

## Attitudes towards learning English among the Aliya madrasah students in Bangladesh

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### ABSTRACT

Affective variables such as attitude, autonomy, motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety are crucial among the factors that contribute to learning a second/foreign language. Among them, one of the most important factors in inspiring learners to learn a language is their attitudes towards learning. The purpose of this study was to examine the cognitive, emotional as well as behavioral attitudes of Bangladeshi Aliya madrasah students towards learning English. The study also explored the differences in their attitudes towards learning English based on demographic profiles, that is, their gender, their parents' monthly family income, and their parents' education level. Data were obtained via questionnaire surveys and they were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics, independent T-test, and one-way ANOVA. The results revealed that the participants demonstrated highly positive cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attitudes towards learning English. The analysis also showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the students' attitudes towards learning English based on their parents' monthly family income and their parents' education level. However, the results presented no significant difference in the students' attitudes towards learning English in relation to gender. This finding may help teachers to improve their classroom preparation by understanding their students' attitudes better and making the learning activities easier for them. Moreover, it may inform the students' attitudes to the authorities and policymakers responsible for devising policy for madrasah education, planning curriculum and designing materials for the madrasah students.

**Keywords:** Aliya madrasah; English language; second language; students' attitudes.

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### INTRODUCTION

A properly educated population is the precondition for building a strong progressive nation which is realized by the policymakers of education in the independent Bangladesh. The country aims to create an enormous development in education where enhancement of proficiency in English language is thought to be imperative (Akteruzzaman & Islam, 2017). With globalization, since mobility and connectivity of people between different parts of the world have been increased, the necessity of English has also been increased and hence, this language is

considered the main instrument of communication in the globalized world. Access to higher education, better jobs, and business as well as maintaining the social and international relationships requires a good command of English, as Wulyani et al. (2019) view that a strong command of English language is important in this era of globalization. Considering the extent of use of English across the world, Morganna et al. (2020) say that people from all over the world speak English. Knowing English has become a reality for an individual to adjust into the modern world and survive the global restructuring

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of human relationship. This necessity of English is well understood by the education policy makers of Bangladesh as different education commissions have recommended learning of English. For example, in 2003, Moniruzzaman Mia Education Commission emphasized the necessity of English in enhancing the quality of higher education in Bangladesh, as the commission recommended, “The curriculum of four-year undergraduate programs should include English language course to be studied in the first six months of the program along with other courses” (Rahim, 2017, pp. 54–55).

National Education Policy (NEP)-2010 also spells out the importance of learning English as it mentions that students should study English as a compulsory subject from primary to graduate levels in general and Alia madrasah education (Ministry of Education, 2010). Following the recommendations by different education commissions and the NEP-2010, necessary provisions and arrangements have been made for students to learn English language from the very beginning of their academic life to the higher secondary level in all streams of education, including general education, madrasah education, and vocational education; English is taught as a compulsory subject. Moreover, English is taught as a foundation course at the tertiary education. Teaching and learning of English have been modernized updating the English curricula and syllabus, adapting and producing suitable materials, and introducing appropriate methodology and techniques of teaching English. Despite such initiatives, a dissatisfaction towards developing proficiency in English by the learners is demonstrated by different stakeholders such as educationists, teachers, parents, and job providers. For instance, Haque (2017) says, in spite of learning English for twelve years, student’s proficiency level is very low. A similar view is expressed by Kabir (2017) who asserts, “We learn English for about 12 years and yet we don’t learn it properly” (p. 2). Though such evaluation applies in general to the students irrespective of any particular stream of education, madrasah students are more harshly criticized in relation to their proficiency in English.

With regard to Aliya madrasah education, a sub-stream in the madrasah education, it is perceived that the students of this sub-stream are less proficient in English than the students of other streams such as general or vocational education (Rahman et al., 2021) and hence, their ability in enrolling into university programs, maintaining quality of programs, and securing a good job is suspected (Azad, 2017; Farhin, 2017). A section in the society excoriates the Aliya madrasah students in the media and social media for their poor command in English though the Aliya madrasah students follow the same English curriculum, syllabus, and materials as well as spend equal amount of time to learn English like the students of

