implies that a positive attitude towards the English language enhances language learning and negative attitude detracts the learning process. The study recommends the school and the teachers create a comfortable and conducive classroom environment and implement appropriate teaching-learning strategies and materials to enhance the positive attitude of students toward learning English as a second language. The study also recommends parents and the community support and encourage the use of English to enhance students' positive attitudes toward learning English.

Keywords: Attitude; classroom environment; learning materials; home; community; peer impact.

1. INTRODUCTION

The English language is important in a variety of fields around the world. The English language serves as an international language of communication [1]. Therefore, English has a special position since it has become the international language of communication. Education is a powerful tool to adapt a child's behavior to society's demands and expectations. Learner attitudes are considered to be one of the most important factors affecting English learning, and both negative and positive attitudes have a strong impact on language learning success [2]. This indicates that if students have a positive attitude towards any subject in education, they can accomplish a lot in that field. In Bhutan, the government not only decided to include English as a subject in the curriculum but also as the medium of instruction. English is the language of curricula as most subjects taught in school are taught in English [3]. In addition to Dzongkha being the national language, English holds a crucial position in various sectors such as government, corporations, private enterprises, education, business, and mass media in Bhutan. Higher secondary school is an important stage for students and they are aware of the importance of English in academic study as well as in their professional life in the future. Therefore, this study was intended to examine

the factors affecting secondary school students' attitudes toward English learning.

1.1 Problem Statement

Studies have been conducted on students' attitudes toward learning English. However, researchers have located limited studies conducted on the factors affecting secondary school students' attitudes toward English learning. For instance, Gajalakshmi [2] conducted research on the same subject and identified that gender, school location, school type, and management type are significant factors that impact students' attitudes towards English language learning. Although there have been a few studies done in other countries, the researcher could not locate any studies done by the Bhutanese in Bhutan. Therefore, the study intended to investigate factors affecting the attitudes of Bhutanese secondary students toward learning English.

The primary emphasis of the current study revolves around exploring the factors that influence the attitudes of secondary school students towards learning the English language. Ahmed [1] claims that there is a positive association between learning outcomes and attitudes toward second language learning. In his opinion, a student who acknowledges the importance of learning English and demonstrates

it through actions exhibits a positive attitude towards language learning. Conversely, if a student does not perceive the significance of English, it indicates a lack of value for the subject. Hence, this study was conducted to examine the factors that impact the attitudes of secondary school students in Bhutan towards learning English. English language learning in Bhutanese schools is solely conducted through formal instruction, with Bhutanese teachers who may not be native English speakers. Therefore, the researcher intended to conduct this study on secondary students of southern Bhutan, as he believes that students from this district seem to have various attitudes towards English and have observed less achievement in learning English as a subject.

1.2 Significance

It is widely accepted that student attitudes toward English are an important predictor of success in a foreign language, and both positive and negative attitudes toward English have a major impact on student learning [1,2,4,5]. Furthermore, English learning can be successful if the teacher correctly identifies the students' attitudes, so that the teacher can build a positive feeling that can counteract the students' negative feelings (Gorja, 2016). Therefore, the study is significant as:

- The study would identify the factors affecting the attitudes of secondary students toward learning the English language.
- The study would provide an in-depth understanding of the factors that influence students' attitude toward the English learning process and their performance in the English Language.
- The research findings could contribute towards mitigating the decreasing attitudes towards English among secondary school students.
- The findings would offer empirical data for policymakers and the course developers of the English language in developing curriculum policy regarding teaching English to secondary students.
- The study would add on to the existing theoretical knowledge on the particular topic.
- The study would encourage teachers to use diverse techniques to guide students to enhance their positive attitude toward learning English

1.3 Research Questions

Main Question: What are the factors affecting the attitude of secondary school students of southern Bhutan towards learning English?

Sub Questions:

- (1) What is the secondary school students' attitude towards learning the English language?
- (2) What are the potential factors that can impact the attitudes of secondary school students, both positively and negatively, towards English language learning?
- (3) How significant is the impact of each identified factor on the attitudes of students towards English language learning?
- (4) What are the secondary school teachers' perspectives concerning students' attitudes toward English at the secondary level?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the reviewed literature on the concepts of attitude, attitude towards language, and language learning, as well as the most influential factors that impact students' attitudes towards learning English as a second language, such as personal/internal factors, educational factors, and social factors.

2.1 The concept of Attitude

Since attitude is the subject of investigation in different specialized areas, there are different definitions of attitudes depending on the discipline. Garrett [6] found that attitude has emotional, intellectual, and behavioral aspects and defined it as the tendency to think, feel, and act in a specific direction toward a specific person or object. attitudes encompass an individual's perspectives, convictions, feelings, and predisposition towards specific actions [1,7,8,2,9]. Hence, the primary emphasis of this study revolves around exploring the emotions and sentiments, likes and dislikes that individuals hold towards the English language.

2.2 Concept of Attitude towards Language

Language attitudes encompass the psychological frameworks that an individual holds towards their native language or other languages [10,9]. Attitudes towards foreign languages, on the other hand, refers to an individual's perception of a

language other than their mother tongue. Mustafa et al. [4] state that attitudes towards language reflect a set of values that students bring to the process of learning a foreign language. Thus, in this study, the attitude towards language refers to attitudes towards English as a second language.

2.3 Language Learning and Attitude

The role of attitude is recognized as significant in the process of acquiring English language skills and achieving academic success. Learning attitudes are thought to influence behaviors, inner mood, and thus learning [8,2,11]. Furthermore, it is evident that there is a correlation between language learning and students' attitudes towards learning English [9]. In the field of education, students' attitudes towards a particular subject are considered crucial affective factors that significantly influence their success in learning a second language, such as English, and achieving academic excellence. Hence, both positive and negative attitudes play a significant role in shaping students' learning outcomes and academic performance in English language acquisition [12,2,4,11]. Hence, attitudes are pivotal in the process of language acquisition as they seem to impact students' achievements or setbacks in learning a new language. Furthermore, Abdelkader and Amine [13] report that a positive attitude towards language enables the learner to have a positive orientation when learning English. Conversely, negative attitudes can impede the progress of a student's learning journey. Consequently, learners who exhibit positive attitudes towards English language acquisition are more likely to be motivated and achieve success in their language learning endeavors. This point is further examined and declared in Abidin et al. [12] that success in acquiring a target language is not solely dependent on cognitive ability, but also on the learner's attitudes towards language learning. As a result, learners who exhibit a positive attitude towards learning English are at an advantage compared to those with a negative attitude [14]. They further argue that students who hold negative attitudes towards English language learning tend to lose motivation, as these attitudes act as barriers that hinder the learning process and impede the acquisition of new English language skills. Similarly, the idea is supported in Mustafa et al. [4] that Learners who exhibit a negative attitude towards learning English are less likely to put in effort in speaking

and are expected to experience lower levels of success in both English language acquisition and academic performance. This indicates that positive attitudes facilitate English language learning, whereas negative attitudes act as a psychological barrier against it. Thus, the above discussion confirms that students' attitudes towards English language learning can significantly impact their language acquisition progress and overall academic performance.

