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Attitudes of B.Ed Students Towards Learning: A Gender and Age-Based Comparative Study at University of Malakand

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ABSTRACT

The attitudes towards learning have a significant impact on the students' motivation, engagement, and professional development, especially among prospective teachers. This study examined the level of attitudes towards learning among B.Ed. students. This study was conducted at the Department of Education, University of Malakand, Pakistan and involved B.Ed. students. In the department of Education University of Malakand, Pakistan, the study conducted with the B.Ed students and investigated the differences based on gender and semester. A quantitative descriptive-comparative study design was used. A self-developed and validated 28 item Attitude towards Learning Scale (ATLS) was used to gather data. A sample of 130 B.Ed students was used. Students were selected using stratified random sampling from 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th semester. Results revealed a moderate overall level of attitudes towards learning ($M = 32.58$, $SD = 8.14$). There was no significant difference between gender ($p = 0.518$). An interesting variation was found from semester to semester, $F(3, 126) = 3.701$, $p = 0.014$. The result of the post-hoc analysis showed that the attitude of the students in 2nd semester was significantly lower than that of students in 6th and 8th semester. The results indicate that the attitudes of students in learning get better when they study B.Ed program. In this research, the importance of early interventions to build positive learning attitudes in junior B.Ed was stressed. Students. Implications for teacher education programs in Pakistan are discussed.

Keywords: Attitudes towards learning, B.Ed Students of English education, teacher education, differences in the semesters, University of Malakand

INTRODUCTION

Attitude toward learning is a key psychological factor that has a significant effect on students' engagement, motivation, persistence, and achievement (Güngör, 2021). It includes cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions that influence the perception, attitude, and value of a learner towards a learning process. It is especially important to develop positive attitudes towards learning among prospective teachers in teacher



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education because prospective teachers are likely to transmit such attitudes to their future students (Ulug et al., 2011). As the basic level in teacher preparation, B.Ed. programs are key to developing teachers' attitude towards lifelong learning and professional growth. Recently, researchers have been keen to know the attitude of university students towards learning, particularly in developing countries where education faces problems like limited resources, high enrollment rates, and traditional education techniques still exist (Tariq, 2025; Yousaf, 2021). Positive attitudes towards learning are correlated with positive academic performance, positive classroom involvement and flexibility in using innovative approaches in the teaching process (Güngör, 2021). On the other hand, negative or indifferent attitudes can result in low motivation, low involvement and unoptimal preparation for the profession.

There are two important demographic variables which are commonly studied with reference to learning attitudes: Gender and Age. There are a number of studies that have indicated that there are significant differences between the attitudes of students' gender towards learning, but the results have been inconsistent by context (Sabiq, 2021; Yu, 2022). Likewise, learning attitudes can be affected by age difference because of differences in maturity, experience in life and academic commitment, especially because of the differences in ages of students in the B.Ed. program, which often span a wide range (Güngör, 2021).

The teacher education system in Pakistan as a developing country with a rapidly growing higher education system is challenged with its own set of issues. An analysis of the attitude of B.Ed. students towards learning is important to enhance the quality of teacher training programs. The Department of Education (DoE) of University of Malakand is an important institution of teacher preparation in Malakand Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Although it is important, there is little empirical evidence available on learning attitudes of B.Ed. students in this region.

The present study is designed to fill the above gap by examining the overall attitude levels and gender and age differences of B.Ed. students towards learning and assessment. The findings of this study should be able to give some contribution to programmer, teacher educator, curriculum developer and policy-maker in designing interventions to enhance positive attitude in learning among future teachers.

Literature Review

The attitude toward learning is a multidimensional concept in which it is composed of cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements, and it is one of the most important factors that determine students' motivation, participation, persistence and success in learning (Albastro, 2025; Wakhata, 2024). It is imperative to develop positive attitudes towards learning in teacher education programs, especially in B.Ed. as the positive attitude of prospective teachers is observed and further transmitted to the next generation of students.

Attitudes towards Learning among B.Ed. and University Students

The recent empirical studies indicate that, in general, attitudes toward learning are moderately positive amongst the university students and B.Ed students but are influenced by the teaching methods and context. According to Albastro (2025), the attitudes of learners towards learning, which include procrastination, apathy and self-esteem, have been found to be significantly related to academic success for the learner. Likewise, the scientific research on blended learning and technology supported learning (TALL) has found that active learning and student-centered learning have a significant positive effect on students' attitudes towards learning (Rehman, 2025; Das, 2023). Teacher education students' attitudes in the Pakistani and South Asian context are generally positive but



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fluctuate across different institutions based on institutional factors, pedagogical approaches and socio-cultural factors.