other streams (Rahman et al., 2021). As Azad (2017, p. 17) opines that despite considerable time and effort spent in learning English as a compulsory subject at the secondary and higher secondary levels, the general proficiency of most of the Aliya madrasah students is “disproportionately low”. He further adds that despite the persistent efforts of the government to enhance students’ skills in English in the last few years, the result is unsatisfactory. Prof. Mesbah Kamal also claims, “Madrasah students who are admitted to Dhaka University possess proficiency in English equivalent to the proficiency of class IV level students of general education stream” (Haque, 2018, p. 1). Quasem (2014, p. 77) claims that the rate of success in learning English among the Aliya madrasah students is extremely low compared to the other subjects of study. Moreover, the poor performance in English is held responsible for the fall of overall pass rate of the madrasah students in the public examinations, as the chairman of Dhaka education board opines, “English has always been considered the major factor in results. Many students flunked this subject, pulling down the tally of total students passed” (The Daily Star, 2017, July 24). While one group of people criticize madrasah students for their poor performance in English due to perceived deficiency of proficiency in the language, the madrasah students are reported to do well in the public exams such as Dakhil and Alim, as the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) pass rate for the technical education board was 75.5 percent in 2018, the Alim (equivalent to HSC) pass rate was 78.67 percent (The Daily Star, 2018, July 19). Moreover, in the undergraduate admission tests at Dhaka University in 2014, top positions such as 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> were secured by the madrasah students. Even 95% marks were obtained by a madrasah student in English particularly (Campus Live, 2014, October 02). Despite such success stories, madrasah students are generally criticized for their perceived deficiency of proficiency in English compared to the students of general streams of education (Golam & Kusakabe, 2018).

The madrasah students are not only criticized for their perceived deficiency of proficiency in English but also frequently deprived of a variety of opportunities like access to higher education and jobs. They face humiliation, unfair treatment, and discrimination in obtaining mainstream jobs (Mamun & Shaon, 2018). Similarly, despite achieving high ranks in the undergraduate admission tests at Dhaka University as mentioned above, they were refused to get admission in some basic subjects such as Bangla, English, Women and Gender Studies, Public Administration, and Economics (Campus Live, 2014, October 02; Yusuf, 2015). Since it appears that the madrasah students are reported to do well in the public examinations as well as university admission tests (Rahman et al.,

2021), it is a grave concern as to why their proficiency in English language is questioned and why they are being deprived of opportunities for this alleged deficit proficiency. Besides madrasah students' special focus on learning Arabic and Islamic studies, some other factors such as their motivation for learning English, attitudes towards learning English, and socio-economic background could be considered potential in explaining their suspected deficiency of proficiency in English. Under the circumstances, this paper, investigates the attitudes of the Aliya madrasah students towards learning English and the factors that (re)shape their attitudes.

Attitude, a psychological construct, defines or promotes certain behaviors and explains their direction and persistence, as Allport (1935) says, "Attitude is a mental or neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" (cited in Baker, 1992, p. 11). Relating this notion to languages, Crystal (2012) perceives attitudes towards languages as feelings and beliefs people have about the languages of others or their own. Since attitude is a belief, a perception, and a feeling, this belief about a language and its learning is strongly linked to success in language classes (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). Gardner (1985) in this regard says, the concept of attitude is an important constituent of success in the acquisition of a foreign or a second language. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) also view that attitude is an important ingredient of motivation that largely contributes to learning another language (also Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005). Similarly, according to Gardner and Lambert (1959), learning success of a second-language is linked to the variables of attitudes. Brown (2000) too opines that learning a second or a foreign language like English is a complex, persisting, long term activity, which may be influenced by several factors, such as first language, age, aptitude, learning strategies, family influence, motivation, and attitudes (Utvær & Haugan, 2016). These views suggest that if the learners hold positive feeling about a particular language, they are likely to be found attentive in its class, remain enthusiastic about this language, practice it more and more in the class, and thus, learn that language more effectively. Gardner and Lysynchuk (1990) attest this view as they find that positive attitudes help the target language learners to develop higher proficiency in that language. With reference to learning English as a second language, Khalid (2016) is reported to find a correlation between positive attitudes and learning English. While positive attitudes are found to yield positive results in learning a second language in this study, negative attitudes are also reported to produce negative results in some other studies. For example, Tella et al. (2010) observe the impact of negative

attitudes in learning English as they report that negative attitudes in learning English cause a low performance of the students. This link between learners' negative attitudes and low performance in learning an L2 is argued by other scholars, as Baker (1992) claims that if the students do not feel the need to learn a foreign or a second language necessary for them to work outside or inside of their close group, they are supposed to show negative attitude to that language and this may affect their learning. At this point it is clear that negative attitude can be a problem to learn a language, while positive attitude can be a good start to learn the language (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011).