2.4 Factors Affecting Students' Attitudes towards Learning English as the Second Language

Numerous studies and literature reviews have been conducted to investigate the various factors that influence student attitudes towards English language learning. These factors, which encompass personality traits, educational backgrounds, and social influences, have been identified as having a direct impact on students' language skills and academic achievements [12,15,1,7,8,2,16,14].

Therefore, the literature review in this section pays particular attention to the most influential factors influencing students' attitudes towards learning English as a second language, such as personal or internal factors, educational factors, and social factors.

2.4.1 Learners' personality

Personality is the individual characteristics or traits that determine potential and common abilities and which are exclusively reserved for one individual. Richards and Rodgers [5] define personality as those aspects of a person's behavior, attitudes, views, actions, and emotions. Learner's personality and internal factors such as learner's risk-taking in learning, learner interest in the English language, self-confidence, and learning anxiety are the most influential factors influencing students' attitudes towards learning English as a second language [1,12,9,5,14]. Similarly, Richards and Rodgers (2014) support that the unique characteristics that individual learners possess can also significantly influence the process of language learning. Furthermore, a good language learner is typically described as someone who has developed adequate proficiency in the second language and possesses a low affective filter, enabling smooth input for language acquisition [17]. On the other hand, a less proficient language learner is typically characterized by their inability to acquire

or learn the second language, often influenced by attitudinal factors such as disinterest in the language and its speakers, lack of self-confidence, heightened anxiety, and low motivation for language learning [5]. Consequently, this indicates that achievement or failure in learning English language relies on our will and our efforts, which can be influenced by the way we think, act, or behave, all of which are in some way linked to individual personality factors.

One of the personality factors that affect attitude towards learning English is self-confidence. Confidence, the learner's belief in his or her ability to complete the task, and self-esteem promote learner acceptance and also result in a low filter [17]. The point is supported by Getie [9] and Denis [10] who stated that self-esteem, risk-taking, and lack of anxiety are traits of self-confidence. Likewise, when self-confidence is boosted, it often results in a more positive attitude and a greater willingness to take risks in learning [18]. On the other hand, challenges in language learning can have an adverse impact on self-esteem, specifically influencing students' attitudes towards learning English and their overall language proficiency (Alsayed, 2013; Tejda Reyes, 2018). Therefore, individual self-confidence influences the second language learning and achievement.

Learner risk-taking is another factor influencing attitudes of students towards learning English as a second language. Many researchers [1,8,2,9,5] (Tejda Reyes, 2018) recognize learner risk-taking and its relationship to greater success in language learning. Similarly, in their discussion of risk-taking, Richards and Rodgers [5] point out that learners who are sensitive to rejection may avoid class because they fear rejection from classmates or teachers. In addition, Richards and Rodgers [5] suggest that fear and embarrassment can deter individuals from taking risks, resulting in a heightened affective filter characterized by negative attitudes that impede progress and performance in language learning. This in turn leads to negative attitudes towards language learning.

Learning anxiety, serving as an affective filter, is another significant personality factor that can impact a learner's attitude towards the process of learning English. Coskun and Tasgin (2018) found that foreign language learners experience stress and anxiety and have difficulty concentrating on foreign language lessons. They

also report that some students who are unsure whether they are using the right structures to express themselves, or cannot find the appropriate words prefer to be silent. As a result, it is concluded that English teachers should strive to establish a conducive learning environment in the classroom by employing strategies that minimize anxiety, negative emotions, and language-related stress during language instruction and performance. Wedeman (2002) endorses the notion that, in order to become a proficient language instructor, one should possess the ability to create teaching and learning materials that are less intimidating and foster a supportive environment. This approach can aid learners in developing a positive attitude towards English language learning as a second language. Hence, learning anxiety serves as a personal factor that impacts the attitudes of secondary school students towards the process of learning English.

2.4.2 Educational factors

Although there are various educational factors affecting students' attitude, many studies discuss educational factors such as school, teacher, teaching style, classroom environment, curriculum, and learning materials that mostly affects the attitude of students towards English language learning [1,12,7,19,8,2,5,14].

Aside from informal settings in which learners have the chance to acquire and use English in the community, schools offer a formal environment for learning the English language. Thus, the factors that affect learner attitudes and the learning environment encompass the overall atmosphere within the school, dynamics within the classroom, and opportunities for interaction among students within the school (Alsayed, 2013), [19,5]. The studies indicates that the learning situation or environment, which includes the school, teachers, and curriculum, plays a significant role in shaping learners' attitudes and their overall success in acquiring English language skills. Furthermore, time is a crucial aspect that deserves emphasis in the teaching-learning context, as the number of hours devoted to language instruction can impact learners' attitudes and level of achievement [10,20,14]. Consequently, the types of schools determine English language learning and success. Moreover, the attitudes of students are largely influenced by the environment in which they learn, including factors such as the school environment, the type of school rules, teachers'

interaction and experimentation, and the classroom atmosphere, which should foster the unique abilities of each learner [13]. Comparably, Richards & Rodgers [5] points out that successful learning of the language in the school situation depends on motivation and attitudes. The idea was supported in (Coskun & Tasgin, 2018) that language Learning becomes easier when it is comprehensive, authentic, and meaningful, and when it is integrated with its practical application. This suggests that learners should be motivated and offered ample opportunities to utilize the language not only within the classroom, but also in real-life settings outside of school.

The learning situation shaped by schools and teachers can play a crucial role in enhancing students' motivation during the learning process [21]. Similarly, lack of motivation can hinder learners from initiating the learning process, and even if they do start, they may struggle to sustain their learning when faced with challenges along the way [22]. Consequently, it has been found that highly motivated learners perform better in learning English than those with lower motivation [1,12,7,19,8,2,9,5,14,22]. Thus, the learning situation and environment fostered by schools and teachers have a significant impact on shaping students' attitudes towards English language learning.

The teacher is one of the foremost factors that significantly influence learners' attitudes towards language learning [1,12,2,5]. Similarly, Alrabai and Moskovsky [23] state that English teachers hold a prominent position in nurturing positive attitudes among learners towards English language learning. Furthermore, the teacher's behavior and instructional practices impact the outlook or attitude of students towards learning English [15,22]. Likewise, Richards & Rodgers [5] found that the classroom management skills of teachers have a multiple impact on learners' attitudes towards the learning process. In addition, Vibulphul [22] reports that students adopt similar beliefs, attitudes, and expectations with the teacher. This implies that the attitudes of both teachers and students are correlated with the success of learners in acquiring the English language. Therefore, the above discussion indicates that a teacher's instructional styles, behavior, and attitudes well as the environment cultivated by the teacher can affect attitudes toward the teacher and the English subject.

Classroom situation is another educational factor that affects the attitudes of students towards

English learning. Having a positive attitude towards the classroom environment contributes to a more effective acquisition or learning of the English language [22]. Similarly, Conteh [19] states that Learning conditions, including factors such as well-designed materials, classroom spatial arrangement, and class size, can impact learners' attitudes towards learning and the overall learning environment. Therefore, the classroom situation and teachers' pedagogy impact learners' attitudes towards learning English.