Gender Differences in Attitudes towards Learning

Gender is still a variable that is studied in learning attitude research and the results that are obtained are varied in the recent research conducted. There is some evidence that female students show more favorable attitudes in particular subjects. In some learning contexts, there was a higher degree of behavioral and cognitive involvement, as well as more positive attitudes, among the female learners in a study conducted by Aznam et al. (2022) and later by Rismawati (2025). On the other hand, a number of recent studies are unable to find any significant differences in the overall attitudes of University and College students towards learning by gender (Nedjo & Adu, 2023; Matobobo, 2026). The discrepancies indicate that the differences in learning attitudes between genders are context-dependent, subject-specific, dependent on learning modalities (face-to-face or digital), and dependent on cultural context. Knowledge of gender differences can be useful in teacher education programs, where there is often a balance of genders, to inform pedagogical intervention.

Age Differences in Attitudes towards Learning

Other key socio-demographic factors influencing the attitudes towards learning are age. Mature learners (usually over 23-25 years) are known to exhibit higher levels of attitude towards learning, which can be attributed to a variety of factors including their higher level of self-regulation, clearer career objectives, and greater experience in life (Ademi, 2025). Younger students can show great start-up motivation and lower endurance in the face of academic difficulties. In a B.Ed course, age difference could be 20 to 25 years; this could affect students' motivation and professional growth. But there is a gap in empirical research that explicitly focuses on the age difference in B.Ed. student's attitudes towards learning in Pakistan and other developing countries.

Theoretical Framework and Research Gap

The present study is grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002) that argue that attitudes have a significant influence on learning involvement and learning intentions. The literature on learning attitudes has increased significantly in the past few years, but there is a lack of evidence on the learning attitudes of the context about the University of Malakand, KP, in particular. The present study aims to fill this gap by examining the overall attitude level and demographic (gender and age) difference in attitudes of B.Ed. students towards learning.

Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate the attitudes of B. overall.Ed students towards learning at the Department of Education, University of Malakand
2. To compare the attitudes of B.Ed students towards learning with respect to their gender and age

Hypotheses

Ho1: No significant difference in attitudes of B.Ed students towards learning with respect to gender. Ho2: No significant difference in attitudes of B.Ed students towards learning with respect to age.

Research Design

The research method of this study was quantitative, descriptive-comparative survey. The survey method was found to be most suitable because it allows for the collection of data systematically on attitudes from a relatively large sample and enables the examination to



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be done statistically on group differences (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). This study was carried out at the Department of Education, University of Malakand, Pakistan in year 2023.

Population and Sampling

The study had a population of all B.Ed. Students during the Academic Year 2023, the University of Malakand was the home of B.Ed students of the department of Education. The total population was 520 studying in 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th semester.

A sample of 130 B.Ed. the stratified random sampling technique was used to select "B.Ed students". The population was divided in 4 strata according to semester (2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th). A sample was drawn at random from each stratum, with the number sampled from each stratum being proportionate to the size of the stratum (approximately 32-33 students per semester). In this sampling method, all the semesters were represented, and it also increased the generalizability of the results with respect to the target population (Etikan et al. 2016).

Research Instrument

The researcher created a new instrument in this research and titled it as "Attitude towards Learning Scale (ATLS)". The B scale was developed to measure the scale B.Ed students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of attitudes towards learning.

There were 32 items on the original survey with a five-point Likert Scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). This scale was reduced to 28 items after expert review and pilot testing. More positive attitudes towards learning were represented by higher scores.

Validity

Validity was determined by expert validation. The draft instrument was shared with five experts from the field of education and educational psychology of University of Peshawar, University of Malakand and Allama Iqbal Open University. Several items were changed according to their recommendations and four items were deleted.

Pilot Testing and Reliability

Pilot Testing and Reliability was conducted by a pilot study with 28 B.Ed students (not a part of the main sample). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure the reliability of the scale which resulted 0.89 which is very good internal consistency. The item-total correlations were also examined, and were satisfactory for all items.

Data Collection Procedure

Before data collection, the permission was taken from the Chairperson of the Department of Education, University of Malakand. The researcher personally went to the department where the questionnaires were administered during the normal class hours in 2023. Participants were told what the study was about, and that their participation was voluntary and their information would be kept confidential and anonymous. The questionnaire was given to each student 20-25 minutes to fill out. The researcher was there to clarify any ambiguities. 130 questionnaires were sent out, and they received all questionnaires, giving 100% response rate.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 26) was used to analyze the data. To find the overall level of attitudes descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage were used. The following inferential statistics were performed:

The attitude towards learning by gender was examined by using Independent samples t-test. Differences across semesters were assessed by using one-way ANOVA and Tukey HSD post hoc test. All statistical tests were set at the 95% confidence level ($p < .05$).



