

Factors Affecting the Attitude of School Students Towards English Learning

A Structural Equation Modelling Approach

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ABSTRACT

Students' attitudes toward learning English are influenced by a variety of factors including the learning environment, teachers' teaching methods, available teaching-learning materials, parental influence, community involvement, and peer groups. This study investigated how these factors interact and determine attitudes of high school students of Assam towards English learning. The sample size of the study was 355. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used as an analytical approach with SmartPLS 4.0. The results confirmed that the model is reliable and valid. Teachers' teaching methods, teaching-learning materials, and peer influence were found to greatly affect the students' attitudes toward learning English positively; whereas the learning environment, parental, and community influence did not have a significant direct effect. Learning environment and teaching-learning materials were positive predictors of teaching methods. The teaching methods, in turn, mediated the effect of teaching-learning materials and the learning environment on students' attitudes. The findings underscore that effective pedagogy and sufficient learning resources are central to enhancing students' engagement and attitudes toward English. Strengthening classroom practices and facilitating access to quality material may go a long way toward addressing learning constraints in schools. In future studies, long-term effects and other contextual variables might be considered that affect attitudes toward English learning.

Keywords: Students' Attitude, Learning Environment, Teaching Methods, Teaching-Learning Materials, Structural Equation Modelling

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Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2020) and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023 (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2023) state that multilingualism is very important; however, English is essential for students to be able to prepare for higher education and participation in national and global opportunities. Despite English's significance as reflected in the policies, it has been a very difficult language for many students, such as those in government schools in Assam, to read, write, understand, and communicate. While national assessments indicate low learning outcomes—attributed to insufficient exposure and lack of teaching-learning materials, large class sizes, and restricted opportunities for authentic use of English (Masih, 2022)—it is increasingly important to understand learners' perceptions of English and how these perceptions interact with achievement in English (Meganathan, 2019).

The attitude is one of the important psychological factors considered in language learning. Even as Gardner's Socio-Educational Model (1985) states, positive attitude would boost motivation and keep one on the track to achieving success, whilst negative attitude produces anxiety, avoidance and poor performance (Gregersen et al., 2020). Expectancy value theory also shows that while learners' confidence in their ability suffices for their engagement, the value they attach to the English language also matters (Nagle, 2021). Attribution theory deals with how success or failure will inform future behaviour through beliefs about effort, ability, or difficulty (Weiner, 2012). It has been proven that students with positive attitudes always show better vocabulary growth, comprehension, participation, and overall achievement (Chen et al., 2013).

In the Indian context, attitudes are shaped by teacher interaction, peer influence, parental support, classroom environment, and community perceptions (Getie, 2020). For students in Assam, English learning often occurs in resource-constrained schools, with limited exposure beyond textbooks (Ahmed, 2016). As a result, teaching methods, materials, and peer dynamics may play a more decisive role than home- or community-based factors. Therefore, emphasis in the teacher education programme should be on enabling the trainees to acquire the ability for self-learning and independent thinking.

Teachers should have professional knowledge and professional status (Behera, 2015). Although policy frameworks stress English proficiency, few studies in Assam have examined how multiple ecological factors interact to influence attitudes. This study addresses this gap by analysing relationships among learning environment, teaching methods, teaching-learning materials, parental influence, peer influence, and community influence and by examining how these factors collectively shape secondary students' attitudes toward learning English. Supporting the examination of attitudes with theoretical frameworks and linking them to achievement is essential for improving English learning outcomes in school contexts.

Rationale of the Study

In Assam, research consistently shows that students in government and Assamese-medium schools remain weak in English despite studying it continuously from primary to secondary levels. Previous studies of secondary school report that students struggle to speak basic sentences or write simple applications in English even after 10 years of schooling, largely because teaching remains dominated by grammar-translation, rule-driven instruction, and exam-oriented practice rather than communicative use of the language (Ahmed, 2016). Studies on English education at secondary level further highlight limited exposure to English in the wider environment, especially for regional-medium students, and note that low proficiency is closely linked to inadequate classroom interaction and minimal opportunities for listening and speaking practice (Bishwas, 2019).

Status studies from different districts of Assam show that many English teachers in government and provincialised schools lack specialised training in ELT and rely heavily on traditional methods, large classes, and textbook-bound teaching, which restricts meaningful engagement with English (Awal and Karim, 2021; Saikia, 2020). Recent work focusing on rural schools in Assam reports additional structural barriers, such as poor infrastructure, limited learning materials, and scarce exposure to English media, all of which contribute to low confidence and negative attitudes among learners towards English (Dutta, 2023; Deka, 2025). At the same time, policy-oriented and editorial discussions emphasise that English is still perceived as a language of status and mobility in Assam, and point to initiatives such as the English Language

Teaching Institute (ELTI) and district-level training centres as attempts to strengthen teacher capacity, and improve English outcomes in government schools (Ahmed, 2016).