The utilization of diverse resources in the classroom is another pedagogical factor that can influence learner attitudes towards learning English. The learning resources such as textbooks and other reading materials influence learner attitudes and learning [24,20]. Furthermore, Gardner [21] found The characteristics of an English course and the proficiency of the teacher can significantly impact an individual's attitude towards learning and the development of English as a second language. Equally, Cocca and Cocca [24] confirmed that it is important to have adequate curriculum planning and the creation of attractive activities concerning the teaching ability of teachers or their emotional connection with students. He also proposes that the learning materials should consider the diverse affective attitudes of the learners, and the use of authentic learning materials could enhance students' attitudes towards learning English. This highlights the significance of creating engaging and authentic learning materials, as the absence of such resources can lead to negative attitudes towards learning English as a second language.

2.4.3 Social factors

The different social factors that most influence students' attitudes towards language learning are parents, peers, and the community [15,8,21]. The parents of learners are among the factors that exert influence on learners' attitudes towards the English language and the learning process. Numerous studies suggest that learners' attitudes towards the target language often mirror those of their parents, indicating that learners tend to adopt their parents' attitudes towards the language (Abolfazli & Sadeghi, 2018; Ahmed, 2013) [10,7,5,14,22]. Hence, parents hold significant and influential sway over their children's attitudes. Similarly, Cocca and Cocca [24] found that When students have a supportive home environment and ample learning

opportunities, their proficiency in the English language tends to be higher. As such, parents play a significant role in shaping students' attitudes towards learning English as a second language.

The learner's peer has a remarkable influence on their attitudes towards English learning. Although there are studies that suggest that the influence of friends may be less significant than commonly believed, several evidence from various studies indicates that peers have a considerable impact on attitudes towards learning [10], (Drnyei, 2001); [2,4,11]. In addition, Bardram (2006) found that The perception and experience of peer attitudes towards language significantly affect the process of language learning. Furthermore, Getie [9] confirmed that a single peer can shape attitudes and behavior more than his or her parents. Therefore, peers play a significant role in shaping learners' attitudes and influencing their English language learning.

The community in which students live is another social factor that can impact their attitudes towards learning English as a second language [25]. Learners tend to achieve more favorable learning outcomes when they have increased opportunities to communicate with native speakers of the target language [26,21,2,14]. Interestingly, Getie [9] affirms that the success of learning a second language is influenced by factors such as student motivation, awareness of the need for English language learning, support from English language speakers, and regular social contacts with English speakers in daily life. Therefore, the community in which the learner lives have also a great impact on the attitude and learning.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology is one of the essential components of any research study. The methodology provides the theoretical basis to understand which methods can be applied to a specific case [27]. This section discusses the research paradigm, the design, the sampling approach, data collection tools and procedures, data analysis methods, research validity and reliability, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Paradigm

The paradigm or philosophical worldview is critical in guiding the research process. It pertains to a broad philosophical orientation

towards the world and the methodology employed by a researcher in their investigations [27]. Furthermore, Mackenzie and Knipe [28] claim that the selection of a paradigm dictates the objectives, incentives, and interpretation of research. Therefore, the study adopted a pragmatic worldview.

Pragmatism serves as a philosophical foundation for mixed-methods research, embodying a worldview that arises from practical actions, contextual situations, and consequential approaches aimed at addressing problems through real-world applications and solutions [27]. Furthermore, pragmatism serves as the underlying conceptual framework for investigating mixed methods, offering a foundation for exploring abstract concepts and facilitating the examination of practical applications (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). Considering the research objective of identifying factors that influence students' attitudes towards language learning, the most suitable approach for gaining comprehensive insights within a pragmatic framework would be through the utilization of mixed methods, specifically employing a convergent parallel design. Thus, this study is guided by the pragmatic worldview because the study engages the convergent mixed-method design.

3.2 Research Approach

The study employed a mixed-method approach. Mixed methods research is an exploratory approach in which both quantitative and qualitative data are collected. Creswell and Creswell [27] suggest researchers to use multiple sources, such as interviews, observations, and documents to yield additional insight. Therefore, this study employed a mixed-method approach to study the factors affecting students' attitudes towards English learning.

3.3 Research Design

A research design relates to decisions on what, where, how, and by what means an investigation or research study entails (Kothari, 2004). It is a general plan for the research piece that includes policies, a conceptual framework, who or what is to be examined, and the methods and procedures to collect data (Punch, 2014). Therefore, since this study employed a mixed-method approach, it employed the convergent parallel mixed-methods design by designing questionnaires as the main data-gathering

instrument and interviews for focus group discussions and English teachers as supplementary data-gathering instruments.

3.4 Population Description and Sample Description

A population is an entire group about which one wishes to draw inferences [27]. The population for this study consists of secondary school students and secondary English teachers at Tendu Central School in southern Bhutan. The study was conducted at this school because the researcher believes that students in this area appear to have different attitudes towards English as a subject.

A sample refers to a particular subgroup from which data is collected, and its size is invariably smaller than the overall population [27]. The study's samples are secondary students in classes nine to twelve and the secondary English teachers of Tendu Central School in southern Bhutan. The researcher selected 302 students from classes nine to twelve from the target population as the participants for the quantitative data and survey questionnaire respondents. Additionally, six English teachers from classes nine to twelve were chosen for semi-structured interviews. Similarly, six students from classes ten to twelve were selected as focus group participants.

3.5 Sampling Technique

This study employed a simple random sampling technique to select student participants for the questionnaire. Random sampling is a dependable technique for gathering information, as it involves the random selection of individuals from a population, thereby saving time and resources [27]. On the other hand, the researcher used purposive sampling to select respondents for focus groups and teacher interviews. Getie [9] recognizes that purposive sampling involves the selection of units based on the researcher's informed judgment and perception of their relevance to the subject matter. Thus, the researcher used purposive sampling to select respondents for the focus group discussions and interviews. The secondary English teachers were purposefully selected with the help of the academic head and head of the department as interview participants. Likewise, participants for the focus group discussions were selected with the support of English teachers, to

have two members from each class with mixed gender.

3.6 Data Collection Tools and Procedures

3.6.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument that enables the researcher to collect data tailored to their study and obtain insights that may not be accessible through other means [27]. Therefore, a survey questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data. Further, Quad [29] claims that managing a A questionnaire facilitates the generation of unique data that is specific to the researcher's study. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert-type scale (strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, and strongly disagree). The questionnaire comprised 34 items projected to gather the participants' opinions on the factors affecting secondary students' attitudes towards learning English. The questionnaires were circulated to the randomly chosen respondents, and the researcher himself administered the questionnaires. The study collected quantitative data from 302 students from classes IX to XII.

3.6.2 Interview for teachers

An interview is a qualitative data collection tool that enables researchers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of a specific concept. Interviews typically involve the use of unstructured or semi-structured open-ended questions, aimed at eliciting participants' perspectives and opinions [27]. In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to collect qualitative data. Semi-structured interviews provide the interviewer with a balance between control and flexibility, enabling them to delve into the interviewee's emotions and thoughts in-depth. These interviews facilitate the exploration and elaboration of the interviewee's responses, transitioning from specific content to negotiation, discussion, and expansion of their viewpoints (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Therefore, semi-structured interviews were used to examine the factors influencing secondary school students' attitudes towards English learning.