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Gender-wise Comparison of Attitudes towards Learning

Independent Samples t-test for Gender Differences in Attitudes towards Learning

	Gender	N	Mean	t	df	Sig.
Sum	Male	62	32.5161	-.091	128	.518
	Female	68	32.6471			

There was a slight difference between the mean score of female students (M = 32.65) and male students (M = 32.52), as seen in Table 4.2. However, the difference was not statistically significant, $t(128) = -0.091$, $p = 0.518$ ($p > 0.05$). So the null hypothesis H_01 “There is no significant difference in the attitudes of B.Ed students towards learning with respect to gender” is accepted. This suggests that male and female B.Ed students’ the attitude of learning is the same in the Ed students of the University of Malakand.

Semester-wise Differences in Attitudes towards Learning

Descriptive Statistics of Attitudes towards Learning by Semester

Semester	N	Mean	Std. deviation
2 nd Semester	34	23.8529	7.28690
4 th Semester	20	32.7500	9.59098
6 th Semester	32	34.7812	6.22552
8 th Semester	44	33.7955	8.57682
Total	130	32.5846	8.14480

The descriptive statistics show some differences in the average scores between semesters. The 6th semester students' mean attitude score (M = 34.78) was greater than that of 8th semester (M = 33.80) and 2nd semester (M = 23.85) students, respectively.

One-Way ANOVA for Differences in Attitudes by Semester

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	692.927	3	230.976	3.701	0.014
Within Groups	7864.643	126	62.418		
Total	8557.569	129			

The result of one way ANOVA showed that there was a significant difference in attitudes towards learning among B.Ed students across different semesters, $F(3, 126) = 3.701$, $p = 0.014$ ($p < 0.05$). Thus it can be concluded that the null hypothesis H_02 , “There is no significant difference in the attitudes of B.Ed students towards learning with respect to semester” is rejected.

Post-Hoc Analysis (Tukey HSD)

A Tukey HSD post hoc test was performed to determine the differences in attitudes towards learning among the different Semesters. The results revealed that:

The attitudes towards learning were found to be very low in 2nd semester students than in 6th semester students (Mean Difference = -5.93, $p = 0.015$) and the attitudes towards learning were very low in 2nd semester students than in 8th semester students (Mean Difference = -4.94, $p = 0.035$). There were no significant difference between 4th semester students and other semesters or between the 6th and 8th semester students. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that senior B.Ed students that were in the later semesters of



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the B.Ed program showed higher positive attitudes towards learning than did the junior students.

Findings

The key results from the research are briefly described below:

1. The overall level of B.Ed Students attitude towards learning at the University of Malakand was found to be moderate with Overall mean (32.58) and SD (8.14).
2. The male and female B were not significantly different in terms of attitude towards learning B.Ed students, $t(128) = -0.091$, $p = 0.518$ ($p > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.
3. The attitudes towards learning of B. were significantly different from each other B.Ed students across different semesters, $F(3, 126) = 3.701$, $p = 0.014$ ($p < 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.
4. Post-hoc analysis (Tukey HSD) also showed that there was significant difference between the 2nd semester students' attitudes towards learning and 6th semester students' attitudes towards learning ($p = 0.015$) and 8th semester students' attitude towards learning ($p = 0.035$).
5. The positive attitude of learning was higher among senior students compared to junior students (2nd semester), especially at 6th semester and 8th semester.

Discussion

The attitudes of B.Ed students were investigated in the present study. Gender and semester based differences in the students' learning towards B.Ed at the University of Malakand. The results add to the existing literature on teacher training in developing contexts. The moderate found in this study was similar to the previous study which pointed out that prospective teachers who are in the environment of limited resources often have ambivalent attitudes about learning, which is neither very positive nor very negative (Rehman, 2025; Albastro, 2025). This moderate attitude might be due to traditional pedagogical approaches, examination based systems and lesser exposure to innovative pedagogical approaches adopted by many universities in Pakistan. Interestingly, there was no significant difference in attitudes towards learning between genders. The results are contrary to some international studies which show that female students have more positive in terms of learning attitudes (Rismawati, 2025; Yu, 2022), while on the other hand, the results are consistent with recent studies in teacher education that indicate that institutional and curricular aspects seem to cancel out the gender effect. The results of this study do not reveal any gender difference, indicating that the B.Ed students' of University of Malakand's B.Ed program offers fairly gender-balanced educational opportunities for boys and girls. One of the interesting results found in the study is that there is a significant difference between attitudes at different semesters, in that senior students (6th and 8th semester) have more positive attitudes than their junior (2nd semester) counterparts. This trend of improvement in attitudes is consistent with Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), and Socialization Theory in teacher education that extended interaction with the program, exposure to practicum, and growing professional identity formation would increase students' learning value. There is a significant gap in attitudes between both the two groups, which points to a critical transition period in the institutions that needs special attention.