This state-level evidence supports the rationale for the study on government schools in Assam that face systemic pedagogical, infrastructural, and training challenges in English. This likely shapes students' attitudes towards learning the language and justifies a focused Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) investigation on school-based factors such as teaching methods, learning environment, peer influence, and materials.

Review of Related Literature

Previous Indian studies, strongly highlighted the role of teachers' pedagogy in shaping students' attitudes towards English. Research repeatedly shows that traditional, exam-oriented teaching reduces participation and confidence, whereas activity-based and communicative approaches increase motivation (Chandrasekharan, 2024; VidhyaLakshmi and Sureshkumar, 2022). Classroom experiments conducted in government and private schools also report that when teachers use group work, role-play, discussion, and communicative tasks students show a more positive attitude towards English learning (Ashok, 2015; Jabeen, 2014). These findings make it clear that the teachers' teaching method is the most influential factor in shaping students' willingness to learn English.

Another underlying argument in Indian study is the impact of teaching-learning materials. Research claims that students are benefitted from the audio-visual materials to customise and understand the learning context (Kurisunkal, 2018). ICT-enhanced materials implemented through smart-class programmes, language labs, and digital presentations have been reported to increase interest in the subject, reduce boredom, and create positive classroom experiences (Bhardwaj, 2025). Evidence from various secondary school classrooms has shown that the variety and quality of materials directly impact attitudes toward English learning and make lessons more meaningful. This evidence, therefore, concludes that teaching-learning materials constitute not an add-on, but rather the core of meaningful language learning.

The school learning environment has also received attention in Indian studies. Research shows that a supportive school environment—where students feel safe to speak, make mistakes,

and participate—helps them develop confidence and enjoyment in English classes (Agarwal, S., and Thakur, 2014; Aravamudhan, 2019). However, several studies conclude that the effect of the environment is indirect, because a favourable environment alone does not change attitudes unless teachers use it to create opportunities for interaction. Thus, the learning environment influences attitude primarily through classroom teaching and practice, rather than acting as an independent factor.

Studies on home and community factors in India show mixed results. Parental encouragement, parental education, and socio-economic status can influence access to private tutoring, books and exposure to English, but these effects are not always strong or consistent (Gupta, 2023). Community narratives about English as a symbol of modernity and mobility influence motivation, especially among urban and aspirational learners (Highet, 2021). However, peer group influence is consistently reported as important, because students feel more confident speaking English when encouraged by classmates during group work, presentations, and informal conversation (Areepattamannil et al., 2018). Peer support, therefore, acts as a social and emotional factor, helping students overcome fear and develop a positive attitude towards English learning.

Objective

To examine factors influencing students' attitude towards English learning.

Hypotheses

H1: There is no significant relationship between learning environment and attitude of students towards English language learning.

H2: There is no significant relationship between teachers' teaching method and students' attitude towards learning English.

H3: There exists no significant relationship between teaching-learning materials and students' attitude towards learning English.

H4: There exists no significant relationship between parental influence and their attitude towards learning English.

H5: There exists no significant relationship between impact of students' peer group and their attitude towards learning English.

H6: There exists no significant relationship between influence of students' community and their attitude towards learning English.

H7: There exists no significant relationship between teaching-learning materials and teachers' teaching method.

H8: There exists no significant relationship between learning environment and teachers' teaching method.

H9: Teachers' teaching method is a mediator in the relationship between teaching-learning materials and students' attitude towards learning English.

H10: Teachers' teaching method is a mediator in the relationship between learning environment and students' attitude towards learning English.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The researcher employed a survey design to assess various factors influencing students' attitudes toward learning English. In this study, quantitative data was collected for the investigation of the correlations among the discovered factors.

Sampling and Sample Size

Government schools were selected from the Sonitpur district of Assam based on their location (urban and rural) and willingness to participate in the study. A simple random sampling technique was adopted at both the school and student levels to ensure contextual relevance and adequate representation across gender and grade levels. The sample size for the present study consisted of 355 respondents and was determined using established guidelines for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The obtained sample size of 355 exceeds the recommended threshold, which is adequate to study SEM. Therefore, the final sample size of 355 was considered sufficient and appropriate for conducting SEM analysis. The sample drawn from government schools, included 158 male and 197 female students. Participants were enrolled in Grade 9 ($n = 145$), Grade 11 ($n = 103$), and Grade 12 ($n = 107$). All participating schools used Assamese as the medium of instruction.