3.6.3 Focus group discussion

A focus group discussion is a qualitative research method that encourages participants to freely exchange their perceptions and opinions with other members of the group. Typically, it

entails group-based interviewing, wherein a moderator guides a loosely structured discussion among participants on various topics of interest [27]. Furthermore, Steward et al. (2007) support that Focus group discussions provide abundant and comprehensive data on individuals' opinions, emotions, feelings, and experiences. Therefore, this study used focus group discussions to collect comprehensive data as it enables participants to explore the subject more deeply. According to Liamputtong (2013), A focus group interview typically comprises a gathering of 6-10 individuals who share similar social and cultural backgrounds.

Hence, in this study, purposive sampling was employed with the cooperation of English teachers to select six participants, with two individuals chosen from each of the classes ten to twelve.

3.7 Data Analysis

In a mixed-method design, data analysis involves the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, utilizing the appropriate methods for each type of data obtained (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The quantitative data were processed, cleansed, coded, and entered into the IBM SPSS Version 22.0 software for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics, such as mean, standard deviation, and correlation, were utilized to interpret the statistically analyzed data. To interpret the means collected from the quantitative data, the design of Brown (2010) was adapted as shown in Table 1.

Likewise, the raw data gathered from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were organized, transcribed, coded, and categorized into various themes during the transcription process. These qualitative data were then interpreted and narrated as part of the

qualitative analysis. The teacher participants of the interview are represented by codes such as Tr1, Tr2, Tr3, Tr4, Tr5, and Tr6 for semi-structured interviews and FGD S1, FGD S2, FGD S3, FGD S4, FGD S5, and FGD S6 for focus group discussion student participants. The study used thematic analysis guided by the six steps [30]. Therefore, the qualitative data underwent thematic analysis, while the quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22.0.

3.8 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are criteria used to assess the quality of research, indicating the extent to which a method or technique effectively measures what it intends to measure. Reliability focuses on the consistency of a measure, while validity pertains to the accuracy of a measure [27]. To uphold reliability and validity, this study employed multiple strategies including triangulation, pilot tests, and member checks.

3.8.1 Triangulation

Triangulation refers to employing diverse approaches to gather data on the same topic, involving varied samples and methods of data collection [31]. Similarly, Triangulation is a qualitative research technique that involves comparing and contrasting data from multiple sources [32]. Hence, this study employed triangulation by utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the factors influencing students' attitudes towards English learning. Additionally, data triangulation was employed as the study gathered data from diverse samples, including students, focus groups, and English teachers, using data collection tools such as questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions.

Table 1. Interpretation of mean scores with reference to Brown Model

Likert Scale	Mean values	Level of Opinion
1	4.51-5.00	Strongly Agree
2	3.51-4.50	Agree
3	2.51- 3.50	Neutral
4	1.51-2.50	Disagree
5	1.00-1.50	Strongly Disagree

Adapted from Brown (2010)

3.8.2 Pilot test

Pilot testing involves replicating the research study with a small number of test-takers before conducting the main study, allowing the research approach to be tested and refined [27]. The pilot test was done to evaluate the validity of questionnaires to make necessary changes in the actual study. The reliability of the questionnaire used in the study was checked with the use of Cronbach's Alpha. The Cronbach's Alpha value of my questionnaire for this study was 0.896. Therefore, the questionnaire used in the study is valid and reliable. In addition, a pilot test for the interview questions was done with five secondary English teachers, and necessary addition and changes were made to make the question reliable and valid.

3.8.3 Member check

The study also used member checking to maintain validity. Member checking involves providing the interviewees with a summary and interpretation of each interview to obtain their feedback on its accuracy and plausibility [33]. Thus, member checking was done with each interviewee to confirm the basic ideas that were derived in the transcription as a validation of the respondents to ensure the accuracy of the data collected.

4. RESULTS

This section presents the findings of both quantitative and qualitative data, which consist of six themes: attitudes towards learning English, factors affecting secondary students' attitudes towards English as a second language, such as classroom environment, teaching and learning process, home and community, and peers' impact. Quantitative data in this study were obtained from 302 secondary school students, while qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with six teachers and a focus group interview with six students. Participant quotes from the interviews are included to support the discussion, without making any corrections to the quotes' syntax to prevent misinterpretation. The findings, along with supporting evidence from the data, are elaborated in the subsequent section.

4.1 Attitudes towards Learning English

The examination of both quantitative and qualitative data reveals that, in general,

secondary school students exhibit positive attitudes towards learning English as a second language. However, the data also indicates that there are certain groups of students who have negative attitudes towards English learning. Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviation of the items related to attitudes towards learning English as a second language.

As evident from Table 2, many participants revealed that they like learning English as it is an interesting subject, with almost all of them strongly agreeing ($M=4.4735$; $SD=0.67536$). Similarly, the average and variability (standard deviation) of the items for the items "I like learning English as I see the value of English in life" and "I like learning English to get a better job" is ($M=4.3642$; $SD=0.85480$) and ($M=4.3510$; $SD=0.76639$), respectively. This shows that most students agree with statements indicating positive attitudes towards learning English.

However, the average and variability (standard deviation) for the items "I do not like learning English because it is not my favorite subject" and "I dislike English because I feel tense and anxious in using English" are ($M=4.2185$; $SD=0.96376$) and ($M=4.2185$; $SD=0.86952$), respectively. The data shows that many students also agree with statements indicating a negative attitude towards English learning. Therefore, the survey data revealed that secondary students have both positive and negative attitudes towards learning English.

Furthermore, in the semi-structured interview, English teachers commonly observed the presence of both positive and negative attitudes towards learning English as a second language among their students. For instance, almost all teacher participants in the interview reported that they observed students are less interested in learning English and prefer speaking Dzongkha over English as they feel incompetent in using the English language (Tr 2, Tr 3, Tr 5, Tr 6). Many secondary teachers think that the students are not competent in using English as they make errors in pronunciation, spelling, and grammar, and are not able to speak English fluently (Tr 1, Tr 2, Tr 5, Tr 6). Moreover, the lack of basic knowledge from the lower classes, lack of reading habits, and lack of practice in speaking English are common reasons cited for incompetency in English usage (Tr 2, Tr 3, Tr 5). They also added that the influence of mother tongue, lack of exposure to English-speaking environments, and lack of confidence in speaking

English are other factors that cause students to lack interest in learning English. For example, Tr 2 stated, "Lack of reading habit, lack of confidence and influence of their mother tongue causes them to become less fluent English users and thus, lack of interest towards learning English as a second language."