Theoretical Contribution This study builds on the application of attitude theories in a context where it has not been studied in teacher education (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan). It highlights the dynamic nature of learning attitudes, and their sensitivity to the course rather than the static demographic characteristics like gender.



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Practical Implications The findings have important implications for the teacher education policy makers and institutions in Pakistan. During the first semesters, departments need to have a structured orientation and mentoring program to develop positive learning attitudes early in the B.Ed journey. Changes to the curriculum, such as active learning, reflective learning, and the use of technology, can also contribute to increased engagement and attitudes among students.

Limitations and Future Directions Cross-sectional design and single-institution sample reduces generalizability of results. Longitudinal study designs and multi-university samples should be considered in future research to gain insights into the development of the attitudes to learning during the teacher preparation program. It would also be useful to include mixed-design studies exploring potential explanations for the lower attitudes in early semesters.

Conclusion

This study investigated the attitudes of B.Ed students from Department of Education, University of Malakand. The results showed that B.Ed students had moderate positive attitudes towards learning. No significant gender differences were found, but a statistically significant difference was found in terms of semester with senior students (6th and 8th semesters) having significantly more positive attitudes than junior students, especially in the 2nd semester. These results support that attitudes towards learning are not fixed but tend to become better as the students go through the B.Ed program. The lack of gender gap indicates that the current Teacher Education program at the University of Malakand provides relatively equal opportunities for learning to female and male students. The much lower attitudes scores in second semester however, indicate a critical transitional period which needs immediate academic and psychological support. This study has important implications for teacher education in Pakistan. Since Future teachers must form good, positive attitudes towards learning during their teachers' preparation because they will influence the learning attitudes of thousands of school students. The gradual positive change in attitudes over semesters suggest that significant learning experiences, practicum, and professional socialization are important factors in improving students' engagement and motivation. Recommendations It is strongly recommended that the Department of Education at the University of Malakand to introduce structured orientation programs, mentoring system and student centered pedagogical approach from the very beginning of the B.Ed program. Special consideration is given to first and second year students to ensure that they do not disengage and form a good start of positive learning attitudes. This research adds to the body of literature by conducting its empirical study in a public sector university of KP territory. It reminds us to continually strive to improve teacher training programs to produce highly motivated and professionally committed teachers. Ultimately, to build positive attitudes towards learning in the achievement of B.Ed students is not just a target to be met for academic purposes but is an essential target to meet to enhance the overall quality of education in Pakistan.

Recommendations

The study has resulted in the following recommendations:

1. The Department of Education at the University of Malakand should launch comprehensive orientation and mentoring programs which are tailored to first and second semester B.Ed students. These should be aimed at developing positive attitudes to learning through interactive workshops, peer mentoring and learning methods that are innovative.
2. Student-Centered Pedagogical Practices: Faculty need to move away from the traditional lecture format to a more student-centered teaching-learning approach,



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such as using project based learning, group discussion and reflective practice, from the first few semesters. This could help to boost student's engagement and attitude to learning.

3. The department should regularly review B.Ed by conducting a Continuous Monitoring of Student Attitudes. Attitude of B.Ed students at various points of the program to learning. Feedback systems can be put in place regularly to allow for early identification of students with low levels of motivation and timely academic and counseling interventions.
4. Curriculum and Practicum Enhancement: The B.Ed curriculum needs to be changed to provide more practical teaching times and Professional development opportunities starting from early semesters. Building the link between theory and practice could facilitate students 'awareness of learning value and build professional identity.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Longitudinal Studies: Future researchers should take longitudinal studies to follow up how attitudes of B.Ed students change over the course of the 4-years. This would be more in-depth than the existing one cross-sectional study.
2. Multi university comparative study: Comparative studies from various universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other provinces of Pakistan should be conducted to compare the results and provide improvement in generalizability of the findings.
3. Mixed Methods Approach: Further research is recommended to use a mixed-methods design (quantitative + qualitative) to measure the level of attitudes and investigate the reasons for low or high attitudes by conducting interviews and focus group discussions.

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