The foregoing discussion implies that the performance in language learning is highly influenced by both negative and positive attitudes (Getie, 2020) and hence, it could be said that attitude plays a crucial role in language learning. These above stated notions about attitude and its significance clearly indicate that attitude is an important constraint of learning a foreign or a second language. People may be found to demonstrate a multiple, not a single, attitudes towards a language. To illustrate, someone may like a language for one domain, for example, office, but not for another domain, for example, family; he/she may like to learn it for personal gain but not for ethnic or social identity. Thus, the attitudes towards languages are found to have three dimensions or aspects namely cognitive, emotional, and behavioral (Baker, 1992). While the cognitive aspect deals with a person's beliefs, values, and thoughts about a language, the emotional component deals with his/her emotions and feelings towards the language, and the behavioral aspect relates to his/her behavioral actions in that language. These three attitudinal components are, however, interrelated, meaning that positive beliefs about a language carry positive emotions, which demonstrate positive linguistic behavior. But the extent of these three components may vary, as some individuals might have sturdier cognitive attitude to language than behavioral or emotional one.

The attitudes are found to be influenced by a number of factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and cultural background. As with reference to culture, Gardner (1985) suggests that the second or foreign language learners who view the target culture favorably would learn the target language more efficiently than those with a negative view of the culture of the target language. Ellis (2015) also observes that attitudes can be affected by the views of the students' own culture as well as the culture of the target language. Similarly, parental factors are reported to influence learners' attitudes towards learning a second or a foreign language, as Spolsky (1989, p. 26) opines, "One of the social contexts to be taken into consideration is the various parent factors such as their education,

religion, culture, socioeconomic status, place of birth, and knowledge of the target language” (also Brown, 2000). Besides parents, the teachers are also found to influence students’ L2 learning attitudes, as Wright (1999) states, the teacher has a strong perceived influence on student’s attitudes (also Getie, 2020).

Attitudes and their roles in learning English as an L2 have been studied across different contexts in the world. A very few studies (e.g., Al Mamun et al., 2012) have also been carried out in Bangladesh to explore the importance and role of attitudes in learning English as a second or a foreign language. But these studies have only investigated the attitudes of the students of general stream of education in Bangladesh. Surprisingly, no attempt has been made so far to date to examine the importance and role of attitudes of Aliya madrasah students towards learning English though Rahman et al. (2021) studied on Aliya madrasah students’ motivation for learning English. Moreover, the studies which have investigated learners’ attitudes towards learning English in Bangladesh have not addressed the components of attitudes (e.g., cognitive, emotional, and behavioral) as well as the differences of attitudes towards learning English with regard to such variables like participants’ gender, their parents’ monthly income, and their parents’ education level. Under the circumstances, the present study was conceptualized and its accomplishment was rationalized. The present study aimed to examine Bangladeshi Aliya madrasah students’ attitudes towards learning English with regard to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components of their attitudes. Moreover, this study identified the differences in their attitudes based on their gender, their parents’ monthly income, and

their parents’ education level. With these aims, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attitudes of the Aliya madrasah students in Bangladesh towards learning English?
2. How far do their attitudes towards learning English vary according to the difference of their gender and the monthly family income and education background of their parents?

## METHODS

### Research approach

The study was approached quantitatively. Quantitative approach was chosen as it offers a numerical or quantitative overview of a population’s trends, opinions, or attitudes through analyzing sample of that population (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Moreover, as this study selected its participants randomly, investigated correlations between dependent variable (attitude) and independent variables (participants’ gender and their parents’ monthly family income and education status) objectively, the use of quantitative approach was justified. Compatible with this approach, a questionnaire was administered to collect data.

### Population and sample

The setting for this research was Rangpur district, Bangladesh. Alim level students of Aliya madrasah in Bangladesh was the population of the study from which a sample of 300 students were selected (from six Aliya madrasahs) through a simple random sampling method. Table 1 shows the distribution of sample according to the variables.