Conversely, there are also a few who have observed positive attitudes from students towards learning English. For example, Tr 4 stated, "Students do take an interest in learning English and exhibit positive attitudes towards learning as they seem to enjoy it." This suggests that there is a favorable disposition towards learning English. Similarly, a few students in the FGD responded that they love to learn English as it is a globally spoken language. For example, FGD S1 stated, "I do enjoy learning English because it is a worldwide language and it's more convenient to travel abroad. Moreover, our subjects are all in English. And ever since I drive to school, I find English interesting." In addition, FGD S2 added:

I enjoy learning English because it is the one subject which is used as a medium for all other subjects. And it allows us to communicate effectively with all the people around the world. And it also let me boost my learning ability and competency globally at large.

Thus, quantitative and qualitative data reveal that students possess both positive and negative perspectives towards English learning.

4.2 Classroom Environment

One of the factors that emerged from the analyzed quantitative and qualitative data as influencing students' attitudes towards learning English as a second language is the classroom environment. In this context, the classroom environment refers to both the physical space and the psychological atmosphere that influence students' attitudes towards learning English. The mean and standard deviation for the classroom environment is given in Table 3.

Table 2. Attitudes towards English as a second language

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of opinion
I think English is the most interesting subject that we have in school.	4.4735	.67536	Strongly Agree
I like to learn English because I want to live abroad.	3.9702	1.04187	Agree
I feel I am a competent English language user.	3.4603	82531	Not sure
I like to learn English because it is one way to get a good job.	4.3642	85480	Agree
I like to learn English because I see the value of English in my life outside the classroom.	4.3510	76639	Agree
I like to learn English because I want to pass in Bhutan Higher Secondary School Examinations	3.9934	1.03106	Agree
I believe that I can do the English examination very well.	3.7881	78701	Agree
I am free from any frustration whenever I speak English in the classroom.	3.1391	1.06306	Not sure
I do not like to learn English because it is not my favorite subject.	4.2185	96376	Agree
I dislike English because I feel tense and anxious in using English	4.2185	86952	Agree
I wish that no subjects in schools were taught in English.	4.4305	.96455	Agree
Overall Mean	4.0726	43918	Agree

Table 3. Classroom environment

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of opinion
I like to learn English because the classroom environments are interesting to me	3.8311	.97201	Agree
I prefer to attend English classes because the way we are taught is very interesting.	4.0132	.96094	Agree
I dislike learning English because the classroom environment is not conducive.	3.8543	1.04323	Agree
Overall Mean	3.8996	.71103	Agree

Table 4. Correlation between attitudes towards English and classroom environment

		Attitude	Classroom Environment
Attitude	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.381**
	N	302	302
			.000
Classroom Environment	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.381**	1
	N	302	302
		.000	

The findings indicate that the classroom environment plays a significant role in secondary students' attitudes towards learning English. The students agreed with all the items (M=3.8996; SD=0.71103). The survey data revealed that the classroom environment has an influence on secondary students' attitudes towards learning English. For instance, almost all participants agreed that the mean and standard deviation for the items "I like to learn English because the classroom environments are interesting to me" and "I prefer to attend English classes because the way we are taught is very interesting" are (M=3.8311; SD=0.97201) and (M=4.0132; SD=0.96094), respectively. This shows that students exhibit a positive attitude and interest in learning English if the classroom environment is conducive. Similarly, students agreed (M=3.8543; SD=1.04323) with the item "I dislike learning English because the classroom environment is not conducive." This indicates that students show less interest and have a negative attitude towards learning English if the classroom environment is not conducive.

A significant and moderately positive correlation was identified between students' attitudes towards learning English and the classroom environment (r=0.381, p<0.01) as indicated in Table 4. This suggests that the classroom environment has an impact on students' attitudes towards learning English.

Similarly, the teacher participants in the semi-structured interview pointed out that students

show interest in English classes when the classroom is made comfortable and conducive by bringing interesting content and topics which are easier for them to understand. (Tr 1, Tr 2, Tr 6). For instance, Tr 6 said, "They show interest when the classroom environment is conducive and when they are motivated and encouraged to speak in English."

Furthermore, the teacher participants in the semi-structured interviews added that students show less interest in learning difficult texts if they do not understand the teaching and cannot connect with the topic (Tr 1, Tr 3, Tr 5). The data reveals that students are more likely to show interest in learning English if the classroom environment is conducive and if the content and topic are engaging. Therefore, the findings suggest that the learning classroom environment has an impact on learners' attitudes and success in learning English as a foreign language.

4.3 Classroom Teaching and Learning Strategies

In this context, classroom teaching and learning strategies encompass a range of approaches employed by teachers in the classroom to enhance students' attitudes towards learning English as a second language. The findings indicate that the utilization of different teaching and learning strategies in the classroom influences students' attitudes towards learning English. Table 5 presents the mean and standard deviation of items related to classroom teaching and learning strategies.

Table 5. Classroom teaching and learning strategies

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of opinion
I am interested in our English teacher's method of teaching.	3.7748	1.08553	Agree
Our English teacher uses good examples and illustrations while he\she teaches.	4.0596	.91667	Agree
Our English teacher encourages us to speak in English.	4.4503	.74876	Agree
Our English teacher uses clear instructions during any English activity.	4.1589	.85175	Agree
Our English teacher's teaching is not interesting.	3.2583	1.09340	Agree
Overall Mean	3.9404	.57259	Agree

Table 6. Correlation between the attitude and classroom teaching and learning strategies

		Attitude	Classroom Teaching and Learning Strategies
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.320**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	302	302
Classroom Teaching and Learning Strategies	Pearson Correlation	.320**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	302	302

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

As indicated by the data presented in Table 5, the overall mean and standard deviation (M=3.9404, SD=0.57259) for the classroom teaching and learning strategies items fall within the "Agree" category. This suggests that the teaching and learning approaches employed by teachers in the classroom play a significant role in influencing students' attitudes towards learning English as a second language. For example, participants agreed with the mean and standard deviation for the items "I am interested in our English teacher's teaching method" and "Our English teacher uses clear instructions during each English activity" (M= 3.7748; SD= 1.08553) and (M= 4.1589; SD=0.74876). This indicates that students show interest in learning English when the teacher uses interesting teaching and learning strategies in the classroom, indicating a positive attitude towards learning. In contrast, participants also concurred with the statement "Our English teacher's teaching is not interesting," as indicated by the mean and standard deviation (M= 3.2583; SD= 1.09340). This suggests that when teachers employ monotonous teaching and learning strategies, students tend to dislike learning English and develop negative attitudes towards it.

Additionally, the analysis revealed a significant and moderately positive correlation ($r= 0.320$, $p<0.01$) between students' attitudes towards learning English and the classroom teaching and learning strategies, as depicted in Table 6. This suggests that the strategies employed by teachers in the classroom have an influential role in shaping students' attitudes towards learning English.

Similarly, all of the teacher participants in the interview agreed that one of the key components to enhance students' interest towards learning English as a second language is to consider their interests while using teaching-learning strategies and to use diverse and appropriate teaching-learning strategies based on their interests. For example, Tr 6 stated:

We tried to use diverse strategies as per the interest of students or we choose the pedagogy to suit their interest to garner their learning interest towards English learning. But again, we have to think about the facilities that are available for us but if it is within our doing then we use various strategies to enhance their interest in learning English. So, I think strategies or pedagogies that we choose for the particular

class is influencing their interest in learning English as a second language.