Table 1: Sample Size Determination for SEM

Criterion/ Guideline	Description	Sample Size Requirements	Status
Number of indicators	Total observed indicators used in the study	31 indicators	
Hair et al. (2019) rule	Minimum 10 respondents per indicator	$31 \times 10 = 310$	Satisfied
Actual sample size	Respondents included in the study	355	Exceeds requirement
PLS-SEM 10 times rule (Barclay et al., 1995)	Sample size should be 10 times the largest number of structural paths to a construct	Adequate	Satisfied
Final decision	Adequacy of sample size for SEM	355 respondents	Sufficient

Data Collection Tool

Data collection was conducted with prior permission obtained from the heads or principals of the participating schools. Students were assured that their responses were confidential and this would permit them to provide feedback. Respondents were given 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire to allow time to reflect on their responses. This questionnaire was adapted from the previous studies of Getie (2020), Getahun (1997), Medhanie (1986), Mohamed (2004), and Tursi (1970).

Research Findings

Evaluation of the Measurement Model

To assess the measurement model, both convergent and discriminant validity must be examined. Convergent validity is established when indicators of the same construct show consistency. This is reflected through acceptable values of factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). In general, factor loadings and CR should be above 0.70, while AVE should exceed 0.50 to confirm that the construct explains more variance than measurement error. Reliability is also checked through Cronbach's Alpha, where values of 0.70 or higher indicate acceptable internal consistency.

Discriminant validity ensures that different constructs are truly distinct. This can be verified by comparing the square root of AVE with the correlations between constructs. When the square root of AVE is higher than the inter-construct correlations, discriminant validity is confirmed.

Table 2: Evaluation of the Outer Loading of Indicators

S. No.	Construct	No. of Indicators	Outer Loading (OL)	Decision
1.	ATLE	9	8 indicators greater than 0.07	1 indicator is rejected
2.	CI	2	All indicators greater than 0.07	All indicators are accepted
3.	LE	3	All indicators greater than 0.07	All indicators are accepted
4.	PGI	4	All indicators greater than 0.07	All indicators are accepted
5.	PI	5	All indicators greater than 0.07	All indicators are accepted
6.	TLM	3	All indicators greater than 0.07	All indicators are accepted
7.	TTM	5	All indicators greater than 0.07	All indicators are accepted

Note: ATLE: Attitude towards learning English, CI: Community influence, LE: Learning environment, PGI: Peer group impact, PI: Parental influence, TLM: Teaching-learning materials, TTM: Teachers’ teaching method

Table 2 depicts the results of the outer loading assessment for various constructs. The construct ATLE (attitude towards learning English) consists of 9 indicators, with 8 showing outer loadings greater than 0.7, while one indicator with a loading between 0.5 and 0.7 is considered for removal. For the constructs CI (community influence), LE (learning environment), PGI (peer group impact), PI (parental influence), TLM (teaching-learning materials), and TTM (teachers’ teaching method) all indicators have outer loadings greater than 0.7, indicating that they are strongly representative of their respective constructs and are accepted without any need for removal.

Table 3: The Measurement Model's Validity and Reliability

S. No.	Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
1.	ATLE	0.948	0.955	0.645
2.	CI	0.708	0.711	0.774
3.	LE	0.740	0.777	0.655
4.	PGI	0.774	0.779	0.594
5.	PI	0.835	0.847	0.600
6.	TLM	0.725	0.740	0.641
7.	TTM	0.826	0.833	0.589

Table 3 shows the reliability and validity testing of the constructs in the measurement model. The reliability of all constructs is satisfactory as the Cronbach's alpha values are above the 0.7 threshold, demonstrating high internal consistency. The maximum alpha reported for ATLE is 0.948, whereas CI has the lowest but still acceptable at 0.708. In addition to the validity, the composite reliability of all of the constructs is greater than 0.7 as well, which indicates that these constructs are consistent and ATLE is the highest at 0.955. The AVE value is greater than 0.5 for all constructs indicates that convergent validity is adequate with CI (0.774) being the highest and TTM, having the lowest at 0.589. Overall, the constructs have good reliability and validity in the model.