**Table 1**  
*Sample Distribution*

Description	Group	Frequency (N= 300)	Percentage (%)
Gender of the participants	Male	154	51.3
	Female	146	48.7
Parents’ education level	Postgraduate /Kamil	22	7.3
	Undergraduate /Fazil	54	18.0
	HSC/Alim	113	37.7
	SSC/Dakhil	53	17.7
Parents’ monthly family income	Below SSC/Dakhil	58	19.3
	Tk. 50000/above (high)	43	14.3
	Tk. 20000–49000 (middle high)	75	25.0
	Tk. 10000–19000 (middle low)	117	39.0
	Tk. Below 10000 (low)	65	21.7

### Instrument

The questionnaire comprised two parts. The first part consisted of items related to participants’ background, for example, their gender and their parents’ monthly family income and education status. The second part consisted of a total of 15 items, five items on each component namely cognitive attitudes, emotional attitudes, and behavioral attitudes. These items were adapted from

attitude questionnaire developed by Abidin et al. (2012). The participants were instructed to specify their opinion on a 5-point Likert scale (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree). Though the items were adapted, their validity was ensured incorporating expert opinion and feedback from piloting the instrument. Reliability of items was also checked through Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient: the alpha ( $\alpha$ )

value for the scale of cognitive attitudes was .85, emotional attitudes .83 and behavioral attitudes .79. These values indicate that the items were reliable since  $\alpha = .70$  and above are considered acceptable reliability level for the items (George & Mallery, 2003).

**Data analysis**

Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 25 was used to run the statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics was applied to find out the frequency, the means, and the standard deviations of the data. To determine if there was any statistically significant difference in Aliya madrasah students' attitudes towards learning English based on their gender, their parents' monthly family income and education status, inferential statistics was run. Independent sample *t*-test was carried out to explore the differences in their attitudes in relation to their gender, whereas one-way ANOVA test was run to identify the differences in their attitudes with reference to their parents' monthly family income and education level. Before running these statistical

analyses, the normality of data distribution was checked since it is one of the prerequisites for running these inferential statistics.

**RESULTS**

Table 2 displays participants' overall attitudes towards learning English, whereas Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5 show their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attitudes respectively obtained via descriptive statistics. Table 2 shows that the participants have high positive attitudes towards learning English, as  $M=3.99$  indicates high positive attitudes according to Alaga (2016). Their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attitudes are also found to be highly positive distinctively since the mean score is 3.90, 3.94, and 4.14 respectively. Moreover, it appears that the participants are shown to demonstrate their behavioral attitudes ( $M = 4.14, SD = .74$ ) more strongly compared to their emotional attitudes ( $M= 3.94, SD = .83$ ) and cognitive attitudes ( $M = 3.90, SD = .86$ ). These findings answer to the first research question.

**Table 2**  
*Attitudinal Variation of the Participants*

Attitudes category	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Attitudes
Cognitive attitudes	3.90	.86	High
Emotional attitudes	3.94	.83	High
Behavioral attitudes	4.14	.74	High
Overall attitudes	3.99	.81	High

**Cognitive attitudes to learn English**

Participants' cognitive attitudes towards learning English obtained through Items 1 to 5 are presented in Table 3. It can be seen from this table that majority of the participants (79%, i.e.,  $A=48.0\%$  &  $SA=31.0\%$ ) are of the view that being good at English will help them to study other subjects well (Item 1). Though a few of them are found to remain neutral in their opinion regarding the issue, a highly negligible percentage of them are found to disagree with it. With regard to Item 2, while a substantial number of the participants, 71.7 percent ( $A=44.7\%$  &  $SA= 27.0\%$ ), are found to opine that studying English helps them to communicate in English effectively, some are found to be neutral, and an almost negligible percentage of them are found to report their disagreement about it. The table also shows that 77.0% ( $A=48.0\%$  &  $SA=29.0\%$ ) of the participants are of the opinion that they are able to think and analyze the content in English (Item 3). Although a very little percentage of them show neutral stance regarding the issue, a nearly negligible percentage of them are reported to disagree with it. Likewise, with regard to Item 4, the table displays that over half of the participants (51% i.e.,  $A=30.0\%$  &  $SA=21.0\%$ ) opine that they are satisfied with their performance in the English subject. Whereas a very significant percentage of the participants (34.0%) are neutral with the issue, a

few of them are found to disagree. Concerning Item 5, it can also be seen from the table that 76.0% ( $A=50.7\%$  &  $SA=25.3\%$ ) of the participants believe that studying English is important because it will make them more educated. Though some of them are found to remain neutral regarding this issue, a highly insignificant percentage of them are found to disagree with it. In short, it appears from the table that the participants hold highly positive cognitive attitudes towards learning English. Though the mean score for each item is found to vary slightly from one another, the average of the mean scores is 3.90, which could be considered an indication of their high positive cognitive attitudes towards learning the language, according to mean range categories mentioned by (Alaga, 2016).