Further, they also said that students show interest in learning English when teachers limit the use of old methods and use new 21st-century pedagogy by using technologies such as smart television, visual videos, projectors, and power point presentations in the classroom (Tr 1, Tr 2, Tr 4, Tr 5, Tr 6).

The point is supported by Tr 2:

Definitely, now a day is the 21st century and we have to follow 21st-century pedagogy. Sometimes, you go with videos, and visual where they can observe, they can hear and see. So, when we have different kinds of strategies, they show certain kinds of interest towards learning English. Moreover, they participate in class.

Furthermore, Tr 4 stated:

When I was teaching Shakespeare, if you teach Shakespeare from the textbook, it is hardcore. But if you go with a PowerPoint presentation and add some videos, and dramatic scenes, definitely students will be learned and maybe they will learn more and then explore more and maybe learn themselves a lot".

Likewise, during the focus group discussion, participants expressed that their motivation to learn English is enhanced when teachers employ diverse classroom learning strategies and activities. For example, FGD S6 shared:

I would say that English actually is getting boring when just dealing with the lecture. Therefore, actually, English should not be boring just lectures. But some of our teachers use different strategies, not too modern, not too traditional, but they use a kind of average kind of strategy, which is interesting, like asking questions. This can be the best strategy where there will be strange participation. We would love to learn by watching videos and drama as it is hard to comprehend the text such as Merchant of Venice. So, we like to learn English when our English teachers are using some kinds of interesting materials and activities in the class to teach.

The analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data reveals that the use of appropriate learning strategies in classroom teaching, based on students' interests, needs, and contextual

relevance, are common factors that significantly influence students' attitudes towards learning English, as they foster curiosity and interest in the language.

4.4 Teaching Learning Resources

Teaching and learning resources in this context refer to resources such as stimulating and appropriate textbooks, teachers' use of interesting and authentic teaching materials, and the availability of facilities such as reading materials that affect learners' attitudes towards learning English. Table 7 displays the mean and standard deviation of items related to teaching and learning resources, such as textbooks, and their influence on student's attitudes towards learning English.

In the survey, participants agreed with the items "The passages in our English textbooks are interesting to me" and "The words in the passages of our English textbooks are easy enough to understand" with the mean and standard deviation (M= 3.8974; SD= 0.92908) and (M= 3.4570; SD= 1.04538) respectively. This shows that students enjoy learning English when the content and topics of the textbooks are interesting and easy for them to understand. On the other hand, students agreed with the statement "The passages in our English textbook are not clear to me" with a mean and standard deviation of (M= 3.6225; SD= 1.09509). This shows that they do not like learning English when the content and topics in the textbooks are difficult for them to understand, indicating a negative attitude towards learning English. The survey data with an overall mean and standard deviation (M= 3.6589; SD= 0.74927) in the "Agree" category indicates that students have a positive attitude when the teaching resources, such as textbooks, are interesting and easy to understand for them. Therefore, the quantitative data indicates that an appropriate curriculum with authentic and appropriate textbooks plays a crucial role in influencing the attitudes of students towards learning English as a second language.

Many teacher participants in the interview believe that students show less interest in learning English as many students face difficulties in understanding the text on their own, and they are not able to comprehend the text without the teacher's explanation (Tr 1, Tr 2, Tr 3, Tr 4). For example, Tr 3 said:

Table 7. Teaching learning resources

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of opinion
The passages in our English textbooks are interesting to me.	3.8974	.92908	Agree
The words in the passages of our English textbooks are easy enough to be understood	3.4570	1.04538	Agree
The passages in our English textbook are not clear to me.	3.6225	1.09509	Agree
Overall Mean	3.6589	.74927	Agree

I have observed that students show more interest and understand of the seen text such as short stories and essay than unseen text such as poetry and the drama. So, they seem to show interest towards learning English when the texts are interesting and when they understand the text. Further, they also added that students do not show interest in content which are unfamiliar and not to the context (Tr 2, Tr 3, Tr 4). For example, Tr 3 stated:

I believe the content is unfamiliar in places like they know, because we are far from the city and sometimes students are not familiar with those English terms. They are not familiar with English names, English cities and thus, they are not interested. So that's my opinion. Similarly, Tr 5 expressed:

So, this could be one of the obstacles where like students are not interested in English as some of the contents are not in the context. Otherwise, they can because the level of the English textbook prescribed are as per their level like it's quite comfortable for them.

Furthermore, Tr 6 concluded:

The students show interest in English classes if the content and the topic in the text are interesting and easier for them to understand and students show less interest in learning difficult texts when they don't understand the text.

In addition, the findings from the focus group discussion indicate that students are motivated to learn English when their teacher incorporates interesting and diverse teaching and learning materials into the classroom. For instance, FGD S6 stated: "Students get inspired and motivated when they are taught by their favorite teacher

and love learning when the teacher brings different materials and activities." Furthermore, they also added that they become motivated and enjoy learning English when they are provided with available facilities such as reading materials, library facilities, and technologies such as television. For example, FGD S5 stated:

For me what hinders me from learning is the lack of resources from the school. Since I have known myself, I have learned English through reading books and watching movies. But here in school, we have lack of time, and there are few books. There are only a few books here. In my previous school, there usually would be lots of books like different types of authors. And here I can't watch Hollywood movies also. I learn English by reading and watching movies. I think my interest towards learning is diminishing as here we have limited books and no opportunities to watch movies.

The analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data suggests that students' attitudes towards learning English are influenced by factors such as the use of authentic and appropriate textbooks, the incorporation of interesting and diverse teaching-learning materials by teachers, and the availability of engaging reading materials.

4.5 Home and Community Environment

The home and community environment, in this context, refers to the family background and the opportunities in the community to speak and learn English. The mean and standard deviation for home and community are given in Table 8.

Table 8. Home and community environment

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of opinion
My parents feel that learning English is important.	4.2417	1.07115	Agree
My parents are good speakers of English.	2.1026	1.31414	Disagree
My parents encouraged me to study English very well.	3.9834	1.05168	Agree
My parents buy English guides for me to study.	2.9801	1.29897	Not sure
My parents feel that learning English is not important.	4.2715	1.04664	Agree
The community I live in encourages me to learn English	3.2450	1.15547	Not sure
I like to learn English because many of the people living my community speak English	2.5298	1.19416	Not sure
Overall Mean	3.3363	.60570	Agree

Table 9. Correlation between attitude and the home environment and community

		Attitude	Home Environment and Community
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.394**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	302	302
Home Environment and Community	Pearson Correlation	.394**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	302	302

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

The data presented in Table 8 clearly indicates that parents' educational background and their encouragement towards English language use at home have a significant impact on students' attitudes towards learning English. In the survey, participants expressed agreement with the items "My parents feel that learning English is important" and "My parents encourage me to study English very well," as reflected by the mean and standard deviation values of (M=4.2417, SD=1.07115) and (M=3.9834, SD=1.05168), respectively. These findings suggest that students tend to develop an interest in learning English and exhibit positive attitudes towards it when their parents recognize its importance and actively encourage them to learn it as a second language. Conversely, participants in the survey also expressed agreement with the item "My parents feel that learning English is not important," as evidenced by the mean and standard deviation values of (M=4.2715, SD=1.04664). This suggests that students tend to develop a negative attitude towards learning English when they receive less encouragement and support from their parents. Thus, the data show that a favorable home environment with parental support and encouragement is an influential factor in shaping learners' attitudes towards English learning.