Table 4: Results of Measurement Model (Fornell-Larcker Analysis)

	ATLE	CI	LE	PGI	PI	TLM	TTM
ATLE	0.803						
CI	0.166	0.88					
LE	0.215	0.108	0.809				
PGI	0.341	0.252	0.179	0.771			
PI	0.224	0.162	0.175	0.207	0.775		
TLM	0.323	0.092	0.188	0.346	0.198	0.801	
TTM	0.461	0.221	0.237	0.366	0.307	0.344	0.768

Table 4 provides evidence for the discriminant validity of the Fornell-Larcker analysis, which indicates that all constructs are adequately different from one another. By contrast,

discriminant validity exists between constructs if the square root of the AVE for one construct is larger than its bivariate correlations with other constructs (Hair, 2019). The square root of the AVE of the constructs are printed along the diagonal and the correlations among the indicators of the constructs are shown along the off-diagonal. The square root value of AVE for ATLE was 0.803 and for TTM it was 0.768. All diagonal values are greater than the corresponding off-diagonal correlations indicating the distinctiveness of the constructs. Most of the relations between the constructs are low to moderate (the highest is 0.461 between ATLE and TTM and the lowest is 0.092 between TLM and CI); despite these relations, each construct keeps its own identity, since on the diagonal values are greater than off-diagonal correlations. This fact supports the discriminant validity of the model, suggesting that the constructs under study have been well specified and are not extensively overlapping (Figure1).

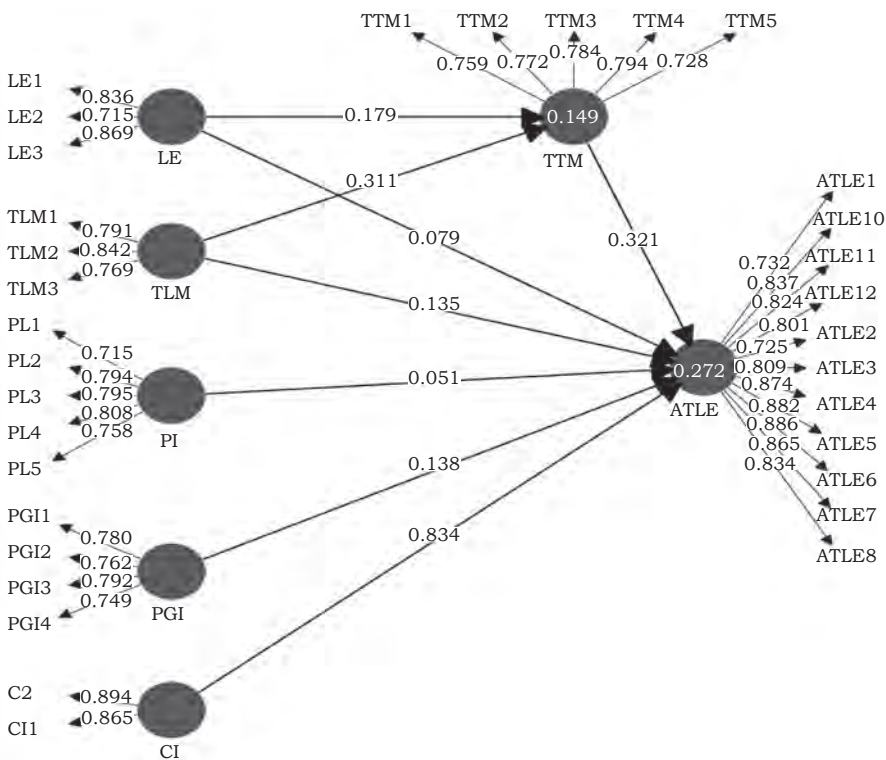


Figure 1: The structural model

Table 5 summarises the hypothesis testing results, highlighting key relationships affecting students' ATLE. Hypothesis H1, which examined the influence of the LE on ATLE, was unsupported, indicating that LE alone does not significantly shape students' attitudes. On the other hand, H2 revealed that TTM strongly impact ATLE, showing that effective teaching strategies significantly improve student attitudes. Hypothesis H3, also supported that TLM positively affect ATLE, emphasising the importance of quality educational resources. Hypotheses H4 and H6, testing the influence of PI and CI on ATLE, were both unsupported, suggesting that these factors may not have a direct effect. However, H5 demonstrated that PGI plays a significant role, underlining the importance of social interactions in shaping student attitudes.

Moreover, H7 confirmed that TLM significantly affect TTM, showing that better resources improve teaching methods. Hypothesis H8 revealed that LE influences TTM, implying that the classroom environment shapes teaching practices. Indirect effects were also observed in hypotheses H9 and H10, where LE and TLM indirectly influenced ATLE through their impact on TTM, emphasising the interdependence of teaching methods, learning resources, and the environment. TTM is used as a mediator to explain the process through which the LE and TLM influence ATLE. The influence of LE and TLM depends on how teachers apply them during instruction. Therefore, TTM serves as the linking mechanism between LE, TLM, and ATLE.