**Emotional attitudes to learn English**

Participants' emotional attitudes towards learning English collected through Items 6 to 10 are presented in Table 4. The table shows that 82.6% ( $A=41.3\%$  &  $SA=41.3\%$ ) of the participants opine that they feel excited while they communicate with others in English (Item 6). Although only a small fraction of them is found to be neutral, disagreement was demonstrated by a highly insignificant number of the participants on the issue. With regard to Item 7, over half of the participants (55.6%, i.e.,  $A=35.0\%$  &  $SA= 20.6\%$ ) perceive that studying foreign languages like English is enjoyable.

**Table 3**  
*Participants' Cognitive Attitudes towards English*

Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	Level of Motivation
Item 1	1.0	1.3	18.7	48.0	31.0	4.07	High
Item 2	.7	3.3	24.3	44.7	27.0	3.94	High
Item 3	.3	3.0	19.7	48.0	29.0	4.02	High
Item 4	5.0	10.0	34.0	30.0	21.0	3.52	High
Item 5	–	4.0	20.0	50.7	25.3	3.97	High

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, M=Mean, sd=Standard Deviation, Item 1: Being good at English language will help me to study other subjects well, Item 2: Studying English language helps me to communicate in English effectively, Item 3: I am able to think and analyze the content in English language, Item 4: I am satisfied with my performance in the English subject, Item 5: Studying English language is important because it will make me more educated.

**Table 4**  
*Participants' Emotional Attitudes towards English*

Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	Level of motivation
Item 6	–	1.0	16.3	41.3	41.3	4.23	High
Item 7	5.0	16.7	22.7	35.0	20.6	3.50	High
Item 8	.3	1.7	21.7	49.3	27.0	4.01	High
Item 9	–	2.0	23.3	51.0	23.7	3.96	High
Item 10	.3	1.3	21.0	51.0	26.4	4.02	High

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, M=Mean, sd=Standard Deviation, Item 6: I feel excited when I communicate in English with others, Item 7: Studying foreign languages like English language is enjoyable, Item 8: I prefer studying in my mother tongue than in any other foreign languages, Item 9: I am interested in studying English language, Item 10: I enjoy doing activities (e.g., debating, singing, reciting) in English.

**Table 5**  
*Participants' Behavioral Attitudes towards English*

Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	Level of Motivation
Item 11	.3	1.3	19.7	53.7	25.0	4.02	High
Item 12	.7	6.0	14.7	31.6	47.0	4.18	High
Item 13	–	1.0	15.4	51.3	32.3	4.15	High
Item 14	–	1.0	19.0	56.0	24.0	4.03	High
Item 15	–	1.0	8.3	47.4	43.3	4.33	High

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, M=Mean, sd=Standard Deviation, Item 11: I like to give opinions in English during the class lessons, Item 12: I do not feel embarrassed to speak in English in front of other students, Item 13: When I hear my friend speaking in English, I like to practice speaking in English with him/her, Item 14: I like to practice English the way native speakers do, Item 15: I pay attention when my English teacher explains the lessons to the class.

Though a few of them are seen to disagree with this opinion, some of them are neutral. The table also shows that 76.3% of the participants (A=49.3% & SA=27.0%) prefer studying in their mother tongue than in any other foreign languages (Item 8). Though some of them remain neutral regarding this issue, a very low percentage of them are reported to disagree with the phenomenon. Similarly, with regard to Item 9, it is found that 74.7% (A=51.0% & SA=23.7%) of the participants are interested in studying English. While a very few percentages of the participants are disagreed with the issue, some of them are observed to be neutral. It can also be seen from the table that 77.4% (A=51.0% & SA=26.4%) of the participants believe that they enjoy doing activities (e.g., debating, singing, reciting) in English (Item 10). While some of them marked their neutral view on the point, an unmentionable number of the participants are reported to demonstrate their disagreement. Briefly speaking, the emotional attitudes of the participants towards learning English are observed to be highly positive. As the average mean score is 3.94, it

suggests that the participants hold high emotional attitudes towards learning English. Their level of attitudes could be considered high according to the mean range categories mentioned by Alaga (2016).