Similarly, students rated "Not sure" for the item "The community I live in encourages me to learn English" with a mean and standard deviation of (M=3.2450, SD=1.15547), indicating that there is less community encouragement for learning English. However, students rated "Disagree" for the item "I like to learn English because many people living in my community speak English" with a mean and standard deviation of (M=2.4298, SD=1.19416), indicating that there are not many people in their community who speak English. Thus, the data show that they get encouraged in learning English when there are people in their community who speak English and when there is support and encouragement in learning English from the community.

As indicated in Table 9, the correlation between students' attitudes towards English learning and the home environment and community is statistically significant, with a positive correlation coefficient of $r=0.394$ at a significance level of $p<0.01$.

The survey data, with an overall mean and standard deviation of (M=3.3363, SD=0.60570), falling in the "Agree" category, suggests that a favorable home environment characterized by parental support, encouragement to learn

English, and opportunities to communicate with English speakers in the community are influential factors that shape students' attitudes towards learning English. In the qualitative data, teacher participants in the interview reported that family background, support, and encouragement from the home and community influence English learning. For example, Tr 4 stated:

There are influences from the parents' family background. It is observed that if the parents are English users, they show interest towards English and if the parents are uneducated and non-English users, they use their mother tongue in their conversation and show less interest in learning English.

The point is supported by Tr 5:

Many students here in our school show less interest in learning English and this could be maybe because of their family background. If their parents are not English users or someone who's not educated then they are chances that they might land up using their mother tongue, together. And they will not focus on English. I've seen parents who are not educated as I said earlier that they don't know the importance of English and they believe their mother tongue is more important because towards at the end of the day, they go back home and then they try to communicate with their mother tongue.

In addition, another participant believes that the lack of exposure to the right speaking environment at home and in the community causes them to show less interest in learning English. For example, Tr 2 stated:

I think they are poor in English speaking and seem to have negative attitudes towards learning English because there's less exposure to English at home and community that live in. And students are more like, into speaking their language, even in school, even in the community and with their friends. There is the influence of the mother tongue everywhere.

Furthermore, the student participants in the focus group discussion also expressed that their parents' background and encouragement, as well as the community's support in English learning, influence their attitudes towards learning English. They further stated that they are discouraged from learning English when English speaking is neglected and more people speak their native

language in the community where they are located. For instance, FGD S 6 stated:

Firstly, I would like to say that learning English is quite interesting and captivating but the region where I stay hinders my English learning the most because I stay in Tendu central School is under southern region, where the maximum of the public's are Ihotshams and they neglect speaking in English and that's why I get some time I get some time demotivated looking at the surrounding looking at the region where I stay. Secondly, it is the school environment. Since the tendu Central School is as I already said it's in southern regions. There are a greater number of Ihotsham students from them like in the school they actually promote their mother tongue that's why they don't even give a damn to speaking in English, as my most of my friends do is speak in their native language. That's why that hinders me in learning English. Therefore, environment and the society influence me in learning.

The point supported by FGD S 4:

The factors that support me in learning English would be that we could get to witness some of the great English speakers there in the community and at the school. We usually get motivated by them as we can hear them. By ourselves, the way they speak, the way they make their points clear, and most of the students would get motivated with their speech, and we would like to learn more English, we'd like to learn English better from them.

Similarly, students get encouraged and motivated to learn English if there is encouragement and support from their parents. For instance, FGD S 5 stated:

As I have known myself, like I am, I was also motivated by my father who is an English teacher. As he speaks English fluently and he usually encouraged me encourages me to speak English and like him, there are other great speakers in our country sellers. So, if you could get to witness them and hear them speak English.

The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that the home environment, including factors such as parental background, parental support and motivation, and community attitudes towards English as a Second Language have an impact on students' attitudes towards learning English.

Table 10. Peer Impact

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of opinion
My friends use English in our communication so it helps me improve my English proficiency.	3.2517	1.30788	Not sure
My classmates feel happy whenever I speak in English.	3.1788	1.06022	Not sure
Learning English with my friends is better than learning it by myself.	4.0232	1.17679	Agree
My friends do not feel happy whenever I speak in English outside the classroom.	3.5795	1.15795	Agree
Overall Mean	3.5083	.70205	

4.6 Peer Impact

The analysis of the data revealed that peer impact, specifically the influence of friends, is a significant factor that affects students' attitudes towards learning English. Table 10 presents the mean and standard deviation for peer influence on English learning.

It is evident from Table 10 that learners' friends are an influential factor that affects their attitude towards learning English. For instance, all participants unanimously agreed that learning English with their peers is more enjoyable than learning individual, as indicated by the mean and standard deviation of (M=4.0232; SD=1.17679). This suggests a positive impact of peers on English learning. The quantitative data, with an overall mean and standard deviation of (M=3.5083; SD=.70205), further supports the influence of peer attitudes on learners' attitudes towards learning English.

Similarly, students who participated in the focus group interview revealed that the attitudes of their friends towards the English language have an impact on their own English learning. For example, FGD Ss 6 stated:

I get demotivated when my friends neglect English speaking and when more people are speaking their mother tongue. There are a greater number of lhotsham friends. They promote their mother tongue that's why they don't even give a damn to speaking in English, as most of my friends do speak in their native language. That's why that hinders me from learning English.

Thus, the qualitative data also reveals that the attitudes of their friends influence their attitude of towards learning English.

5. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine factors influencing secondary school students' attitudes towards learning English as a second language. The study used a convergent mixed method. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected using surveys and interviews as data collection tools. Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS 22.0 for descriptive statistics on mean and standard deviation and Pearson's correlations. Qualitative data were examined using thematic analysis techniques proposed by Braun and Clark [30].

In this section, the significant findings of the study are discussed with relevant literature. The findings are discussed under six themes, such as attitudes towards English as a second language, classroom environment, teaching and learning strategies, teaching-learning resources, home, and community environment, peer influence, and strategies to enhance positive attitudes. The findings are interpreted concerning relevant literature.

5.1 Attitudes towards English as a Second Language

The findings indicated that students possess both positive and negative attitudes towards learning the English language. This is consistent with the findings of Gajalakshmi's [2] study of secondary school students' attitudes towards English learning, which indicated both positive and negative attitudes towards the language. On the other hand, Delic's [8] study investigating attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language revealed that high school students generally exhibit negative attitudes towards English. On the contrary, Kesimal and Arslan [34] discovered in their research on student

attitudes towards English in high schools that students enrolled in language-intensive high schools exhibit more positive attitudes towards English compared to students in other high schools. Moreover, the findings from the research conducted by Abdelkader and Amines (2017) suggest that students who exhibit positive attitudes towards the English language and its speakers are more motivated and consequently achieve higher success in language learning. On the other hand, students who hold negative attitudes towards learning English may lose motivation and interest in the language, as these attitudes can impede the learning process and hinder the acquisition of new language skills. Therefore, this study highlights the need to strengthen students' positive attitudes towards learning English as a second language.