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient	T Statistics	P Values	Result
H1	LE -> ATLE	0.079	1.226	0.220	Unsupported
H2	TTM -> ATLE	0.321	4.337	0.000***	Supported
H3	TLM -> ATLE	0.135	2.19	0.029***	Supported
H4	PI -> ATLE	0.051	1.152	0.249	Unsupported
H5	PGI -> ATLE	0.138	2.019	0.043***	Supported
H6	CI -> ATLE	0.034	0.688	0.492	Unsupported
H7	TLM -> TTM	0.311	5.474	0.000***	Supported
H8	LE -> TTM	0.179	3.316	0.001***	Supported

H9	LE -> TTM -> ATLE	0.057	2.727	0.006***	Supported
H10	TLM -> TTM -> ATLE	0.1	3.036	0.002***	Supported

Note: ATLE: Attitude towards learning English, CI: Community influence, LE: Learning environment, PGI: peer group impact, PI: Parental influence, TLM: Teaching-learning materials, TTM: Teachers’ teaching method. SRMR = 0.055, ***P < 0.05

Discussion

Through the analysis of factors influencing student’s ATLE, the TTM surface as paramount among influences, mediating the effects of other important factors. TTM are also strongly and directly impacting ATLE as supported by the research on the competence and engagement of instructors (Fauth et al., 2019; Liang, 2024). Authoritative and well-structured teaching presence, in particular with blended learning models, increases performance expectancy and shapes attitudes towards learning (Albeta et al., 2024). Consequently, conducive LE and good TLM are positively influencing ATLE. However, it largely runs through effective teaching practices.

Quality TLM correlates positively and significantly with ATLE; therefore, it also stands to prove the necessity of learning resources (Albeta et al., 2024). Proper and attractive materials for learners would enhance interest and intrinsic motivation, which accords with previous findings about the impact of resource characteristics on learning motivation (Ustun et al., 2022; Albeta et al., 2024). Technology-based and interactive software with digital formats were also proven to maximise engagement of students during learning, making it an effective learning outcome (Ustun et al., 2022). Therefore, resourcefulness in terms of multimedia and interactivity is inevitable in making the teaching environment lively, according to Albeta et al., 2024. Thus, there must be permanent investments into fresh, good, and relevant materials for English teaching and learning.

The LE does not affect ATLE but indeed significantly affects TTM. A supportive LE would empower teachers into better teaching practices (Cheon et al., 2019; Lan, 2024). This indirect pathway is very important because a positive environment grants the teachers the tools, flexibility, and support to innovate into an

effective method, that in turn, has effects on the attitude of the students. For example, a technology-rich atmosphere may generate much-needed support for the integration of AI tools or blended learning approaches, thereby further enhancing teaching efficiency (Albeta et al., 2024; Yang, 2024).

PGIs are also significant as interaction among classmates positively affects students' ATLE (Cheon et al., 2019). Collaborative and social learning environments are essential, as past research demonstrates the contribution social presence and peer interaction have on learner engagement and satisfaction (Cheon et al., 2019). Conversely, some interventions aim at fostering a prosocial peer climate, so as to increase prosocial behaviour and cut down on antisocial behaviour among students (Cheon et al., 2019). This highlights the need for normalisation of collaborative learning activities and activities for peer interaction towards better ATLE.

According to the results, PI and CI were not direct determinants of ATLE, suggesting that these external factors may be less potent in directly shaping in-school English learning attitudes compared to internal classroom dynamics. Such contexts may shape external educational outcomes; however, the present findings stress the more immediate effect of the school environment. The external factors may act on the indirect line by shaping this self-concept or facilitating access to resources that may, in turn, affect motivation and engagement in learning (Flandez and Caballo, 2025; Fadhilah and Warni, 2024).

Conclusion

This study has brought to light several factors of attitudes of school students towards learning English and gives considerable information through structural equation model. Results indicate that positive student ATLE are greatly influenced by good teaching methods, appropriate TLM, and favourable PI. Therefore, interventions on improving students' ATLE should focus on Teacher's Teaching Method and upgrading learning resources that mediate the effect of the LE. Schools should consider promoting professional development for teachers and also encourage collaboration among them while investing in varied, attractive TLM that include digital tools. Blended learning gives very good results on improving learning outcomes, whereby the learning is facilitated with a combination of in-person learning and online teaching.

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