**Behavioral attitudes to learn English**

Participants' behavioral attitudes towards learning English gathered through Items 11 to 15 are presented in Table 5. The table shows that 78.7% (A=53.7% & SA=25.0%) of the participants feel like to give opinions in English during the class lessons (Item 11). Despite the fact that some of them are observed to be neutral, an almost negligible portion of the participants disagreed on the point. As far as Item 12 is concerned, the table displays that 78.6% (A=31.6% & SA=47.0%) of the participants do not feel embarrassed to speak in English in front of other students. While a few of the participants are found to be neutral, a highly insignificant percentages of them are found to disagree respecting the issue. The table also shows that 83.6% of the participants (A=51.3% & SA=32.3%) are of the opinion that when they find their friend speaking in

English, they like to practice speaking in English with them (Item 13). Though some of them are found to remain neutral, a nearly unmentionable percentage of them are found to be disagreed with the issue. Similarly, with regard to Item 14, the table displays that 80.0% (A=56.0% & SA=24.0%) of the participants like to practice English the way native speakers do. While a few of the participants are neutral about the issue, an almost unmentionable percentage of them are found to disagree. Regarding Item 15, it can also be seen from the table that 90.7% (A=47.4% & SA=43.3%) of the participants believe that they pay attention when their English teacher explains the lessons to the class. While it is found that some of the participants are neutral, an extremely negligible percentage of them are reported to show their disagreement on the issue. In a nutshell, the participants are found to demonstrate highly positive behavioral attitudes towards learning English. Despite the slight variation in the mean scores of the items, it could be said that the participants possess high positive behavioral attitudes towards learning English since the average mean score is 4.14. Their level of attitudes could be considered high based on the mean range categories mentioned by Alaga (2016).

**Differences of participants’ attitudes with reference to their gender, and their parents’ monthly family income and education status**

The extent to which participants’ gender and their parents’ monthly family income and education status influence their attitudes towards learning English were obtained through inferential statistics and the results are presented in the tables. These findings answer to the second research question.

**Language attitudes and gender**

Table 6 and Table 7 show the results of the independent sample *t*-test which specify whether the attitudes of madrasah students towards learning English differ based on their gender variation. It appears in Table 6 that the mean scores of the male students (M = 59.01, SD = 5.15) are slightly higher than the females (M = 58.92, SD = 5.14), meaning that the male students’ attitudes towards learning English are comparatively more positive than the female students. But Table 7 suggests that this difference is not statistically significant as observed from the independent sample *t*-test result,  $t(298) = .143, p = .887, 95\% \text{ CI } [-1.08, 1.25]$ , since the significance value ( $p = .887$ ) is greater than alpha at .05 level of significance.

**Table 6**  
*Group Statistics*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attitudes	Male	154	59.01	5.157	.416
	Female	146	58.92	5.146	.426

**Table 7**  
Independent sample *t*-test

	Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Attitudes	Equal variances assumed	.003	.954	.143	298	.176	.085	.595	-1.086	1.256
	Equal variances not assumed			.143	297.214	.887	.085	.595	-1.086	1.256

**Language attitudes and parents’ monthly family income**

Table 8 and Table 9 present the findings of the one-way ANOVA which indicate if madrasah students’ attitudes towards learning English differ based on monthly family income of their parents. Table 8

shows that there is a statistically significant difference in participants’ attitudes with reference to variation in their parent’s monthly family income  $F(3,296) = 17.93, p < .05$  since the significance value ( $p = .000$ ) is smaller than  $\alpha$  at .05 level of significance.

**Table 8**  
*ANOVA*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1216.349	3	405.450	17.931	.000
Within Groups	6693.214	296	22.612		
Total	7909.562	299			

Furthermore, Table 9 presents the analysis of Multiple Comparison to determine significance of difference between groups. Post Hock test shows

significant statistical differences in attitudes towards learning English between income groups of BDT500000/above and BDT10000–19000 ( $p = .000$ ),

BDT50000/ above and Below BDT10000 ( $p=.000$ ), BDT20000–49000 and BDT10000–19000 ( $p=.000$ ), BDT20000–49000 and Below BDT10000 ( $p=.000$ ), since the  $p$  value is less than Alpha level ( $p < .05$ ). There is a meaningful difference between

these groups. To 1 that students with parents who belong to a high income group have high attitudes towards English language than students with parents who have low income.