5.2 Classroom Environment

The results of the study show that the classroom environment is one of the factors influencing students' attitudes towards learning English as a second language. For example, almost all students agreed with the influence of the classroom environment, with an overall mean and standard deviation of ($M=3.8996$; $SD=0.71103$). The qualitative results also showed that students show interest in English lessons when the lessons are enjoyable and nurturing by introducing interesting content and topics. As per the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the learning context or the classroom environment significantly impacts the attitudes and achievements of English language learners.

This finding corroborates with the study by Denis and Getie (2020), in which they found that classroom conditions such as the physical arrangement of the class and the class size have a major influence on learner attitudes and the learning situation. Similarly, this result is consistent with the literature suggesting that the learning environment provided by the school, teachers, and curriculum has an impact on learners' attitudes and success in learning English (Alsayed, 2013); [19,5]. This finding is also in agreement with the literature that emphasizes the importance of learners' attitudes towards the classroom environment to enhance positive attitude towards learning English [19]. Therefore, the findings imply that the classroom environment nurtured by the teacher affects students' attitudes toward English.

5.3 Classroom Teaching and Learning Strategies

The results of the study show that teachers' teaching and learning strategies in the classroom influence students' attitudes towards learning English. The quantitative results, which revealed an average mean of $M=3.9404$ and standard deviation of $SD=0.57259$, suggest that the instructional methods and learning strategies employed by the teacher in the classroom play a role in shaping students' attitudes towards English language learning as a second language. Similarly, the qualitative findings revealed that the use of appropriate and diverse teaching and learning strategies that engage students productively in the lesson is key to enhancing students' interest in learning English.

This finding is in agreement with the literature that points out the importance of teachers' pedagogical knowledge and instructional practices in enhancing students' interest in learning English [1,7,19,5]. It also confirms Wedeman's (2002) conclusion that English teachers must create favorable conditions in the classroom through the use of methods to minimize anxiety and negative feelings toward English language learning and performance. Furthermore, this finding is in agreement with the study done by Coskun & Tasgin (2018) which found that language learning is easier when teachers use diverse strategies and make the learning whole, real, and relevant.

The study highlights the need to use numerous and suitable classroom teaching-learning strategies to enhance students' attitudes toward learning English.

5.4 Teaching Learning Resources

Teaching and learning resources, such as stimulating and appropriate textbooks, interesting and authentic teaching materials, and the availability of facilities such as reading materials, are vital factors that influence students' attitudes toward learning English. The quantitative findings indicated that students have a positive attitude when the teaching resources, such as textbooks, are interesting and easy to understand, and have negative attitudes when the textbooks are out of context and do not match their interests. Similarly, qualitative findings indicated that students are motivated to learn English when their teacher brings interesting and diverse

instructional and reading materials into the classroom.

This finding is consistent with the literature that points out the influence of teaching and learning resources on learners' attitudes and learning [16,9,20]. Furthermore, this finding aligns with Gardner's [21] research, which revealed that the characteristics of English curriculum and textbooks can influence learners' attitudes towards learning English, regardless of the teacher's skills and empathy. Additionally, this finding is in agreement with literature suggesting that authentic learning materials improve students' attitudes towards learning and the learning situation [23,24].

This finding implies that authentic and appropriate textbooks, interesting and diverse teaching materials, and facilities such as reading materials can positively affect students' attitudes towards learning English. Therefore, it is crucial to develop stimulating and authentic learning materials as a lack of such resources may advance negative attitudes towards learning English.

5.5 Home and Community Environment

The results of the study indicate that a favorable home and community environment is another factor influencing secondary school students' attitudes towards learning English as a second language. The quantitative results, with an overall mean and standard deviation ($M=3.3363$; $SD=0.60570$), indicate a favorable home environment, such as the community, are significant factor influencing students' attitudes towards learning English. Similarly, qualitative results show that family background, support, and encouragement from home and community influence English learning.

This finding is consistent with literature that states various social factors influence students' attitudes towards language learning, with parental and community support and encouragement being the most influential (Abolfazli & Sadeghi, 2018); [8,21]. This study aligns with the findings of Cocca and Cocca [24], which highlight that when parents use English at home, it creates a conducive environment for students to learn the language, resulting in more favorable opportunities for language acquisition. This indicates that a favorable home environment with parental support and encouragement enhances students' interest in learning English.

This finding is also in agreement with studies that suggest that learners would have a positive attitude when they have more chances to communicate with speakers of the target language (English) in the community [26,21,14]. This indicates that the community in which the learner lives can impact attitudes towards English language learning and success.

Overall, the findings indicate that the home environment, such as parental background, parental support, and the attitude of the community towards English, influences students' attitudes towards learning English.

5.6 Peer Impact

It was found that peer influence is also a factor that affects attitudes towards learning English. The quantitative findings with an overall mean and standard deviation ($M=3.5083$; $SD=0.70205$) indicate that the influence of friends affects learners' attitudes towards learning English. Similarly, qualitative findings indicate that the attitudes of peers towards the English language impact English language learning.

This result is consistent with Bartrams' (2006) study on attitudes towards language learning, which found that peer attitudes towards language learning have a significant impact on learners' language learning. However, this finding contradicts studies that argue that the influence of peers on students' attitudes towards language learning is less (Drnyei, 2001); [4]. Nevertheless, Getie [9] confirmed that an individual peer can shape attitudes and behavior more than their parents. This finding indicates that the attitudes of students towards English language learning are notably impacted by their peers [35-47].

6. CONCLUSION

The study showed that students have both positive and negative attitudes towards learning English as a second language. The results imply that positive attitudes towards English learning enhance language learning and academic performance, while negative attitudes impede the learning process.

The study suggests that schools and educators should promote awareness of the significance of English language learning to cultivate a positive attitude towards learning English. This can be achieved by establishing a favorable classroom atmosphere and utilizing suitable teaching

methods and authentic materials that foster students' attitudes towards English learning. Thus, English teachers are recommended to create a comfortable and conducive classroom environment, employ effective teaching strategies, and provide ample opportunities for learners to practice and use the English language. Moreover, the study revealed that a favorable home environment, such as parental support, encouragement in English learning, and opportunities to communicate with English speakers in the community enhances a positive attitude towards learning English. The study suggests that parents and the wider community should actively promote and support their children's English language speaking and learning endeavors in order to foster positive attitudes towards English learning.

The study also highlights that factor such as a lack of reading habits, reading materials, exposure to the right environment, and poor grooming from the primary stage hinder students' positive attitude towards learning English. Therefore, addressing these factors would enhance a positive attitude towards learning English as a second language.

In summary, the study recommends that schools and teachers raise awareness of the importance of English language learning, create a comfortable and conducive classroom environment, use appropriate teaching strategies and materials, and address the hindering factors to enhance students' positive attitudes towards learning English. The study also recommends that parents and the community encourage and support their children's English speaking and learning.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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