**Table 9**  
*Post Hoc (Multiple Comparisons)*

		Tukey HSD					
(I) Monthly Family Income	(J) Monthly Family Income	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
50000/above (BDT)	20000-49000	.880	.910	.768	-1.47	3.23	
	10000-19000	3.958*	.848	.000	1.77	6.15	
	Below 10000	5.437*	.935	.000	3.02	7.85	
20000-49000 (BDT)	50000/above	-.880	.910	.768	-3.23	1.47	
	10000-19000	3.078*	.703	.000	1.26	4.90	
	Below 10000	4.556*	.806	.000	2.47	6.64	
10000-19000 (BDT)	50000/above	-3.958*	.848	.000	-6.15	-1.77	
	20000-49000	-3.078*	.703	.000	-4.90	-1.26	
	Below 10000	1.478	.736	.187	-.42	3.38	
Below 10000 (BDT)	50000/above	-5.437*	.935	.000	-7.85	-3.02	
	20000-49000	-4.556*	.806	.000	-6.64	-2.47	
	10000-19000	-1.478	.736	.187	-3.38	.42	

\*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.  
Note: BDT=Bangladesh taka

**Language attitudes and education status of their parents**

Table 10 and Table 11 show the findings of the one-way ANOVA which designate whether the attitudes of madrasah students towards learning English differ based on the education status of their parents. Table 10 shows that there is a statistically significant difference in attitudes of the participants

in relation to their parent’s education status  $F(4,295)=18.97, p < .05$ , since the significance value ( $p=.000$ ) is smaller than  $\alpha$  at .05 level of significance.

Moreover, Table 11 presents the analysis of Multiple Comparison to determine significance of difference between groups.

**Table 10**  
*ANOVA*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1618.273	4	404.568	18.970	.000
Within Groups	6291.290	295	21.326		
Total	7909.562	299			

**Table 11**  
*Post Hoc (Multiple Comparisons)*

		Tukey HSD					
(I) Parents Education Status	(J) Parents Education Status	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Postgraduate/Kamil	Undergraduate/Fazil	-2.941	1.168	.089	-6.15	.26	
	HSC/Alim	-.660	1.076	.973	-3.61	2.29	
	SSC/Dakhil	2.054	1.171	.403	-1.16	5.27	
	Below SSC/Dakhil	3.973*	1.156	.006	.80	7.15	
Undergraduate/Fazil	Postgraduate/Kamil	2.941	1.168	.089	-.26	6.15	
	HSC/Alim	2.281*	.764	.025	.18	4.38	
	SSC/Dakhil	4.995*	.893	.000	2.54	7.45	
	Below SSC/Dakhil	6.914*	.873	.000	4.52	9.31	
HSC/Alim	Postgraduate/Kamil	.660	1.076	.973	-2.29	3.61	
	Undergraduate/Fazil	-2.281*	.764	.025	-4.38	-.18	
	SSC/Dakhil	2.714*	.769	.004	.60	4.82	
	Below SSC/Dakhil	4.634*	.746	.000	2.59	6.68	
SSC/Dakhil	Postgraduate/Kamil	-2.054	1.171	.403	-5.27	1.16	
	Undergraduate/Fazil	-4.995*	.893	.000	-7.45	-2.54	
	HSC/Alim	-2.714*	.769	.004	-4.82	-.60	
	Below SSC/Dakhil	1.919	.878	.187	-.49	4.33	
Below SSC/Dakhil	Postgraduate/Kamil	-3.973*	1.156	.006	-7.15	-.80	
	Undergraduate/Fazil	-6.914*	.873	.000	-9.31	-4.52	
	HSC/Alim	-4.634*	.746	.000	-6.68	-2.59	
	SSC/Dakhil	-1.919	.878	.187	-4.33	.49	

\*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.



A statistically significant variance of attitudes towards learning English is observed between Postgraduate/Kamil and Below SSC/Dakhil ( $p=.006$ ), Undergraduate/Fazil and HSC/ Alim ( $p =.025$ ), Undergraduate/Fazil and SSC/Dakhil ( $p =.000$ ), Undergraduate/Fazil and Below SSC/Dakhil ( $p=.000$ ), HSC/ Alim and SSC/Dakhil ( $p=.004$ ), HSC/Alim and Below SSC/Dakhil ( $p =.000$ ), since  $p < .05$ . This suggests that the students whose parents have higher education background hold higher positive attitudes towards learning English than the students whose parents possess low education profile.

## **DISCUSSION**

One of the major aims of the present study was to investigate Aliya madrasah students' attitudes towards learning English in Bangladesh. This study was also conducted to identify whether the demographic factors of the participants, for example, their gender, and their parents' monthly

The findings of the present study designate it clearly that the participants hold highly positive cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attitudes towards learning English. Though they are reported to give preference to study through their mother tongue, Bangla, they are found to admit that they hold highly positive attitudes towards English. Moreover, it could be said that though they are said to give emphasis on learning Arabic and Islamic studies, they are not less interested to learn English language, which could be inferred from their reporting of highly positive attitudes towards learning English. Since the participants demonstrate highly positive attitudes towards English, they are likely to have positive motivation also for learning English, which is attested by Rahman et al. (2021), as, according to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), attitude is an important ingredient of motivation for learning. Since their attitudes and motivation align positively, they are likely to succeed in learning English, as while Ellis (1997) and Gardner (1985) clearly observe that motivations correlate with attitudes in the process of language learning, Uju et al. (2019) identify this correlation both in the process as well as outcomes of language learning. It can thus be argued that the participants have high enthusiasm for learning English. Hence, their attitudes may not be held accountable for their perceived deficiency of proficiency.

While the attitudes of the participants are found to be highly positive, their attitudes are not found to vary on their gender variation. This finding corroborates with the results of previous works, for example, Asghar et al. (2018). Akay and Toraman (2015) also find that gender difference does not make statistically significant variation in participants' attitudes to learn English grammar.

family income and education status influence participants' attitudes towards learning English. The study reveals that Aliya madrasah students are found to show overall high positive attitudes towards learning English. The finding is in line with the results of the studies conducted by Al Mamun et al. (2012), Morganna et al. (2020), and Orfan (2020). Furthermore, the results also indicate participants' highly positive cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attitudes towards learning English. Interestingly, this finding is also similar to studies by Morganna et al. (2020) and Orfan (2020). These studies find that the participants hold positive affective, cognitive, as well as behavioral attitudes towards learning English. However, these findings show a contrast with the findings by Abidin et al. (2012) who studied the Libyan school students' attitudes towards learning English with regard to behavioral, cognitive, as well as emotional features of attitudes. They found that the participants had negative attitudes in all three attitudinal features.

However, Kobayashi (2002) observes the influence of gender on attitudes as she finds that female students hold more positive attitudes towards learning English than the male students. Abidin et al. (2012) also identify female students with more positive attitudes towards learning English than the male students. Since the present study finds no gender variation in participants' attitudes, this suggests that participants irrespective of gender hold highly positive attitudes towards learning English.

Participants' attitudes are, however, found to vary significantly with reference to monthly income of their parents, as suggested by ANOVA. The results indicate that students from the higher income families demonstrate higher positive attitudes towards learning English than those from the lower income families. This finding is in line with some previous studies, as Sicam and Lucas (2016) observe that students with high socio-economic backgrounds tend to like English more positively. Similarly, Hoque (2018) views that students from high income families avail more opportunities such as access to different books and materials in a comfortable home environment which help them develop their positive attitudes towards learning English, resulting in better results in examinations, whereas lack of opportunities due to poverty and lack of resources have a negative impact on students' attitudes towards learning English, resulting in decreased examination results. Besides income, parents' level of education also brings about significant variation in participants' attitudes towards learning English. The results reveal that participants' attitudes towards learning English become more positive with the increase of education level of their parents. This result aligns with the findings by Kesgin and Arslan (2015) who find in a

Turkey school context that if the parents' educational level increases, the students' attitudes towards English language also increase accordingly. Participants' variation in attitudes towards learning English in relation to their parents' monthly income and education level found in the present study could be attributed to the assumption that more educated parents realize the necessity of English more and thus they not only want their children become proficient in English but also support them to develop their proficiency. This desire and support of the parents seem to influence children to (re)construct positive attitudes towards learning English.

### CONCLUSION

This study identifies highly positive cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attitudes of the participants towards learning English. Moreover, though their attitudes are not found to vary with reference to their gender difference, variations in their attitudes are observed in relation to the difference in the income and education levels of their parents. More positive attitudes are demonstrated by the participants who belong to the parents with higher income and education levels. Above all, the findings suggest that Aliya madrasah students seem to be highly enthusiastic about learning English. This implies that attitudes towards learning English might not be held accountable for the perceived deficiency of proficiency in English of the Aliya madrasah students. Further studies are called for exploring the constraints of their perceived deficiency of proficiency in English.

The findings of the present study have several implications. They contribute to the existing body of knowledge about attitudes towards learning a second/foreign language like English. The findings can have practical implications also. The findings may inform the teachers about the attitudes of the learners and this may help teachers to use strategies to enhance their attitudes and adapt/design interesting and suitable techniques of teaching English. The findings may also help curriculum planners to make an effective English language curriculum and material produces to adapt/produce suitable English language materials for the learners. The findings may have similar practical implications to other education contexts analogous to the context of the present study.

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